

1 Punctuate Your Priorities

Every life journey is different because backgrounds, opportunities, personalities, financial resources, skills, talents and thought processes of people are all different. However, there are principles that can help every person answer the vital question: What should I do with my life?

To answer this question, you must begin by defining your priorities.

"The purpose of life is to live a life of purpose." —Robert Byrne

What do you care about most?

"You will never know a line is crooked unless you have a straight one to put next to it."

—Socrates

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be. Matthew 6:21

• Identify Your Anxieties

Finances? Fashions? Food? Fitness? Families? Future?

• Identify Your Activities

How much time do you spend everyday at work, watching TV, with friends and your mate, etc?

• Identify Your Ambitions

What do you talk about with others or think about when you are alone?

... and He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. Matthew 6:33

What do you do best?

You can waste time and energy doing those things you are not good at. In reality, everyone is probably bad at most things and good at only a few things. Your priorities must focus on the best of your life and not the worst.

"The reason most major goals are not achieved is that we spend our time doing second things first."

—Robert J. McKain

When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "Why are you trying to do all this alone? The people have been standing here all day to get your help. ...This is not good!" his father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. Now let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing him their questions to be decided. ...If you follow this

advice, and if God directs you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace." Exodus 18:14, 17-19, 23

He is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is wiser still who from among the things he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best."

—William Glandstone

What have you learned from past experiences?

Priorities today should reflect lessons and insights learned from wrong priorities from your past.

"Knowing what you cannot do is more important than knowing what you can do." —Lucille Ball

We all have limits:

Gifts. You can't do it all.

Resources. You can't have it all.

Relationships. You can't please all.

Days. We can't beat the odds.

How should you adjust your aim today?

"Aim at nothing and you'll hit it every time."

"Success is the progressive realization and internalization of all that I ought to be and do." —Ron Jensen

"This is the true joy in life . . . The being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap. The being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish, little clod of ailments." —George Bernard Shaw

"You are my God, my times are in Your hands."

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2 Cultivate Your Courage

Every life journey is different because backgrounds, opportunities, personalities, financial resources, skills, talents and thought processes of people are all different. However, there are principles that can help every person answer the vital question: What should I do with my life?

To answer this question, you must cultivate your courage.

“Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others.” —Winston Churchill

The Bible is filled with character sketches of both courage and fear.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

The words, *fear not*, are in the Bible 365 times—one for each day of the year!

Present Tensions:

- **The Presence of Fear.** “Unbridled fear results in missed opportunities.” —Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader*
- **The Presence of Evil.** You cannot deny the presence of evil. It must be dealt with.
- **The Presence of Apathy.** People resist because an action may be uncomfortable.

HOW CAN I CULTIVATE C-O-U-R-A-G-E IN MY LIFE?

Clarify What It Means to be Courageous

Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines *courage* as a “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.”

“There is no such thing as bravery, only degrees of fear.”
—John Wainwright

My definition: “Courage is action in the face of fear, risk for the sake of change, and strength in the place of opposition, resistance and evil.”

Observe the Experiences of Those Who Have Conquered Fear With Faith

The Bible is an encyclopedia of men and women who in the face of terror, evil, fear and apathy took action and exhibited courage. Example: David vs. Goliath, 1 Samuel 17.

Understand the Power of “NO” in Making Courageous Decisions

“Most of us lead busy, but undisciplined lives. We have ever expanding ‘to do’ lists, trying to build momentum by doing, doing, doing, and doing more. And it rarely works. Those who build the good-to-great companies, however, made as much us of ‘stop doing’ lists as the ‘to do’ lists. They displayed a remarkable amount of discipline to unplug all sorts of extraneous junk... they displayed remarkable courage to channel their resources into only one or a few arenas.”

—Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Good leaders abhor wrongdoing of all kinds; sound leadership has a moral foundation. Proverbs 16:12

Resolve to Face Today with Reality and Tomorrow With Hope

“Do the best you can do every day. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery.”

—Don Nelson, *Dallas Mavericks*

“Facing current reality is often nasty, but necessary.” —Andy Stanley

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please

his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:7-9

Accept the Fact that Courage and Success are Not Always Compatible, but Courage and Character are Inseparable

“An unwillingness to accept risk has swamped more leaders than anything I can think of.” —Max Dupree

“The test of courage is to bear defeat without losing heart.”

Grasp the Fact that Gain and Pain Really are Partners in Progress

We have all said the phrase, “No pain, no gain!”

Elevate the Impact of Your Life Lived With Courage

What should I do with my life? *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith, be men [and women] of courage; be strong.*

1 Corinthians 16:13

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3 Facilitate Your Failures

Every life journey is different because backgrounds, opportunities, personalities, financial resources, skills, talents and thought processes of people are all different. However, there are principles that can help every person answer the vital question: What should I do with my life?

To answer this question, you must facilitate your failures.

“The difference in average and achieving people in life is their perception and response to failure.” —John Maxwell, *Failing Forward*

It’s a fact that failure is a real and regular part of life.

