



Living With Purpose *What's Your "One Thing?"*

I love movies. I can go and get lost in another time and another place. What are some of your favorite movies? Most of the movies I like best are true stories. But there is a story in a fictional movie that bears telling-and it is as true as life itself. In a way it is a parable for the Wild West as scripted by Hollywood. To me, the central scene in the movie revolves around two characters, played by Jack Palance and Billy Crystal. Of course, I'm referring to "City Slickers," a movie about a 39 year old man at the halfway point in life who goes out on a cattle drive with two friends to find his inner self. The scene has Jack and Billy out alone on the range looking for a lost cow. Jack is a crusty old Cowboy with little emotion other than anger as far as Billy can tell. Jack says, "Yeah you all come out here about the same age. Same problems. Spend fifty weeks a year getting knots in your rope then--then you think two weeks up here will untie them for you. None of you get it. Do you know what the secret of life is?" Billy asks him. "This!." (Jack holds up one finger). "Your finger?" asks Billy. "One thing," Jack answers. "Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don't mean anything." "That's great, but what's the one thing?" Crystal asks. "That's what you've got to figure out." These are not elegant words but they speak volumes to our day and age. Jack Handley said, "I hope life wasn't a joke, because I didn't get it." Do you get it? What's your "one thing?" Have you figured it out? How do you live a life of purpose when you don't know what your purpose is? First, you need to know what your purpose should look like. Your Purpose Ought to:

1. Start with you. Your Talent - What you can do well. Everyone has a talent for something. Maybe you learned it as a child performing for classmates. Maybe it became a hobby in your teen years. Perhaps you developed a finesse for something that everyone else relies on you for. Your Desire - What you want to do. Is there something that you have always wanted to do? Remember the movie "Chariots of Fire," about the British Olympians in 1920? Eric Liddell, the Christian Scottish runner told his sister that the reason he enjoyed running was that he got great joy from it. He could feel God's power flowing through him when he ran. What do you do that makes you feel that passionate? Your Results - What you accomplish at what you do well. What abilities do you possess that help you do certain tasks better? You now what you are good at. My pastor often says that everyone is a 10 at something. What are you a 10 at? Your Recognition - What others think you do well. Ask your close friends or family what you "shine" at. What abilities do they see in you that you don't. Often others see abilities and gifts in us that we don't see ourselves. Your greatest supporters are the ones that see your strengths and can help you move toward them for success. Your Circumstances - What you have opportunity to do. There is a verse in the Bible in the story of Esther. Her uncle tells her at a crossroads in her life, "Perhaps

you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this." Where have you been placed at the right time to affect your or other's destiny? What have you got at your disposal that no one else has to solve problems or create a new way of doing things. Your Fulfillment - What you enjoy doing. What would you do if nobody paid you to do it? Remember, most people are a 10 at something. It gives them fulfillment and joy. If you can find out what this is in your life, find a way to get people to pay you and you've got it made! A friend once gave me some great advice, "Spend the first half of your life finding what you are best at doing and enjoy, and the second half getting people to pay you to do it."

2. Contain life-changing convictions. Your convictions are the things for which you would lay down your life. Most people would agree that there are four things worth dying for:

(1) *Faith* - Our faith is what sustains us in tough times. Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ" has caused many to rediscover (or discover) their faith. We all believe in something or someone. The first step in the 12 step Alcoholics Anonymous program is to acknowledge a Higher Power. Our faith is worth fighting and giving our lives for. Christians believe that Jesus laid down his life for the world. He said that there is no greater love than laying down your life for others.

(2) *Family* - Most good parents would easily lay down their lives for their children or each other. When you've got nothing else, you have your family. You may not have a great relationship with your parents or your siblings, but they are a source of support and strength when relationships are handled right.

(3) *Freedom* - Many Americans take this for granted. Statistics show that immigrants to our country are more successful in business than natural born Americans. Why? Often they have fought hard to win their freedom and come to our shores and when they arrive, they keep fighting for their dream.

(4) *Friends* - You are doing very good in life if you can name one or two close friends that you trust and would lay down your life for (and they in turn for you). What have you done to cultivate close friendships with one or two people that will stand the test of time? An unknown author once said, "It is better to have lived for something than never to have lived at all."

3. Include others. Don't have a goal for just yourself. Your purpose should lift everyone around you to a higher level. What are you doing that will change the lives of those around you? John Maxwell says, "There is no success without a successor." You don't want people to say after you have died and buried, "Thank goodness he/she is gone!" Leave this a better world than when you came. Bring others along with you. Jimmy Durante, the famous comedian and entertainer said, "Be awfully nice to them going up, because you're gonna meet them all coming down."

4. Be bigger than yourself. Live for something greater than yourself. It should be the last thing we accomplish, so then, life is a continual effort to perfect your purpose. Ask yourself, in 500 years (or in 50) will anyone know what I did? Will I have made a difference? The really great contributions to mankind have lasting value that we all remember. Often the greatest inventions are created by people who want to make life better for everyone else. A friend of mine says he

likes to give to worthy charities that truly do good for people because it not only helps them but makes him feel good, too.

5. Have eternal value to it. Tom Winninger, a consultant with major corporations, like Hertz and Kodak was meeting with the CEO and board of Kodak to try and help them beat their competition and take #1 in the market. They were concerned about Fuji Film making more sales than Kodak. Tom told them they didn't sell film. The CEO argued that they did, but Tom insisted that they didn't. After an exasperating conversation, the CEO said, "Well before we dismiss you as our client, tell me what you think we do sell." Tom answered, "You sell memories. People don't buy film, they buy memories." He showed them that their product had eternal value to it. That it was more than just a roll of film; it was people's lives and dreams. What do you do that has eternal value? What are you a "10" at? What is your purpose, your vision? Does it include others? Is it greater than yourself? Will it have a lasting impact? Regardless of where you are, answering these questions will have a lasting impact on how you spend the rest of your life.

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