

FRONTLINE BUSINESS SCHOOL

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

Aims:

- To understand God's purpose for you and your business.
- To grasp the size of God's anointing on us
- To understand the role of kings
- To walk in our authority
- To influence
- To impact our city and nation

Purpose is a great word, and one that we hear all the time at the moment. What is your purpose? Some people know the answer to that question. Some people do not. Some people think it is important. Some people do not. Where on the spectrum are you?

Philippians 3:12b (New International Version)

... but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

There is a reason for your existence; there is a reason that you are a child of God. You have a purpose. It has come from Christ Jesus Himself. It is our job to press on and take hold of that.

Purpose is about what you do, and we have to be careful not to focus on what we do at the expense of understanding who you are. We also have to be careful not to focus on what we are doing at the expense of understanding why God wanted us to do it in the first place.

That said, there is tremendous freedom in understanding your purpose, and your business is the same. If God has called you to business – if you have received business as your ministry for today – then God also has a purpose for your business.

We should “press on to take hold of that” purpose for our business.

My own personal story is that I have always known my basic purpose. There are fundamental principles that we can take from God's word. There are times

though, when I have known my purpose much more specifically. Sometimes we think that understanding our purpose is a bit like having a job description where we have a list of tasks that we are supposed to do and the boundaries that we should operate in. Rarely does it work like this. Often we have a sense that we are doing the right thing without detailed descriptions. We should not be condemned or confused if we feel that we are short of lots of detail in knowing our purpose.

Philippians 3:12-14 (New International Version)

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Knowing your purpose is not a one time event, but something that you must keep working toward, and it is important that you do. It ensures that you function in your calling and anointing. As we will see in Session 3 on Leadership, Vision is imperative to your business. Your purpose should feed your vision.

THE KING INSIDE THE KID

Knowing your purpose is linked with knowing who you are. When you realise that being a business man (or woman) is not a second rate calling, but actually something that can be truly wonderful and that you, as the son of the King are to take a part in that role – then you start to have an identity that is whole. What you do and why you do it are linked.

God told Samuel to anoint David as king¹. At this time, David was just a kid. Even his own dad didn't think he was up for the job. He was a simple shepherd boy but his purpose was beyond what he was doing at the time.

Yet there was a significant time lag between David being anointed as King and David becoming King, even though the moment he was anointed, the Bible tells us

¹ 1 Sam 16:1-13

that “from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power”². There was a king inside the kid and God knew it. Perhaps it was this sense of purpose that enable David to face Goliath – in a sense doing the job of the king – long before he actually took the throne.

Your business may be at a very young stage. You may just be a sole trader, but you need to understand that there is still a purpose for your business – there is still the call, the reason for your anointing. David was anointed to be something. You are anointed to be something – a king. It may be that the king is inside the kid, and it might be a while off becoming a reality – but it doesn’t change what God has for you.

There must have been immense times of frustration for David, knowing his purpose – yet being far from it. It is important in these times of frustration that we keep on going and keep on doing the right thing. It is easy to rush God’s timing – but don’t force the issue.

In session 1 we started to use the term “kings” to identify what we do as well as to show it as a separate calling to that of the priest. Given that this session is about purpose – what was the role of the king? What was his purpose?

2 Chronicles 9:8 (New International Version)

Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the LORD your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness."

Notice several things about this verse:

- God “delighted in you” – that’s the reason He chose you. Not your education, or skills – just simply that He delights in you.
- God “placed you on His throne as King to rule for the Lord your God” – this is your calling – to rule and do business for the Lord your God.
- “Because of the love of your God for Israel and His desire to uphold them forever”. That’s your purpose. You rule as a king because God loves His people and He desires to uphold them forever.

² 1 Sam 16:13

- “He has made you king over them”, this identifies our calling again.
- “to maintain justice and righteousness” – again this identifies our purpose.

