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Gleanings

The Second Greatest Christmas Gift



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Christmas will be a difficult time for many. There will be the usual family challenges, but for some there is even more that stands in the way of a merry Christmas. For example, the world is increasingly at risk for a nuclear event and war with Iran and/or Korea. Islamic terrorism continues to be a global menace. Unemployment lingers at record levels in the US and in many other nations worldwide. Indeed, there is much disruption, both real and potential, that stands in the way of living a quiet and peaceful life.

Economic and political leaders seem perplexed as to how to respond. For those who concern themselves with such realities, their mood may be something short of merry. How can a spirit of gloom be replaced with a truly "merry" Christmas?

May I suggest two gifts that will restore merriness? These, indeed, are the two best gifts of all.

First, there is the gift of knowing Jesus Christ. Clearly, this is the best gift of all. Knowing Christ provides a basis from which to answer all the questions of existence. There is no gold, silver, or any tangible asset that is as valuable and precious as knowing Christ.

And second, a corollary of knowing Christ is that Christ provides the basis for a meaningful life. Christ is intentional and purposeful. He creates and orchestrates events according to His divine plan. A meaningful human existence, therefore, comes from following Christ in alignment with His will and His ways.

This means that to realize your potential in life and enjoy a satisfying meaningful life, you must discover and fulfill the purpose of God for your life.

One way to approach this reality is to consider your personal "value proposition." A value proposition is a summary statement of the contribution that a person or organization makes to this life, along with an appraisal of the value or worth of that contribution.

Your personal value proposition is an expression of the purpose for which you were made. In today's climate of high unemployment and underemployment, many people are reevaluating their value propositions.

One of my affiliates, Joe Kolinger, was inspired to write on this topic. Following are his observations and comments on personal value propositions.

I am hearing a number of people talk about their need for more business or a better job. When I listen more carefully I hear that they are not clear on who they are and what they were made to do—surprise, surprise! There are other issues (i.e., wrong theology), but in this note I will just refer to the lack of personal clarity.

One of the outputs of the Strategic Life Alignment Seminar (SLA) should be the clear capture of a person's value proposition.

Here's the motivator. Those who want to find employment or better employment or acquire more business should pay careful attention to the value proposition they are communicating.

A potential "customer" can detect incongruity between a person's words and inner self. That is, a person can say things that do not line up with who the person really is internally. If there is disconnect between a person's verbal conversation and inner essence, potential customers hear a conflicted and confused sound. Generally, this does not endear the customer to the person, which means that opportunities could be lost.

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Therefore it is essential for a person to be clear about their identity and purpose in life. A healthy growing person has a value proposition that is congruent – clear and authentic. It comes from a clear understanding of a person's relationship with the Creator. When a person is clear on his or her personal value proposition it inspires confidence, which leads to business and/or employment opportunities.

A common impediment to a clear personal value proposition is an incorrect view of ministry. A person who wrongly thinks that ministry and work are incompatible, and thinks that ministry is more important than work, will be a poor worker. He or she is double-minded and therefore unstable (James 1:8). To be a good worker, one must recognize the divine calling to work and realize that work is ministry (Ephesians 2:10).

In a competitive economy your value proposition must be rooted in faith—conviction that you have been called of God to do the work that you do. It must be *your* value proposition—not one that is borrowed or tailored to please someone else.

It's not easy to capture a person's essence and value proposition without some significant investment and revelation from the Lord. Some—no, many—never find it. Personally, I have worked on this quite a bit. It may be a bigger challenge for those like me who have a driven personality and an independent spirit. I tend to grab opportunities not suited to me because I don't keep in mind my personal value proposition.

For me, the value proposition, once captured, is gold—a priceless truth about the intent and purpose of God for my life.

So if you want to find your dream job and/or increase your value to your organization, it is critical that you develop an understanding of your value proposition and how it fits into the value proposition of your organization.

The process is more than just brainstorming good ideas or copying others. You need to know who you really are and what you were created to accomplish. Unless you can get clarity on your identity you will struggle writing the value proposition that fulfills your destiny. Maybe you can drum up more business with a value proposition that “works,” but the bigger issue is developing one that fulfills your life's calling (Ephesians 2:10; Psalms 139.17).

We should excel in these areas and help others to do so, as well.

Thank you, Joe, for your inspiring thoughts.

Personal value propositions are wonderful tools that can be used to discover and fulfill the purpose of God in our lives. Knowing your life purpose is priceless. It is clearly a wonderful way to bless yourself and everyone associated with you.

As Joe said, to develop an understanding of your life purpose will take work. It is like finding hidden treasure (Proverbs 2:1–5). You must be diligent, disciplined, and tenacious. When you discover your personal value proposition, it will be an incredible gift to you and everyone associated with you—family, friends, and coworkers.

What a wonderful Christmas gift to give yourself—clarity on and conviction of your personal value proposition. This is a great gift, second only to knowing Christ.

Also as Joe mentioned, he has been on this journey of discovering the purpose of God for his life for several years. And he has been diligent about seeking the Lord, so don't expect an instant answer. Allow God to reveal your personal value proposition in His time. Your responsibility is to faithfully seek Him. You can do that starting right now. So start the journey of discovery. Based on knowing Christ, seek to find His plan and purpose for your life.

And may you have a truly *Merry* Christmas!

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Information (click on date)

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| More Help Finding Your Purpose in Life | <i>Seminar:</i> Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event | July 2011 |
| Biblical Principles in the Workplace | <i>Seminar:</i> Biblical Principles of Selling | April 2011 |
| | <i>Webinar:</i> Biblical Principles of Selling | June 2011 |
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