



# MISSION ENRICHMENT

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*The Spirit of the Gospel in Service of the Mission*

## Quote:

Look not mournfully into the past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future, without fear.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,

1807-1882,  
American Educator and Poet



## At the Center of God's Mission

from *On-the-Job Prayers*  
by William David Thompson

We pray: Hope of the World, it is easy to feel that my faith gets lost in the wilderness of confused values in today's world. Help me to see that this "splendid wilderness" is the center of your mission. Show me today how I can be an extension of your hand in this world, a reflection of your love for all people. Help me to use whatever role I play in the workplace to move the world toward justice, righteousness and peace. Use me in whatever way you can to achieve your creative and redemptive purposes for humankind. Show me how to do my part. Amen.

Ideas or comments are welcome.

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## ONE SIMPLE QUESTION *by Steve Godier*

I once read that an ordinance in one of America's major cities forbids "walking about aimlessly, with no apparent purpose, lingering, hanging around, lagging behind, idly spending time, delaying, sauntering and moving slowly about." I can't tell you how disturbed I felt. Some of my best days are spent like that.

But then, I don't want my whole life to be basically described as having "no apparent purpose...lagging behind...idly spending time...delaying" and generally moving about aimlessly. On the other hand, neither do I want to take myself too seriously. An occasional day spent doing next to nothing sounds perfectly fine.

My problem is that I am usually busy. I schedule tightly and work long hours. I plan my time and make lists.

But it would be a mistake to believe that, just because I am doing many things, I am necessarily doing the right things. Or, perhaps, the BEST things. At least if I'm busy, I want to stay busy at things that matter.

News commentator Dan Rather asked himself a vital question several times a day. Largely because of this one question, he became one of America's leading journalists. Rather wrote the question on three slips of paper. He kept one in his billfold, one in his pocket, and one on his desk. The all-important question he constantly asked himself was "Is what you are doing now helping the broadcast?" If the answer was yes, then he continued with his work, project or idea. If the answer was no, then he stopped what he was doing and put his efforts into something else. He discovered early on that if he did not focus his time, he would end up in a job where he was under-utilized and dissatisfied.

What if you were to ask yourself a focusing question several times a day? Your question might relate to work, or perhaps to another area of your life that is important to you - family, relationships, personal development, spirituality. You might ask yourself if what you're doing now is helping you succeed. Or if what you're doing now is helping you to be a better parent or a better person. You decide. The point is this: one simple question can focus and transform your life.

Try writing the question you choose on small slips of paper or on the back of a business card. Carry it with you. Post it on your desk. You might even affix it to a conspicuous spot inside your car.

Then read it several times a day. That one question will help you choose activities that contribute toward your best self. And if you are busy, at least you will be busy doing the right things - things that matter. Then, if you decide to spend an occasional day walking about aimlessly, with no apparent purpose, lingering, hanging around, lagging behind, idly spending time, delaying, sauntering and moving slowly about, why not? The down time will probably do you good. †



# GET OVER IT!

## MOVING PAST DISAPPOINTMENT AND LET-DOWNS

by David Patrick

**H**ow long do you allow someone to stay down or harbor resentment and disappointment about a dream deferred or when life does not exactly go the way they planned it... even in a once in a lifetime event? Is it a year... or longer? I suppose this can be a quantifiable amount of time. You might even be able to assign appropriate grieving time based on certain situations or more generously on a case by case basis. The point being, and probably with a great amount of consensus, that there comes a time to “get over it.”

### CONTRACT WITH YOURSELF . . .

by John Marks Templeton  
*Discovering the Laws of Life*, p. 136

“...You can choose to make a contract with yourself to do only deeds you will be proud of in the future. The contract is a commitment to live in your own integrity, regardless of whether others around you choose to live in theirs. Try to remember that in the end, it is you who must benefit by living in honor and integrity. It is the key to good health, good relationships, and self-esteem.”

“The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.”

—Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr



I don't particularly mean that in an insensitive way, but rather just the opposite. It is more detrimental to a person to continue to let an incident that did not go as planned in your past to continue to haunt their present day and future. Maybe haunt is not a strong enough word. In some cases, a past let-down will control the present. It can stifle progress. You just can't get past it.

There are a couple ways to realize if you are allowing a past disappointment to control your present day.

**1. Whenever you encounter things that remind you of the let-down you can hardly stand to engage in it:** I had a friend who was looking for employment for a long time after graduating from college. He started out gung-ho in the process but because his plan of working in a job closely related to his degree did not come to fruition in the time he had planned it greatly caused him distress. It got to the point that he could not even look for a job anymore, though he was literally sinking into debt and bills were going unpaid.

**2. Whenever you think about and especially talk about it-- it brings back the pain even to the point of tears:** This is a point I learned from my wife. She once told me about how her mother used to have a hard time discussing some things in her own personal life. My wife told me that whenever the discussion came up, she would wave it off, change the subject or allow it to bring her to a point of crying. She told me that she remembered a day when her mother was able to freely speak about it-- unashamed and even give advice and counsel people concerning the same, that was the day she was free. But if every time a situation is brought up tears flow, you are allowing it to control your present day.

