

MONDAY 5.29.23 - Luke 19:10

Stephen Covey is the author of the bestselling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*. In the book, Covey encourages individuals to formulate and to write out a personal mission statement. Two thousand years ago, Jesus concisely conveyed His mission statement in 14 words: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Mankind is lost in sin and separated from a holy God. Man's charitable works cannot bridge the gap and make him acceptable to God, escaping eternal death. So, Jesus accomplished for us what we could not possibly do for ourselves. Jesus came to earth, lived a sinless life, and offered Himself as a sacrifice for man's sins on Calvary's cross. Christ gives forgiveness of sin and eternal life as a free gift that man appropriates by faith in Him. Share Christ's personal mission statement with an unsaved friend today!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

TUESDAY 5.30.23 - Romans 1:16-17

Hardly a more vivid expression of 'mission' can be voiced but by the words of Paul. The Gospel is God's good news to mankind, that in our sin, God loved us and prepared a redemptive plan. That plan 'revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith.' Great missionaries of the past have wonderful biographies to read, Carey, Chambers, Wesley. Reading them makes one wonder whether one can even be a missionary if not in a foreign land. Yet Spurgeon, Meuller, and Whitefield bring the mission to home terf evangelizing, preaching and serving in their homeland. What can we do that pertains to 'missions'? Paul directs us all to 'live by faith' so that those we meet have reason to see the righteousness in us, that which has been placed and nurtured by Christ Himself. As the days become more difficult let us 'be not ashamed of the Gospel' and share it with all we meet; thus being missionaries

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

WEDNESDAY - 5.31.23 - Galatians 2:1-10

The Lord directed Paul to go to Jerusalem to meet with the leaders of the church—Peter, James, and John. These spiritual giants welcomed Paul with open arms of fellowship. Also, they recognized his distinctive work for the Lord among the Gentiles, and they encouraged Paul to press on. Who has strengthened you in your walk with God? Who has accepted and affirmed you when no one else came to your side? Perhaps you can recall only one person who really upheld you in confusing or hard times. Or maybe several people come to mind. Regardless of the number, remember those who have encouraged you and thank God for them. If you can, voice your appreciation to them, encouraging them to press on in the tasks God has designed especially for them. In this way, you will give back some of what they have lovingly given to you.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

THURSDAY 6.1.23 - Proverbs 27:17

In our kitchen we have a sharpening steel that I use to put a keen edge back onto a cutting knife before carving, say, a turkey. Interestingly enough, not one of our knives get an edge lying in the drawer next to that steel! They need to come in contact with that steel if I have any hope that I can cut the turkey in some semblance of "carving"! Without a steel, a knife remains blunt and ineffective. Without a knife, a steel is completely useless. All of us, brothers and sisters, are to sharpen one another. We need to exhort, encourage, and support one another. But iron has to come in *contact* with iron!

I have found that E2 communities and Small Groups facilitate sharpening that cannot be done effectively in Sunday services. Please consider joining one or both of these and, by doing so, live out this Proverb.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

FRIDAY - 6.2.23 - Psalm 133:1-3

Psalm 133:1-3¹ How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!² It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. ³ It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. There is nothing that revives me, fills me with energy, and gets me focused on the right things, than spending time with my brothers and sisters in Christ. No matter what my mood, upon arriving at a church activity, I am always uplifted by the time I leave. I hope this is true for you as well. Having said that I have two observations I want to comment on. First, it seems to me that times of fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ are becoming fewer and farther in between. Secondly, I have observed that when we do come together, sometimes, we have holy hurdles or cliques which may cause some people to not enjoy the fellowship as much as others. Scripture clearly tells us that we should not stop meeting together and that we should use those times to encourage each other. I can't speak for you, but I think that sounds like pretty good advice.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION
