



Outside of any church building here in Colorado Springs, there is only one man-made structure which, when I enter, always seems to transport me to another place. Another dimension of existence. The spiritual dimension.

It's a place called the World Prayer Center, one of the buildings on the campus of the large church I attend. Inside, there's a quaint coffee shop, a gorgeous lobby area, and what they call the chapel. It is to the chapel that so many come, day and night, to meet with their Creator. At the front of this room is a massive painted globe spinning continually on its axis to remind all who enter to pray for the needs around the world. A grand piano adorns the front, where the sun's rays or the moonlight often glisten from its black surface through the windows that form a semicircle behind it. Through these windows, spanning the front half of the room, is a breathtaking view of the Front Range.

I love to sit here in God's presence contemplating life, praying, or participating in the incredible worship that goes on here. I sit here now listening to a few people roughly my age sing a song called "Everlasting God." It's a good reminder that I can get so caught up in the everyday happenings of life. Worries can build up, business can crowd out the important things, and priorities can be rearranged in a not-so-healthy fashion. Because of this, I need to remember that God is the Everlasting One. *Everything* and *everyone* around me might change, but God remains the same.

So I keep God's never-changing, infinite nature in mind as I enter this new year and consider my resolutions. What do I resolve and what does it mean "to resolve"? It means determination. Tenacity. To be firm in heart and mind. To follow through on a decision. To *finish* with the same zeal what you have begun. Literally, according to the Encarta Dictionary, it is "firmness of purpose."

However, I'm afraid I'm overwhelmed with the thought of narrowing my "determinations," as I may call them, to a few behaviorally-related things—the normal things...like "exercise more," for instance. Those particular resolutions get so cliché, don't they? "Eat better." Then, among Christians we always hear "read my Bible more, spend more time in prayer, etc." Not to say these are bad resolutions in any way. In fact, they are marvelous! But how often do we consistently improve after making resolutions? Sometimes I think they ought to be called "irresolutions" instead.

I'll be the first to admit that past mid-February, I'm usually back where I began the previous year. This, of course, breeds feelings of guilt and utter disappointment in myself, especially since I possess a bit of a perfectionistic streak.

So I must ask myself, however can I remedy this dilemma? First of all, I have to realize that I truly can do nothing in my own strength. It is only God who can give me the motivation and the ability to follow through on a decision in the first place. In this way, God is the only one who can receive glory for anything He accomplishes through me, His vessel. My ultimate motivation and my ultimate goal should be pointing to the majestic glory of God.

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So this year I want to be different than in years past. I want to determine—to resolve—not just future behaviors, but I want to focus on the heart of who I am and who I'm meant to be and, in this way, dig deeper

to the root of all of my actions. After all, God loves me first and foremost for who I am—his creation and a daughter of His—not what I do. This is why the decision to compose my own life mission statement could be one of the most significant decisions I've ever made and will ever make in the future.

It takes me back to the song about our Everlasting God. I sit in the World Prayer Center yet again. It's a new day from when I first began this article; yet, "Everlasting God" is still on the list for the worship team to play today. The music floats to my ears from two strumming guitars and a girl playing the piano beautifully. Again, I'm reminded of how ever-changing our world is.

In such an unsteady environment, the only choice we have when seeking true peace and joy is placing all trust in the Eternal. The everlasting. A mission statement giving you direction and purpose for your life does just that. It lives on. Though the paper you write it on will fade away, that mission will live on in who you are on the inside to the outside, from your thoughts to your actions, and you'll receive heavenly rewards.

To write one of these, there are several steps to consider. But the process of writing your own life mission statement is rewarding, because if you resolve to put the final product in a place where you will see it every morning, you'll memorize it soon enough. Its words will penetrate your heart and mind, and each day you will be filled with that sense of purpose. Bad days are still sure to come, but with a physical reminder of your God-given significance on this earth, it will be easier to fend off thoughts or temptations of the Enemy.

It was at a fabulous Christian college in Kentucky where I first learned of this idea, so please don't think this idea is mine. I was an SLA, a Spiritual Life Assistant, for my hall so I received a packet of papers about personal life mission statements. The papers were authored by Laurie Beth Jones from her national bestseller, *The Path*, and I was encouraged to write a mission statement myself; as well as, encourage the girls on my hall to do the same. I remember always having the good *intention* to meet with my resident assistant and get the girls together to do this, but it seemed like such a daunting task to me at the time. So much schoolwork to do, so many exams, so many campus activities—prayer meetings and chapels and SLA meetings, etc.—that how would I ever have time to write some sort of eloquent statement encompassing the overarching purpose for my *entire life*?!

Six years later, I look back and regret not taking the time then and not making it sound more important to the girls on my hall. I feel so strongly about the need to have one of these—not just in one’s own mind—that I’d say the same is true of what is said so often about prayer: We say, “I can’t afford the time to pray.” But God’s answer is, “You can’t afford *not* to.” So, I will launch into the steps for creating your own personal life mission statement, and I’ll include part of my own statement to give you one example of a way in which you can write it. First, however, I’ll expand on what this project entails a bit more, the reasons behind it, etc.:

1. WHY?

- It’s a chance to take time out and think deeply about what’s most important to you.¹
- It gives clarity of purpose—a written reason for being.
- It imprints your values on your heart.
- It’s the beginning of personal avenues to leadership.
- It’s a foundation to build dreams and goals because it helps to uncover talents, interests, and deep desires.
- It acts as both a harness and a sword—harnessing you to what is true about your life, and cutting away all that is false.