**3. You let the past situation poison relationships or endeavors: Relationships are important.** As a matter of fact, there is little if nothing at all that you can do to progress in life outside of relationships. As the saying goes... “no man is an island.” Every person is at his poorest relational point AT LEAST, a peninsula. You need people in your life, but if you are allowing offense or past disappointment to cause resentment in your relationship, it is controlling your present day. It can even be something subtle that is lying below the surface that is causing you to not fully give yourself or trust others in important relationships. You can even have seemingly happy and functional married couples who have something underlying causing it from reaching the next plateau that marriages typically graduate into. That is very dangerous. It can even be that one of the parties in the relationship doesn't even know that there is a problem.

*“...by shifting your expectation in what God can do, you will be able to move on and get a different outcome.”*

**4. You lie to yourself and others regarding the problem:** There are people who say that if you lie to yourself long enough that even you will begin to believe the lie. I don't know if that is true in every case. Because every time that you tell that lie you are the one that knows it's a lie. What actually happens is that you learn to live with the lie, until it comes to a point where it can not be contained or covered any longer. What is in the dark will always be revealed and come to the light. My point is that you can be dishonest and cause everyone to believe that the situation doesn't bother you anymore about the problem, but the very fact that you don't let the truth be known shows that you allow the situation to control your ethics, honesty and integrity.

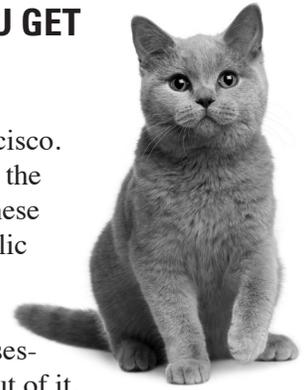
Now don't get me wrong, it is normal and acceptable to be and display

disappointment and hurt. You can't heal a wound by saying that it's not there. That's insane. By pretending that you are not hurt or disappointed will only stand to hurt you more as you continue to try to function normally with an injury. I remember running track in high school and having a stress fracture in my foot. I wanted to keep running on it and not let anyone know so when asked how I was feeling, I kept saying that everything was alright. Well, naturally the injury got worse because I tried to continue to function in a normal way on something that needed recovery. The same holds true in your life with let-down and disappointment.

So it is understandable to be hurt when things don't go your way. In fact, the Bible says that "hope deferred makes the heart sick." So naturally people become "heart sick" when their expectations don't happen. But the Bible also says to place your hope (expectation) in God. I am not saying God caused the thing to not go right, but I am saying that by shifting your expectation in what God can do, you will be able to move on and get a different outcome. Things may not be the same again (and you may not be able to go back and change it), but that doesn't mean that God can't make it good again. †

Taken from **EVERYBODY'S NORMAL UNTIL YOU GET TO KNOW THEM** by John Ortberg, pp. 204-205)

**A** man wanders into a small antique shop in San Francisco. Mostly it's cluttered with knickknacks and junk. On the floor, however, he notices what looks like an ancient Chinese vase. On closer inspection it turns out to be a priceless relic from the Ming dynasty whose value is beyond calculation. It is worth everything else in the store put together. The owner clearly has no idea about the value of this possession, because it's filled with milk and the cat's drinking out of it.



The man sees an opportunity for the deal of a lifetime. He cleverly strategizes a method to obtain the vase for a fraction of its worth. "That's an extraordinary cat you have," he says to the owner. "How much would you sell her for?"

"Oh, the cat's not really for sale," said the owner. "She keeps the store free of mice."

"I really must have her," the man countered. "Tell you what—I'll give you a hundred dollars for her."

"She's not really worth it," laughed the owner, "but if you want her that badly, she's yours."

"I need something to feed her from as well," continued the man. "Let me throw in another ten dollars for that saucer she's drinking out of."

"Oh, I could never do that. That saucer is actually an ancient Chinese vase from the Ming dynasty. It is my prized possession, whose worth is beyond calculation. Funny thing, though; since we've had it, I've sold seventeen cats."

The ability to assign value is one of the rarest and most precious gifts in the world. People who live deeply in community learn to discern and express the value of other human beings. They are masters of expressing love in word and gesture. They assign high worth, value, and importance to others by viewing them as priceless gifts.... every human being carries a sticker from God: "Made in my image. Worth the life of my Son. My prized possession whose value is beyond calculation." †

**UNDERSTAND THE STATEMENT, "WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE"**

(excerpt from *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... and it's all small stuff*, by Richard Carlson, Ph.D)

**T**his is the title of a super book by Jon Kabat-Zinn. As the title suggests, wherever you go, you take yourself with you! The significance of this statement is that it can teach you to stop constantly wishing you were somewhere else. We tend to believe that if we were somewhere else—on vacation, with another partner, in a different career, a different home, a different circumstance—somehow we would be happier and more content. We wouldn't!

