

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 14: Personal Development Planning

Talk 3: Personal Development Planning - Life Mission

Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership. We are discussing the very important subject of a leader having a personal development plan. We have so far pointed out that your personal development plan should consist of the following four elements:

- Your vision of the future
- Your life mission
- Your goals and strategies
- The values you live by

Having spent the last programme discussing your vision we will now concentrate on your personal mission statement. What is a mission statement, why is it important and how can you develop one? These are some of the questions to keep in mind as this programme progresses.

So what is a personal mission statement? We said that this is a statement that answers what I exist to do, for whom and why. In short your mission defines your overall purpose for existence. Now you may wonder how a mission statement differs from a vision statement. While a vision statement outlines **where** you want to be in the distance future, a Mission statement talks about **how** you will get to where you want to be.

At this stage it will be worthwhile to give two biblical examples of mission statements. Let's start with Jesus' mission. We have already seen that his vision was that of establishing the Kingdom of God. To get to that vision he defined his actual mission in Luke 4 as follows:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

What I am saying here is that the various activities defined in this manifesto constituted the mission of Jesus or what would eventually lead to the fulfilment of the vision of establishing the Kingdom of God. To establish the Kingdom of God Jesus had to preach good news to the poor; He had to proclaim liberty to the captives – that is, to those who are under the oppression of sin and bound by demons and intergenerational spirits. He had to cause those who are spiritually blind to recover their sight. He had to proclaim the year of Jubilee, the year of celebrating the restoration of what had previously been forcibly taken from them. Those broad objectives defined the mission of Jesus as he sought to fulfil his vision of establishing the kingdom of God.

Let's now look at the example of St Paul. In Acts 20:24 Paul says, "But my life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God's wonderful kindness and love." His reason for existence was to be God's missionary with a vision of seeing the gospel spreading to all parts of the world. Notice what a driving force this mission was for Paul. He said if he did not fulfil this mission then indeed his life was worth nothing to him. You see how powerful a sense of mission can be?

But how do you work out your reason for existence as a Christian? Rick Warren says you should consider your SHAPE. He takes the word SHAPE to be an acronym, each letter standing for something.

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S is for **spiritual gifts**. Every child of God has one or more of these. What are your spiritual gifts? More importantly, are you using your spiritual gifts for the good of the body of Christ? Romans 12:6-8 says:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

H is for **heart**. What are your heart's desires and concerns? There are things that you feel passionate about. A certain need stirs your heart when it might be ignored by a different person. Those things that you feel passionate about represent your heart, and they should be factored into your mission statement.

A is for **abilities**. Just as you have spiritual gifts that you are given when you become a Christian, there are also natural abilities. You are born with those abilities, and they just need to be cultivated and strengthened. Are you naturally organized? Maybe you have a very good memory? Whatever skills God has given you from birth are your natural abilities. These should also be factored into your mission statement or reason for existence.

P in SHAPE is for **personality**. Your personality also helps in determining what your mission in life should be. You may be a **sanguine**, someone who is high in the area of influencing others by your high level of emotionalism and expressiveness. People find you interesting, and you are very popular. Or you may be a **melancholy**, which is someone who is high on caution, very rational and analytical. Another person would be described as a **choleric**, very high on dominating and driving others to achieve. Or maybe you are a peaceful **phlegmatic**, someone highly sensitive to the needs of others, someone really able to relate and empathize with others. The important issue behind all this discussion is to ask if you have ever analysed your own personality. The way you are wired in your personality must surely be factored into a consideration of your mission statement.

E in our acronym SHAPE stands for **experiences**. God has not taken you through your experiences for nothing. Your experience of education, travel, work – and of course all the battles you have fought and won in life are all part of how God has shaped you for the mission he is giving you in life. In 1 Samuel 17:36-37 David told Saul:

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

Do you see how David relied on his experience to shape his mission?

So what are we saying about developing your mission? We are saying that taken together your spiritual gifts, your heart's passion, your natural abilities, your personality and your experiences suggest the kind of mission you should be involved in as you seek to achieve your vision. So, considering your SHAPE, write your mission or reason for existence.

Some time ago the Lord revealed to me that in order to realize my vision for a transformed world my mission must be that of training and equipping leaders of for both the church and the wider society. This mission statement is helping me to decide priorities for my life. Of the many available opportunities for service which ones should occupy my time? I could be spending time in feeding or medical programmes. I could be an environmental activist. I could even be counsellor to help heal the many marriages. In fact I do some of these things. But the centre of my calling is raising leaders

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of integrity who can transform our broken world. That is why I am producing and presenting these programmes on leadership. That is why I am heading a theological college that trains Christian leaders. That is why I am similarly heading the Trainers of Pastors Association of Zimbabwe – an organization that is engaging in the non-formal training of pastoral leaders. These activities find their point of unity in my mission statement which talks about of training and equipping leaders of for both the church and the wider society. Your mission will most likely be different from mine, simply because your SHAPE is different from mine.

Let's make a date to meet in the next programme to discuss the next step in your personal development plan. Until then, practice these Tools for Wise Leadership.

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