Business exist to make a profit. This is the standard definition of a business in today’s world. But with God there is so much more than that. To quote Spider-man’s uncle Ben – “With great power comes great responsibility” and the role of Kings is not just to get and maintain wealth – but to actually uphold people, and maintain justice and righteousness.

The Bible tells us that Kings should also stop violence and plundering³.

Our business should be much more than just money machines. Yes we should look for a profit – but we should look to maintain justice and righteousness in our city, our nation and our world. It means that we should be involved and using our gifting to make a difference, and not just finance things.

As business people we come into contact with the needy every day. These needy people may come in guise of being poor or being rich – but we are reaching a people that very few people get to reach – and for these we should also look to lift oppression and bring in righteousness. This is the revelation that came to Zacchaeus after his encounter with Jesus⁴.

OUR AUTHORITY

It is interesting that Jesus has a parable for us business folks, and it immediately follows the conversion of Zacchaeus⁵. Each entrepreneur was given a number of minas (the equivalent to 3 months wages). Creativity was called upon and two out of the three did what they were told to do, namely “do business till I come back”⁶ The other guy didn’t do what he was told. Instead, he acted in fear and it got him in all kinds of bother.

³ Ezekial 45:9

⁴ Luke 19:1-9

⁵ Luke 19:11-27

⁶ Luke 19:13b

Yet notice what happens to the two guys that were successful in their business endeavours: *have authority over ten cities*⁷. They were given authority over a city. That's what we gain when we are faithful to the call of doing business. We start to gain authority in our city. The financial gain we get is not just to make life easier for us, but for us to actually grow in authority, and as we grow to begin lifting oppression and executing righteousness.

Someone once said that business people are the new apostles. It is business people, politicians and teachers that grow in power and authority.

"Jesus has put something in your hand: an amount of money perhaps, or an idea, or a strategy for marketing success. As He blesses this, and the one turns into ten, remember that the authority you gain is for the Kingdom. He wants you to impact cities. I originally challenged you to see your marketplace position as your ministry; but Jesus moves it several notches higher. His goal for you is *authority in the city*...the time has come for the kings of the Lord to take their God-given role and change our world."⁸

The Biblical purpose for our business may be way beyond what we originally thought or dreamed of. It is to make money, but also change the world through righteousness and justice. Given that we interact with people who don't know Jesus more regularly than most – we could be the ones bringing in the harvest changing our city and our nation.

And to do that takes influence.

Read Chapters 4,5 & 6 from the God@Work Book by Rich Marshall.

So we have looked at general Biblical principles that outline what we should be doing with our businesses. With those thoughts in mind, it is time to pin down what our practical purpose should also be by looking at specific ideas.

⁷ Luke 19:16

⁸ God@Work, Rich Marshall – page 51

PURPOSE & VALUES

The other thing to hold in mind as we do this exercise is our Value Statement that we created in session one. It goes without saying that our purpose and our values should complement one another. For example, if one of values is to value people – then this is congruent with the Biblical principles that we listed above and that you should have read about in God@Work. Therefore – if the purpose of our business is to sell cigarettes to as many people as we can – then we can quickly see that our purpose, our values and the general Biblical purposes don't fall in line with each other. We should therefore change our business idea.

This example, though, is extreme and easy to make a judgement call. But what about something that isn't as simple, like selling insurance. This could be done in a righteous way or unrighteous way. Maybe, just maybe though – the world is crying out for an insurance sales man that operates with the values of integrity and honesty, who know that the purpose is to lift oppression – and using that idea, make the purpose of their business such that the people buying the insurance buy what they need at the price they need – freeing them up from the dishonesty of others. What a change to put people before profits, and get them the best deal you can.

BE THE BEST IN THE WORLD

But what about your business? In his book *From Good to Great*, author Jim Collins introduces this idea of the Hedgehog Concept⁹ Without going into too much detail – he discovered that one of the things that great companies do in their transition from just being a good company is to find that one thing that they could be the best in the world at – and then focus their energy on that thing.

