



# Point of View

I have a friend - who is a graduate of **The Master's Program** - whose eldest son is about to turn 13. Our Christian culture lacks the Bar Mitzvah experience that our Jewish friends lavish as a right-of-passage on their sons, but Chris isn't letting that hold him back...

He's taking his son Chad away for a unique father-son weekend, welcoming him to the next season of his emerging life. Listen to Chris' e-mail, sent to me and some other friends: "During the weekend, I'd like Chad to read letters from some successful friends of mine sharing some lessons they learned about the teen years. That's where you come in... Will you please write Chad a brief letter? I'm sure he'll gain wisdom from you that will help him become a godly young man..."

Graduations - from the seasons of life - bring seasoned wisdom before the transitioning youth. That's happening for Chad during a weekend; it happens for graduate groups at Commencements. Those ceremonies often bring accomplished performers to the stage to give the insights that were probably "missed" in the classroom monologs that brought the grads to their finish line.

Steve Jobs was the featured speaker at Stanford University in 2005. Listen to an excerpt from that candid time with the men and women who stood poised on the threshold of life: "For the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself, 'If



*today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And whenever the answer has been, 'No' for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something... almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose."*

My old friend Chuck Swindoll says that "a rut is just a grave with the ends kicked out." Today's pioneer path - traveled without change, for long enough - will become a rut, and once it's a rut, it requires little thought or creativity to head down it another day. Routines are efficient and valuable for establishing healthy behavior, but... what happens when a healthy routine becomes a vitality-stealing rut?

Steve Jobs says that his mirror moment each morning is more than a vanity stop; it's

an important moment for an inquisition: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" For the person who has invited God into his self-talk, that question has more than lifelong implications; in fact, the answer to that question comes from the horizon of Eternity.

According to Jesus, this kind of life examination is profoundly important. Here is his counsel: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."* (Matthew 16:24-27)

What does it mean to "take up (your) cross and follow Him?" The metaphor is important. For Jesus, the cross represented his life mission, his calling. For Steve Jobs, his sense of mission involves putting elegant technology in the hands of the discriminating consumer. For me, my sense of mission involves putting under-exploited Christian leaders on track to find and fulfill their Kingdom calling.

It's Monday morning, and it's the beginning of the New Year (post-Labor Day). I'm getting ready to conduct an all-day session of The Master's Program. If this was the last day for Bob-o down here, I'd go out swinging for the center field fence. No "one of these days" platitudes for me. I answered my mirror question with a "yes" today. I'm "losing" my life, so I can find it.

Are you asking the question, of yourself?  
Are you content with your answer? If not, *what do you plan to do about it?*

Bob Shank

*Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP). To learn more about TMP visit:*

[www.mastersprogram.org](http://www.mastersprogram.org)