

DO IT FOR A DAY

DAY 26 – PLAY THE LONG GAME

To the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

2 Peter 3:8

On December 31, 1759, Arthur Guinness opened a brewery in Dublin, Ireland. He found a four-acre (1.7 ha) property at St. James Gate, the western entrance to the country. That was the site of the annual fair, where the ale variety was the best seller. But there was another factor that Guinness took into account. He knew that urban planners intended to build the Grand Canal adjacent to St. James Gate, which would provide his brewery with an integrated waterway.

Guinness had an eye for opportunity (and must have had a knack for negotiation, too). **Somehow he managed to secure himself a lease for nine thousand years!** You read well. That must have been a new Guinness World Record.

Let me ask you an obvious question: who signs a contract for nine thousand years? **The simple answer is someone who plays for the long haul.** When it comes to making decisions, he employed this policy: **“consider the long term and act quickly”.**

That two-sided coin is a good rule of thumb, talking about setting the clock. **We need to keep an eye on long-range goals.** But we also need to act quickly, **act decisively.** When creating or breaking habits, you have to take advantage of the right moment. **Motivation is a form of energy. As such, it tends to dissipate over time.** That's why your life needs to have goals that take a lifetime to achieve, because they force you to adjust the clock by thinking about the distance.

How do you play long term?

If you want to dream big, you have to start small, little by little. That was the challenge of the 18th. The challenge we have today, the 26th, is to think long term. The greater the dream, the more it will cost to achieve it. So shall. **Like I always say, go big or go home.** (Go Big or Go Home).

One of the best examples of long-term thinking is the mysterious oak forest on the Swedish island of Visingsö. Its origin was unknown for many decades. In 1980, the army The Swedish company received a letter from the forestry department reporting that the wood for its boats was ready. The navy was unaware that they had asked for any timber, because the order had been issued in 1829. That was the year the Swedish Parliament voted to plant twenty thousand trees in Visingsö and protect them for the navy.³

For the record, the only objector was the Bishop of Strängnäs. He did not doubt that by the end of the 20th century there would be wars, but he believed that ships should be built with other materials. What is the moral of the story? **That we need to think long term, but we also need to think differently.**

Let me do a little reminder at this point: time is a human construct. *"To the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"* said the apostle Peter. That doesn't make sense within the four dimensions of time and space, but **God does not exist within the space-time dimensions that He created.** With Him there is no past, present or future. God is here, there and everywhere at the same time. It is the Most High God, the Ancient of days, the Eternal now.

Creation was God's way of setting the clock, the chronos. **Eternity is kairos time.** We think of heaven as the future tense destination, but heaven is invading earth here and now. Eternity is invading time, every second of every minute of every hour of every day.

We count forward, but God counts backward. We live our lives forward, but God works backwards.

Teleology is a fancy word for philosophy. It's the second habit of highly effective people: start with the end in mind. **So is God. That's how He does it.** For us, the arrow of time moves in only one direction, past, present, future. Then Jesus appeared and said: **"Truly, truly, I say to you: 'Before Abraham was, I am'"**. (John 8:58) Wait... what? He sets the clock in a very different way than we do. Simply put, God is racing against time.

There are times in Scripture when God adjusts the clock in a unique way. He made the sun and the moon stand still over the valley of Ashkelon. He turned back time for King Hezekiah (*the shadow of the sundial moved back ten degrees*).⁸

Guess what: Prayer is writing the story before it happens.

It is a way to adjust the clock.

My favorite example is a little less mysterious, but no less miraculous. Before the Israelites began to circle around Jericho, God said: *"I have given you Jericho, with its king and its soldiers.."* (Joshua 6:2)

The tense doesn't make sense because it hadn't happened yet, correct? It should be in the future tense, but the verb God used reveals a sacred sequence.

Playing for the long haul is all about obedience in the same direction; with doing things that will make a difference long after we're gone. And they don't have to be big things. Again, it's starting small and thinking long term.

In 1964, Dick Foth was a studentgraduate from Wheaton University who was working on his thesis. He now laughs because the title was too long: "An exploratory investigation of the transition from missionary to national in the administration of the Bible institutes of Latin America." Needless to say, there aren't many books on the subject. His professor and thesis advisor, Lois LeBar, asked him if he and his wife Ruth would attend the InterVarsity Urban Conference as part of their primary research. Dick

told him no, he couldn't afford it. Lois LeBar excused herself, went into another room, and returned with five twenty-dollar bills.

more than half a century later, Dick gets excited thinking about that moment: *“That offering completely changed the course of my life”*. It totally changed mine too, and I'll tell you about it in a moment. Thanks to that one hundred dollars, Dick and Ruth were able to attend Urbana. Eighteen months later, they would return to Urbana, Illinois, to plant a church.”

Let me connect the dots: A-B-C-D.

If Lois LeBar hadn't given them that offering, they wouldn't have planted Urban Assemblies of God Church. If they hadn't started that church, I wouldn't have met my father-in-law and fellow church planter, Bob Schmigdall. If I hadn't met my father-in-law, I would never have met Dick Foth.**What do I want to get to?** Lois LeBar changed my life by changing Dick's. I am a secondary beneficiary of your generosity. Not only were Dick and Ruth Foth part of our original team of nineteen, but he has also been a friend, mentor, and spiritual father to me for over twenty years.”

You never know how a hundred dollar offering can change the course of history. But there is one thing I am very sure of: your legacy is not what you achieve.

Your legacy is what others achieve because of you.

My theme verse is Ephesians 2:10, *“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God ordained beforehand for us to put into practice.”*.10
Do you have it?

The good works that you are destined to perform are already prepared. God is organizing you! God is counting down! That's where holy trust comes from. That redefines what it means to imagine the payoff.”

Excerpt From

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