What could you do in your business that you could be the best in the world at? Or, perhaps, the best in your city or neighbourhood at? When you look at your customer base, what could you do better than all the others around you?

Other terminology that you may have heard used to explain a similar concept is *USP (unique selling point / proposition)*. When talking to your customers, what

⁹ <http://www.goodtogreat.com/lab/hedgehog/index.html>

one thing do you have that is unique from your competitors? What sets you apart?

For example, a painter and decorator might decide that he can be the best in his city at turning up on time and finishing on time and seeing the job through to the end. Does this meet with Biblical principles? Sure it does. It is the simple and honest thing to do, and by doing it – the decorator may well find himself subject to many conversations about God when his clients ask him why he is so different.

Some other pointers to help you answer this question – what *can I be the best in the [world] at?*

- Think of key frustrations that you customers may have, you might find a good answer here. James Dyson made a world-wide business out of creating a vacuum cleaner that didn't require a bag and never lost suction – the main complaint of people using vacuum cleaners. Being a customer of painter and decorators – my key frustration was always that they didn't turn up on time, and would disappear half way through a job to start something else. Solving this problem will result in a huge referral stream from satisfied customers. Don't guess what the key frustrations would be – ask people, ask your customers or potential customers. You will be amazed at the information that they will give you.
- Just because you think it is a good idea, doesn't mean others will – just watch an episode of American Inventor or Dragon's Den and you will see what I mean. Make sure you do your research by asking lots of different people their thoughts.
- Look at other markets for ideas. For example, when Ray Kroc started McDonalds, he looked at other industries for ideas to make his food quicker and cheaper. I have used principles that I learned from a TV Ariel company.
- Don't look to be the cheapest as this is very difficult to maintain (unless you know for certain that you can constantly be the cheapest and still make a decent business). Kwik Save started life out as being the cheapest supermarket – and it boomed in the early 60's – now it isn't anywhere to be seen. People don't necessarily want the cheapest if it sacrifices service. Of course, being the most expensive also carries a lot of responsibility.

Your USP should not necessarily be your price as this is difficult to sell and maintain. B&Q don't claim to be the cheapest, but if you do find a product cheaper – they'll give you some money back. This price guarantee is a great slant on being the cheapest and makes business much easier.

- Don't just sell it to your mum. People that we know can often become excited for us about our ideas, and buy into them. The question is though – can you sell it to a complete stranger?
- You should be able to explain what your purpose is, your USP, what you are best in the world at in one or two sentences to people. For example our painter and decorator may have written 4 sides of A4 on how he will turn up on time and do a great job. He may expound on each item and write why it is important to him and his business. There may be a detailed plan on how each point will be achieved. This is great – awesome in fact, and I will recommend that you do that. But, and this is a big but – his customers won't want to read it or care to listen to it. Microsoft have a huge statement about their purpose, but then sum it up with the line: "Your potential, our passion". Great!
- Avoid vague statements that cannot be measured or are meaningless. In Liverpool, every apartment development states "luxury apartments for sale". This is nonsense and everyone knows it. Their statement is vague and unhelpful. Statements like, "I will ensure that we offer the best value for money services to our clients" fall into that category. What does that mean? How can you measure that? "Excellent customer service" is another.
- Try to concentrate on one thing. Too many times, we think that we can be the best at everything we do. This might be a good ambition – but difficult to live up to.
- Your passion should match your purpose. For me, missionaries are hard-core. Their passion matches their purpose and amazing things happen. They make massive changes to their life to complete their purpose. We should be that committed to our own purpose and the only way that we can do that is if we are passionate about it. So ask yourself, what are you passionate about? In fact – you should ask yourself what are you deeply passionate about. When what you are deeply passionate about and what you can be the best in the world at are one in the same thing – magic happens!

