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Reference Point

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Intentional Living

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise.” Ephesians 5:15

I would guess that each of us has been involved at some point in the process of creating or revising mission, vision, or core value statements for our library. It takes a lot of thought, reflection, word-smith creativity, and negotiation to boil down important core values to a few strategic statements. A number of years ago, when the librarians at my institution had gone through this process, I pondered the idea of making core values for my own life. I came up with five core values based on who I am and the truths of the Word that relate to what I value.

Purposeful Living: Ephesians. 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” My desire is to look for the “diamonds” in my path each day, works that God has crafted specifically for me to do that day. It may be taking the time to talk to a student assistant who is going through a difficult time at home, or sending an email to encourage a friend who has just lost her job. I want to have eyes open to see the good works He has prepared just for me.

Joyful Simplicity and Contentment: 1 Timothy 6:8 “But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.” I want to continually cultivate an attitude of thankfulness for all God has given me and done for me. I choose to say no to the empty lure of material things beckoning to me from every corner of my life; to say no to the craving for praise, attention, status, and recognition; to say no to just one more pair of shoes that I don’t need.

Intentional Love: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” I choose to daily ask myself if I am

expressing love to those I am interacting with. I choose to be intentional about being patient in the check-out line or with the patron who has complaints; to be kind and not self-seeking when I am heading out the door, and someone has one last question; to not be easily angered or keep a record of wrongs.

Wise Choices: 1 Corinthians 3:10-13 “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. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.” I have the responsibility to choose what kind of material I build with every time I make a decision: will it be gold, silver, or costly stones; or will it be wood, hay, or straw? Will I choose to be honest, sacrificial and diligent? As a well-known artist from my era, Gloria Estefan, said so well in one of her songs, “we seal our fate with the choices we make.” I want to make every decision count, even the small ones that may end up having far-reaching consequences.

And finally, **Reflective Rest:** Mark 6:31 “Come with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place and get some rest.” As an introvert I value time alone and with God. Taking a walk in nature, or sitting on my back porch watching the birds, squirrels, and chipmunks in my garden, I can disengage from my busy schedule and responsibilities and focus on my inner self and life with God. And when I do, I find that my soul is restored. When I find myself getting irritated or frustrated more easily, it is often because I have not had the reflective rest that my Shepherd knows I need.

So take the challenge, and set aside a quiet time to reflect on what you value in life. Don’t let life happen to you, live intentionally!

--Linda Poston

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