

What's Your Why?

Mark 1:35-39; October 13, 2019

Some of you that have spent close time with me know that I really enjoy thinking about productivity and I think my desires are driven by a healthy, God-honoring desire to not waste my life. My interests in productivity are not driven so that I can live an easy and comfortable life. They are driven by a strong desire to leverage my life to do the most good for the most amount of people to the glory of God. As part of my productivity system, I use a task management software called "Things." I love Things. Most days, it is a very helpful tool. But some days, it can become very overwhelming. It is not uncommon for me to open Things and for there to be over 100 tasks due in a given day. Anyone feel my pain? While you may not use a task management software and there may not be 100 tasks due in any given day for you, my hunch is that most of us can relate to feeling like there are more things on our plate than we have time for.

And here's my fear: we spend our lives busy and productive doing the wrongs the things, neglecting the most important things, and all along the way strangling our souls to death. I fear this even for myself. So I stand here today as one who needs this message just as much as I'm delivering it to you. That's why it has hit my playlist. The good news, is it doesn't have to be that way.

Read Mark 1:29-39

What does this passage teach us about Jesus Christ?

- Ministry of Word and Deed (1:34, 38-39).
- He rose early to pray and spend time with the Father (35). Yes, we're going to come back to this.
- But there's something even more striking to me.

Explain 1:36-37 (re-read)

- Peter's words come across almost like a rebuke. Combining some thoughts from various authors, it might have sounded something like this:
 - "What are you doing here? There's work to do. You're a smashing success. The crowds are lined up waiting for you to help them. We are building a following. This thing is really starting to gain some momentum. The crowd is getting restless. Come on! Let's go! We're all waiting for you. There's no time to pray." (see Daniel Akin and Kevin DeYoung).
- And how does Jesus respond?

Explain 1:38 (re-read and reference Lk. 4:43)

"...for I was sent for this purpose" (Lk. 4:43).

- Jesus' response is what's so astounding: "Let's go to the next town."
- What led Jesus to say "no" to these people?
 - *For this is why...*
 - *For I was sent for this purpose*

- Jesus was not driven by fame or popularity.
- He wasn't a people-pleaser.
- He was not driven by the needs of others or the urgent.
- Rather, he was driven by his God-given mission.
- Jesus knew his "why" and he always lived with an unshakable resolve to stay on mission and live his why.

And this is what I want to challenge you with today.

The Point: Imitate Jesus with an unshakable resolve to live your why.

If you're going to live with an unshakable resolve to live your why, you must first...

I. Know your Why.

- Do you know your God-given purpose and mission in life?
 - And I'm using mission here in a broad sense to refer to your purpose in life (not just narrowly when we talk of "missions" in a Christian sense of seeing the gospel spread to the ends of the earth).
- Kevin DeYoung says the defacto mission for most of us is this:
 - 1. Take care of the house.
 - 2. Meet the next deadline.
 - 3. Keep the people in our lives relatively happy.
- Without a strong and clear sense of mission, you will have a hard time setting priorities for your life and will most likely be driven by the urgent over the important.

Look back at the text:

- Jesus' clear sense of mission drove his calendaring decisions:
 - Up early, spending time with God.
 - Saying no to the crowds and traveling to the next town.
- How will you know what you're supposed to say "yes" or "no" to in any given moment.
- How will you know how you're supposed to structure your day?
- How will you know when it's time to say, "Let's go to the next town."

There are three components of "knowing your why:"

1. Know your God-given purpose

- As created beings, we don't give ourselves purpose. God, our creator, gives us purpose and it's the same for everyone. Our job is to know and embrace that purpose.

Tim Challies' Catechism:

- Why did God create you? God created me to bring glory to him (cf. Isa. 43:7).
- How can you glorify God in your day-to-day life? I can glorify God by doing good works

(cf. Matt. 5:16).

- What are good works? Good works are deeds done for the glory of God and the benefit of other people.
- But you are a sinful person. Can you actually do good works? Yes. Christians are able to do good works because of the finished work of Christ (cf. Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:14).
- In what areas of life should you emphasize good works? I ought to emphasize good works at all times and in all areas of life (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31).

My whole-life purpose statement: Glorify God by delighting in him through Jesus Christ and doing all the good I can, for as many people as I possibly can, as often as I possibly can, in every sphere of life.

2. Define your God-given roles

What are the areas of responsibility, the roles that you will give an account to God for one day?

Most of our roles should fall within 5 broad categories:

- Personal, Family, Church, Social, and Professional.

My roles:

- Personal, Family, Church, Social

All of these areas are callings from God through which we should serve him and others.

3. State your Mission

Take your overarching purpose statement and apply it to every area of your life.

- These are living statements, which means you can tweak, modify and adjust them as your mission and roles become clearer.
- Whether you actually write out mission statements for each of your areas is up to you, the larger point is for you to find a way to think about not just what currently matters, but what *ought* to matter in each area of your life.

My mission statements (as an example):

Personal: Delight in God and cultivate spiritual, physical, and emotional vitality so that I can do the most good for others to the glory of God.