“Failure is a better teacher than success, but she seldom finds an apple on her desk.”

CONSIDER 7 LIFE LESSONS ON FAILURE

Excerpt from *Failing Forward* by John Maxwell

1. People think failure is avoidable. It’s not!

“To err is human, to forgive is divine.” —Alexander Pope

For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

2. People think failure is an event. It’s not!

3. People think failure is objective. It’s not!

4. People think failure is the enemy. It’s not!

“When we give ourselves permission to fail, we at the same time give ourselves permission to excel.”
—Eloise Ristad, Musicologist

5. People think failure is irreversible. It’s not!

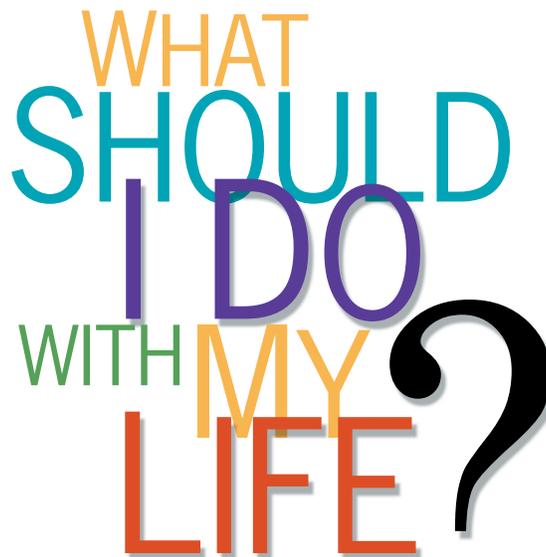
6. People think failure is a stigma. It’s not!

At the Rancho Park Golf Course in Los Angeles, there is a bronze plaque that states: “On Friday, Jan. 6, 1961,

the first day of the 35th L.A. Open, Arnold Palmer, voted the *Golfer of the Year* and *Pro Athlete of the Year*, took a 12 on this hole.”

7. People think failure is final. It’s not!

“There is no doubt in my mind there are many ways to be a winner, but there is really only one way to be a loser and that is to fail and not look beyond the failure.” —Kyle Rote, Jr., Soccer Player



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CONCENTRATE ON LIFE DECISIONS IN FAILURE

• Live with it!

“Failure isn’t so bad if it doesn’t attack the heart. Success is all right if it doesn’t go to the head.”
—Grantland Rice

“A moment of conscious triumph makes one feel that after this nothing will really matter; a moment of realized disaster makes one feel that this is the end of everything. But neither feeling is realistic, for neither event is really what it is felt to be.” —J.I. Packer

• Learn from it!

“The things which hurt, instruct.” —Benjamin Franklin

• Look through it!

CREATE LIFE VISION THROUGH FAILURE

Liquidate your past.

Organize a new life plan.

Open a new file on life growth and development.

Kneel to seek God’s guidance in your life.

3 Strikes, You’re Out!

1. Live only for yourself

2. Withhold love

3. Ignore God

The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives. Psalm 37:23

4 Elevate Your Expectations

Every life journey is different because backgrounds, opportunities, personalities, financial resources, skills, talents and thought processes of people are all different. However, there are principles that can help every person answer the vital question: What should I do with my life?

To answer this question, you must elevate your expectations.

"The purpose of life is to live a life of purpose." —Robert Byrne

"Blessed is he who expects nothing in life for he shall never be disappointed." —Benjamin Franklin

We all deal with the impact of expectations in 3 dimensions:

- Expectations we have for ourselves
- Expectations we have for others
- Expectations others have of us

"Nurture great thoughts, for you will never go higher than your thoughts." —Benjamin Disraeli

Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. Philippians 4:8

"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow." —O.S. Marden

Discovering the Power of Great Expectations:

E-L-E-V-A-T-E

Experience

"Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is like expecting a bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian." —Dennis Wholey

Learning

"Only when you make the right changes to your thinking do other things begin to turn out right." —John Maxwell, *Thinking for a Change*

"Everything comes to him who hustles while he waits." —Thomas Edison

Endurance

"It's easy to have faith in yourself and have discipline when you're a winner, when you're number one. What you got to have is faith and discipline when you're not a winner." —Vince Lombardi

Vision

Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 29:18

"People will never attain what they cannot see themselves doing." —Karen Ford

Attitude

It is the "advance man" of our true selves.

Its roots are inward, but its fruit

is outward.

It is our best friend or our worst enemy.

It is more honest and more consistent than our words.

It is a thing which draws people to us or repels them from us.

It is the librarian of our past.

It is the speaker of our present.

It is the prophet of our future. —John Maxwell

Thankfulness

I am convinced your expectations in life will be fulfilled and enlarged in direct proportion to your appreciation of your life today.

Excellence

"The quality of a man's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence." —Tom Landry

O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth. Psalm 8:1

God's plan and purpose never disappoints!

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