- Look at what you already do in your business (if possible) – and simply ask yourself *Why?* Jim Collins recommends that you ask this question at least 5 times in his book *Built to Last*. For example, in my own company – we sell saunas (hot rooms) amongst other items. But why do I do this? Why is this important? Well – of course, it is to make a profit and provide for my family. OK – but I can do that selling anything. So why sauna?

Why sauna? Fundamentally – they are a good product to sell in that they can make people a lot healthier and more relaxed in life. So digging down into this – we discovered that the purpose of our company is can be summed up in two words: *feel well*. That is what a sauna does – it helps you feel well. So, my aim is to make sure that all aspects of my company do the same thing – the way we treat staff, they should “feel well” and not abused. Customers should “feel well” - the whole experience should help this, what is the point in getting a sauna from us if customers feel stressed by every phone call or email we send to them? So when we introduce a new idea or concept to the business, the question should be “Will this make the customer feel well, will it improve their state of wellbeing?”

I can be the best in the world at doing this. Sure, we focus heavily on design as well as making sure that technically the units are engineered to the highest standards that we know. But the purpose of my business is not to make a sauna look beautiful, nor is it to make it work right – it is to help my customer feel well. To feel well of course, the unit needs to be technically brilliant as well as offer beautiful design. So by concentrating my efforts on this statement – I make a company that is distinguishable from all others.

LIFE ENHANCEMENT

And I include me in that statement. I should feel well in running that business. And this is a really important idea – think about yourself and your family when creating your purpose. There is a great book called *The E-myth* by Michael Gerber. The book should definitely be on your reading list – but in brief – his concept is simple: you have a technician (someone who can do the work) who, at some moment in time, has an entrepreneurial seizure- thinking that just because they can do the work they can set up and run a business doing that work.

For example, an accountant who earns £40,000 a year working for a large firm sits there, working his 40 hour week thinking to himself, “this company charges me out at £150 per hour – if I worked for myself, I could earn this money – work less time, take longer holidays and still be better off”. So the technician (the accountant who does accountancy) has an Entrepreneurial seizure – quits his job and sets up his own accounting practice.

A few months later – he realises that he is working longer hours, has more stress and a lot less money that he had before. The sweet life of owning a business doesn’t quite match up. The answer to this problem is to work harder and longer. The net result is that he has less of life than before. And you should be aware of this simple principle governing your business: if your business is a gift from God, then it should enhance your life and not take it from you.

John 10:10

I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly

The very purpose of Jesus coming was to give you abundant life. The Greek here takes this concept further – it means to have life as God has it – the God kind of life. Life eternal. Abundant, spirit-filled life. His life.

Why would God give you a business that destroys your life? Sometimes the best thing that we can do is fire ourselves! That is not to say that you won’t have hard times. As we have discussed, abundant life is not an absence of problems – but it is the presence of joy unspeakable and peace that passes all understanding in what you do.

This also is not an excuse for laziness and not working hard. If you have a job, you can switch off at 5 – but when you own a business, the chances are you’ll end up working at least 50 hours a week – especially if it is your passion.

I’ll say it again – the purpose of your business should be to enhance your life – not take it from you. It should be a calling and not a regret. A passion and not a dread. You should have a great fulfilment from your work as you walk out the call of God on your life and complete your purpose.

BIBLICAL PURPOSE

A. Summarise 5 Biblical Principles that your business should have:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

B. What reward did Jesus give to the successful businessman in the parable of that talents?

C. How could this apply to you and your business? How do you feel about this?

D. What "talents" has God given you?

BE THE BEST IN THE WORLD

E. What are you deeply passionate about?

F. What could you be the best in the world at?

G. Who are/would be your customers?

H. What key frustrations so they have that you could solve?

L. Now summarise this purpose in 2 sentences:

M. Can you be the best in the “world” at this?

N. Is it focused on one specific thing?

O. Does it contain vague or meaningless language?

P. Will this enhance your life or rob it?

Q. What about that of your family?

R. Does this match up to your Value Statement?

S. Does this match up to the principles that you have discovered in Scripture?