Family: Eagerly pursue, sacrificially serve and extravagantly love my wife as I provide and care for my family and lead them to treasure Jesus above all things.

Church: Joyfully lead and faithfully serve RHC by developing leaders and discipleship environments to make and multiply maturing disciples.

Social: Serve Fulton Heights and the surrounding community leveraging my SHAPE to display and declare the gospel.

Notice this: being a follower of Jesus shapes every single sphere of my life.

How do I use these statements?

- They guide me week by week and help me plan and schedule my priorities.
 - Reflective: Did I do these things this week?
 - Planning: How will I do these things this week?

Knowing my why now sets me up to...”Prioritize my why.”

II. Prioritize your Why.

It’s one thing to know your why, it’s a completely separate thing to actually prioritize and consistently live your why. If you aren’t intentional and don’t prioritize, you’ll push aside the very things you say *are* your actual priorities.

Look back at the text (1:37):

- Jesus let his purpose drive his priorities and decisions.
 - “Everyone is looking for you.”
 - He wasn’t driven by needs or the urgent.
- Is your why driving your priorities and decisions?
- Are you doing the things you *should* be doing?

Why don’t we prioritize our why? What keeps us from prioritizing our why? What hinders us from prioritizing our why?

One possible answer: the busyness of our lives. Have you considered the dangers of a busy life?

Kevin DeYoung, in his book, *Crazy Busy*, makes a strong case:

- “We are so busy with a million pursuits that we don’t even notice the most important things are slipping away” (DeYoung, 20).
- Busyness can lead to 3 dangers:
 - It can ruin our joy.
 - It can rob our hearts (cf. Mark 4:19 - seed that falls among thorns)
 - “For most of us, it isn’t heresy or rank apostasy that will derail our profession of faith. It’s all the worries of life” (DeYoung, 29).
 - It can cover up the rot in our souls.
 - “The greatest danger with busyness is that there may be greater dangers you never have time to consider” (DeYoung, 31-32).

- Why are we so busy? Pride manifested in various ways:
 - 12 P's: People-pleasing, Pats on the back, Performance Evaluation, Possessions, Proving myself, Pity, Poor Planning, Power, Perfectionism, Position, Prestige, Posting.
 - "Every one of the P's listed in the previous section could be changed from vice into virtue with just a minor tweak." It's this question: "Am I trying to do good or to make myself look good?" (DeYoung, 39).

How do we prioritize our why.

1. Acknowledge that you can't do everything.
 - You can't do everything. Your time and energy are limited. Only when you come to grips with this, can you start to use it well.
 - Again, think about Jesus. He knew that if he was going to accomplish the work that God had for him, he'd have to pass up a number of good opportunities. He knew he would not be able to meet all the needs of those around him.
 - Discern between good, better and best.
2. Prioritize what you *must* do over all that you *could* do.
 - "My experience confirms that if I fail to attack my week with theologically informed planning, my week attacks me with an onslaught of the urgent. And I end up devoting more time to the urgent than the important" (C.J. Mahaney).
3. Reduce or eliminate everything that doesn't align with your why.
 - "Much of your productivity depends, then, on prioritization—on choosing the few and neglecting, ignoring, or even just plain refusing the many." (Challies, 92).
 - Learn the slow "yes" and the quick "no."

III. Fuel your Why.

Is anyone beginning to feel the weight of this? I am. The life I'm challenging you to live is not an easy life. But it's a rewarding and fulfilling life. There's nothing in this world that will bring you a sense of peace before God than knowing that you are accomplishing all that he has for you. That's why we must fuel our why.

How do we fuel our lives so that we have the power to live with unstable resolve like Jesus did?

Look at the text (1:35):

- Even though Jesus had been up late doing ministry the previous night, he rose early the next day to spend time with God.
- Why do you think Jesus was up early spending time with the Father?
 - Jesus knew that he could accomplish nothing apart from the empowerment and guidance that came from spending time with the Father.

- God was his source of strength and guidance.
- As a result of his time with God, he came away empowered for the ministry ahead with a clear sense of mission and direction from the Lord.

The best antidote to our struggles with busyness, pride, people-pleasing and the urgent, is daily and consistent time with God. This is the “one thing” we must do to fuel our why.

- When my approval in life is coming from God, it frees me from seeking the approval of others.
- I am more confident in saying no to the crowds because God has made what’s most important clear to me that I need to say yes to.

Read Luke 10:38-42

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Lk. 10:38-42 ESV)

Conclusion

Can you imagine what God can do with a church full of people living out their why’s with unshakable resolve?

As we wrap up, I’m going to create a few minutes of space where you can spend time talking with God. I’m going to try and fight the urge to just hurry on to the next element. As we close our eyes in prayer, I’m going to revisit some of the heart penetrating questions that I’ve shared already and I want to challenge you to honestly take these before the Lord.

- Do you have a clear sense of our purpose and mission in life?
- Where are you pushing aside the very things you say *are* your actual priorities?
- How is busyness covering up the rot in your soul?
- What in your life needs to be eliminated so that you can consistently live your why?
- What next step do you need to take this week in order to prioritize the “one thing” in order to fuel your why?