Have you ever been really busy but sensed you weren't making any headway in life? How is that possible?

It is possible for churches to invest many hours of volunteer labour, spend large amounts of money and run many programs, yet not make any significant impact in advancing the Kingdom of God. How is this possible?

Kingdom impact usually occurs when we INTENTIONALLY and STRATEGICALLY choose to make a specific difference in an area of kingdom life.

What do we mean by the following words?

Intentional:
Being intentional means that we are consciously and purposefully planning to have impact in a specific way in God's kingdom.

Strategic:
Being strategic means we have carefully thought through “how” we are going to create that impact. It means we have considered the steps needed to move forward effectively and have anticipated the obstacles preventing us from accomplishing our goal.

What are some general, life goals you’ve strategized for in the past year?
Purchases, Vacation, Work, Exercise, etc.

Why are we motivated to strategize for these things but less so for the kingdom?

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (NIV)
10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

What are some implications of the above passage?
We are all busy, we all have too much to do and we all have things not getting done. Why should we add strategic kingdom planning to our lives?

- Serving God’s kingdom is why we are here. It’s our life purpose. All else we do are “things” we add to our lives to support us “as” we do kingdom work – jobs, eating, sleeping. Unfortunately, we add so many other non-essentials to our lives that our one true mission often gets crowded out.
- We want to partner with God in making an eternal difference.
- We want to joyfully show Christ the work of our hands when we stand before him.
- God will hold us accountable for how we used our time and resources for his glory and purposes.

What are some non-essential things we add to our lives that crowd out the mission God has for us?

As you reflect on your past week, how much have you intentionally and strategically advanced the work of the kingdom?

Are you presently serving in such a way that the Kingdom of God is experiencing the best you have to offer? (Keep in mind that at different stages of life we have different capacities of time and energy)

**Strategizing Kingdom Impact:**

Read the passages below and consider what is needed in order to have impact in the kingdom.

**Nehemiah 2:1-4 (NIV)**

1. In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" 4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

1. Know what you want to accomplish
What either grieves you or excites you, with regard to the kingdom of God that it compels you to want to do something about it?
Some may say nothing excites or burdens them. If this is the case, they are not seeing the world through God’s eyes. So many people are hurting, lost, focussed in wrong directions and under judgment. We have a hope they desperately need to hear and experience. One will not resonate with this burden if they have become self-focussed and have placed protective walls around their lives, or if they have not spent time asking God share his heart passion with them.

Some may say they have too many areas of interest. This is similar to a business trying to diversify their product too much and eventually sell nothing effectively. These people need to consider how they truly want to impact the kingdom and make significant impact in at least one area. Or, their goal may be simply to be a support to many ministries.

What is so significant about the king’s question to Nehemiah in 2:4?
The king’s question was an intensely practical one. Nehemiah shared his concern and now he needed to consider what he would do about it. We can easily complain about how things are not the way we want them to be but are we really willing to make a difference?

The king’s question demanded a specific response from Nehemiah. Whatever response Nehemiah gave the king, it needed to involve a clear and concise answer and plan of action.

Are you able to clearly state what you want to do about a kingdom burden you have?

Nehemiah 2:4-5 (NIV)
4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

2. Pray

What do you think Nehemiah prayed for?

Nehemiah prayed before every step of the way.

Nehemiah 4:7-9 (NIV)
7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.
Look closely at 4:9. How does prayer and strategic planning work together?
Prayer is the precursor to strategic planning. When we come to God in prayer, it does not abdicate our responsibility as rulers to act, it aligns us with God and his purposes so that we are open to receiving his wisdom in HOW to act.

**Luke 6:12-13 (NIV)**
12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.
13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

Why did Jesus need to pray before choosing the twelve?

**Acts 13:2-3 (NIV)**
2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Prayer is always the starting point for determining God's purposes and how to accomplish them.

**Nehemiah 2:7-8 (NIV)**
7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.

**Nehemiah 2:11-16 (NIV)**
11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days 12 I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.
13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; 15 so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. 16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.
3. Create a plan that considers all the potential obstacles

Why do you think Nehemiah went out during the night to inspect the broken down walls and gates and why did he keep his intentions secret?
The task of rebuilding the walls and gates of Jerusalem was massive. It would have been quickly scoffed and rejected by the people of Jerusalem and have created opposition before it even began. By quietly inspecting the walls, Nehemiah was able to form a practical plan of action to go along with his vision that would make the job appear doable to the people.

Have you ever shared an idea with someone only to have it shot down because you weren’t able to clearly communicate how you could accomplish the task? Share your experience.

What are some examples of creative ideas that you had that have come and gone simply because there was no plan to make it happen?

Acts 16:6-10 (NIV)

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

What can we learn from Paul’s experience about our “plans”?
Our plans are always subject to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Paul prayerfully considered where he should go to preach the gospel but there were times God had a different plan. The good news is that if God has a different plan, he will let you know as long as you are willing to listen.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (NIV)

23 I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.
What can we learn from Paul about fulfilling God’s mission for your life?

4. **Persevere**

The task God calls you to will not necessarily be easy. Quite the contrary, it will challenge your faith and your commitment to the end result. The mission, for Paul, was so important he was willing to surrender his comforts, his schedule, his money and even his life to ensure Gentiles could hear about Jesus Christ.

How important is the ministry that you are presently doing? Is it worth giving everything for? Is it part of a greater picture?

Have you ever had people discourage you from spending time serving in the kingdom? How did you handle that?

What might it cost you to accomplish your ministry goal? Is it a price you are willing to pay?

**Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)**

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

5. **Give it your ALL**

Does ministry sometimes become a mundane thing that you end up giving a half-hearted effort? Why is that? It is easy to lose sight of why we do what we do.

The first week of setting up chairs for a new church can seem like an exciting thing to do as you envision people coming and filling those chairs. Several years later it can feel like a menial task that you are doing simply because “somebody” has to do it and no one else volunteered.
How can we keep from developing this type of mindset?

- We have to view the task as an essential part of accomplishing the overall goal. Seeing the task as God sees the task will help clarify for us the value of how we are serving.

- Whatever we do, we have the opportunity of doing it personally for Jesus. No task, when done with that mindset, is menial or insignificant. It is for our Lord and Saviour who is on a great mission to rescue people into his kingdom. Whatever role we play, if it is for him, it is significant and brings with it great reward.

Does lack of affirmation or praise from others sometimes cause you to question why you should continue in your ministry?

If you were to carry out your present ministry fully for God’s glory, how might that change your approach?

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NIV)
6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Acts 13:36 (NIV)
For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.

John 19:30 (NIV)
When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What cause are you fighting for? What mission are you on?

At what point will you be able to say you completed the task?

It will be an exciting time to stand before Jesus and declare that we have built into his kingdom with all our heart and strength.