The truth is, if you have destructive mental habits—if you get annoyed

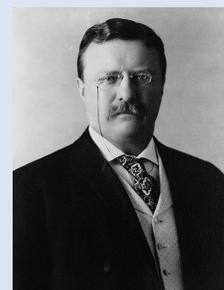
and bothered easily, if you feel angry and frustrated a great deal of the time, or if you're constantly wishing things were different, these identical tendencies will follow you, wherever you go. And the reverse is also true. If you are a generally happy person who rarely gets annoyed and bothered, then you can move from place to place, from person to person, with very little negative impact.

Someone once asked me, "What are the people like in California?" I asked him, "What are the people like in your home state?" He replied, "Selfish and greedy." I told him that he would probably find the people in California to be selfish and greedy.

Something wonderful begins to happen with the simple realization that life, like an automobile, is driven

from the inside out, not the other way around. As you focus more on becoming more peaceful with where you are, rather than focusing on where you would *rather* be, you begin to find peace right now, in the present. Then, as you move around, try new things, and meet new people, you carry that sense of inner peace with you. It's absolutely true that "Wherever you go, there you are." †

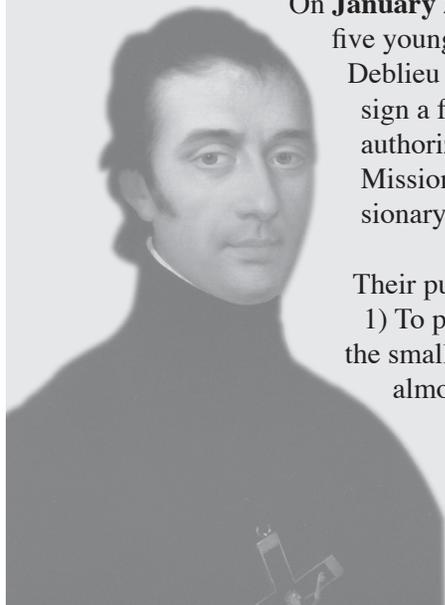
**THEODORE ROOSEVELT:**



*"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."*

# OBLATE HISTORY

*Excerpt from Living in the Spirit's Fire,  
by Fr. Hubenig, p. 66*



On **January 25, 1816, feast of St. Paul's Conversion**, the five young priests (de Mazenod, Tempier, Icard, Deblieu and Mie) gathered in the common room to sign a formal petition asking the archdiocese to authorize their budding society, to be known as the Missionaries of Provence (later to become the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate).

Their purpose was two-fold:

1) To preach missions for the re-Christianization "of the small towns and villages in Provence, which have almost entirely lost the faith..."

2) To "form a community of missionaries governed by a rule, so that they might serve the diocese and, at the same time, strive to sanctify themselves in accordance with this particular mission." †

## LIVING ABOVE THE LEVEL OF MEDIOCRITY

*by Charles R. Windoll (excerpt from pp. 217-223)*

If you are a "Sunday Christian," you will not stand alone when outnumbered... the whole world system is at odds with God. We can't live or do business in this world without rubbing shoulders with those driven by the world's desires.

The world system is committed to at least four major objectives, which I summarize in four words: fortune, fame, power, pleasure. **First and foremost: Fortune, money.** The world system is driven by money; it feeds on materialism. **Second: Fame.** That is another word for popularity. Fame is the longing to be known, to be somebody in someone else's eyes. I'm not referring to being someone's hero, but someone's god. I'm talking about a celebrity mindset. **Third: Power.** This is having influence, maintaining control over individuals or groups or companies or whatever. It is the desire to manipulate and maneuver others to do something for one's own benefit. **Fourth: Pleasure...** It's the same mindset that's behind the slogan: "If it feels good, do it." The world is ruthless and relentless as it works overtime to communicate this fortune-fame-power-pleasure syndrome.

When we spend enough time around those in a particular scene, our actions usually become similar. It is just the way we're made. And it is especially true if the one in the minority is insecure and unsure. If you doubt that, you are merely deceiving yourself....

Christ is my surety. Don't be fooled by the crowd. I remember an old saying, "There's safety in numbers." Well, not always. Sometimes there's danger in numbers. Just because "everybody's doing it" doesn't mean it's either safe or right. †

*"Christ is my surety.  
Don't be fooled by  
the crowd."*

## BANK ACCOUNT

*(sent from Jeanne James)*

A 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud man, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with his hair fashionably combed and shaved perfectly, even though he is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today.

His wife of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, he smiled sweetly when told his room was ready. As he maneuvered his walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of his tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on his window.

'I love it,' he stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.' 'Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room; just wait.' 'That doesn't have anything to do with it,' he replied. 'Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time.'

Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged ... it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it.'

It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away. Just for this time in my life.

Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories! †

