

Standing in the Gap

November 5, 2006

A familiar verse came to mind last week that was also the basis for a Promise Keeper's event. Ezekiel 22:30, "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none." It was one of those God-moments for me.

I asked myself, what does it take to stand in the gap? To be used of God? To make a difference instead of just making a living? Now there are, of course, many different things that could be listed: attributes, attitudes, spiritual disciplines, etc. but three things immediately came to mind based on the word GAP.

Goals

As a leader who wants to make a difference, you need to have a destination, a direction, something you are shooting for. You can call it a dream, a vision, plans, objectives, purpose, mission, or any number of other synonyms. There has to be something out there motivating you, driving you, getting you up and at it in the morning. People respond to that and will want to join you on your journey. Everybody will wind up somewhere in life. I am talking about winding up somewhere on purpose.

A wealthy businessman from Texas was once asked what it takes to be a success he said, "It takes three things. Deciding exactly what it is you want to achieve. Asking yourself what it will cost to do it. Paying the price." Goals answer the question; what "exactly" is it I want to accomplish in this life? Write it down, focus on it, prioritize time and energies to work incessantly at it.

I have specific things in writing and review them regularly. They are things I want to see the Lord do in and through me. They relate to my family and my purpose of "leaving footprints in the hearts of God-hungry leaders who reproduce." These goals give me a sense of direction, simplify making decisions, motivate, give me persistence, and create enthusiasm in my life.

Sometimes when I ask a person how it's going, I hear, "Oh, nothing new, you know, same old, same old." What a drag, I'm thinking to myself. I want my life filled with adventure, excitement, waiting to see what God is going to do next. It says in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." This speaks of His changeless character. For me, being the same spells boring and dull. Having specific goals changes all that.

Accountability

If the goal(s) are going to become a reality, realize that you can't do it by yourself. You'll want to make yourself accountable to a few others for support. You need input, encouragement and a kick in the rear when it's called for. Share your goals with a few good friends who will hold your feet to the fire and ask you the tough questions to keep you focused and out of sin. David had Jonathan, Timothy had Paul, Paul had Barnabas. Who do you have?

The Christian life is a "team sport." No Lone Rangers here! I understand that I have my blind spots, my inherent weaknesses, my pockets of propensity toward sin. I need other people. I am part of a body, not the whole body. I thank God for Gary, David, Darrell, Phil and most especially my wife, Susan. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you! And the head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you." I Corinthians 12:21.

Prayer

You have some specific goals. You are accountable to a few others and here we are talking about keeping in constant contact with the Lord through prayer. The time you spend in prayer is the indicator that you are depending on God and tapping into His power, grace and promises.

I love Matthew 19:26 in *The Message*, "No chance at all if you think you can pull it off yourself. Every chance in the world if you trust God to do it."

If your goals are birthed out of your relationship with the Lord, then He needs to be a regular part of the ongoing process of pursuing them. The more time I spend with the Lord discussing "these goals of ours," the greater the chance that they will actually come to fruition.

I take a three to four hour block of time monthly (sometimes longer) just to pray, especially focusing on what it is I am trusting him for in the future. I bathe in prayer every future plan, idea, event, opportunity of which I am a part. "

So there you have it. Do you truly want to stand in the gap for God and make a difference? Get some specific, realistic, life-motivating, God-pleasing, God-birthed

GOALS

1. Make yourself **ACCOUNTABLE** to a few others to keep you focused
2. Stay dependent on the Author and Energizer of those goals through **PRAYER**