2. A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT IS *NOT*:

- A job description²
- Something you should treat like math busywork due in 30 minutes for algebra class just because you want to get it done, and then it’s done. To be seen no more. No. This is something requiring serious introspection, careful analysis of your attitudes and the principles that drive you.
- Written to impress those surrounding you. It must inspire YOU at your very core.

3. PLEASE *DON’T THINK*:

- “I must not be living my mission right now.” You may already be right where God wants you. This project will show that to you clearly, and it will be that much more rewarding.
- Your mission has to be “Grand and Large.” Your mission is the burden God has placed on your heart that won’t go away. It’s not measured by grandness, but a deep sense of calling.³



TACKLING THE PROJECT:

1. Create a personal map by prioritizing every aspect of your life. This includes family, career, finances, spiritual life, local church, community, health, and activities. Identify the roles you play in each of these areas, the tasks/responsibilities you have, and your core values relating to that area. My example:

Career:

Role(s)--faithful worker

Tasks/Responsibilities—data entry tasks at Compassion International, finance department
Core Values—diligence, placing significance on what I do and realizing the impact of Compassion’s ministry across the world

2. Discover what *MOVES* you by asking yourself these questions:
- Is there any need or problem you believe in so strongly that you'd love to work at it full-time even if you were not paid for it?
 - How would you use a gift of a million dollars if it had to be given away for a cause, issue, need, or problem that moves you?
 - What dream or vision has God given you that you have not pursued?
 - What things hinder you from pursuing or believing that those dreams/visions could become reality? Can you find Scripture references as rebuttals to these things?

3. Reflect on your gifts and talents. First, list 15 talents you possess. Then, put a check mark by the ones you feel you're using most right now. Circle next the talents you believe to be your greatest strengths and, finally, put an X by the talents you would like to develop and use more often.⁴

4. Identify your *PASSION* by asking yourself these questions:

- If you could teach three things to others that excite you, what would they be?
- What would you do on a volunteer basis?
- If money, time, energy, or commitments were no object to your dream(s) being fulfilled, what would you be doing? In your career? With your family? In church? With finances? In activities? Your health? Your spiritual development? Your community?
- Are you doing anything now that resembles your dream?

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5. Envision your *LEGACY*. Imagine yourself observing your own funeral or memorial service, and write down what you'd like to see and hear people saying about your life. Make it as long or short as you want. Here's an excerpt from mine:

I want my funeral to be less of a time of mourning and more of a time of celebration. I want there to be a worship service, in fact, and I want friends and family to wear vibrant colors to remind everyone of the new life I now share with Christ in His presence...If no other word comes to mind when thinking of me, I pray that "worshipper" would be the one people remembered. And, in that, I pray all other areas of my life would be known as having been under God's full authority. I pray that people will think of endurance in running the race...

6. Do a rough draft and a final draft to encompass all of the previous steps into the following type of statement:

My Mission is to _____, _____ & _____ (action verbs), and _____ (your core values) _____ (the cause that most excites you).⁵

(Note: for ideas for your core values visit: <http://www.epictrek.com/CoreValueWords.pdf>)

Mine reads:

I exist to/My mission is to instill hope, build dreams and purpose into the hearts and minds of youth, identifying their individual strengths and empowering them to use those for the glory of God to reach their full potential. Also, to inspire them through my walk with the Lord, that my charisma would be overflowing and my integrity and character as a leader contagious. In addition, to write for God's kingdom, to provide insight into youth ministry

and the current needs of this generation...To change my world, one heart, one life at a time, fulfilling this mission through PRAYER [side note: I really capitalized this for myself when I first penned it because sometimes I forget how massively important and life-altering prayer really is], discipleship, reading the Word, and depending on the "Only Rock and Redeemer, the One who is able to keep me from falling."

So, my friends, keep in mind that these are things I *want* to be, and I'm just a work in progress (though sometimes I feel like a "work in stagnation," ya know?). In no way am I claiming I've "arrived" in any of these areas. God needs to work to empower me to be that girl. So, however long or short yours is when finished, perhaps you want to do what I'm planning now. I have a shadow box from Target—one of those inch deep frames to put 3-D stuff in—in which I'm going to put a typed version of my mission statement, my favorite quote, maybe a poem, and some small objects that remind me of milestones where God's worked miraculously in my life. Then I'm gonna set it by my bed where I'll see it every morning and be reminded of my calling.

Be creative. Write with dry erase markers on your bathroom mirror, stick Bible verses up there as well, or maybe hang a frame on a wall or somehow stick it in your car. You decide. It's yours. It's who you are. And it's going to last a lifetime following you to the very gates of Heaven. And, lest we think this project is all about *us* and our needs and wants, let's keep in mind that if we focus on finding who God is, He will never fail to show us who we are.



Psalm 37:4-6 – "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

¹ The Path, Laurie Beth Jones, 1996 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 23-24

² The Path, Laurie Beth Jones, 1996 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 9

³ The Path, Laurie Beth Jones, 1996 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 12-14

⁴ The Path, Laurie Beth Jones, 1996 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 44-47

⁵ The Path, Laurie Beth Jones, 1996 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 63



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