

WEEKLY LEADERSHIP DEVOTIONAL

July 12, 2026 – July 18, 2026

The Why Behind Your Work

How a God-Rooted Purpose Transforms Every Task, Every Role, and Every Season of Leadership

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

Colossians 3:23–24 (NIV)

When you know why you work, no amount of opposition, obscurity, or ingratitude can stop you. The leader whose why is rooted in God’s purpose does not need applause to keep going, they have an audience of One who sees everything and forgets nothing.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a question that separates leaders who endure from leaders who merely perform: Why do you do what you do? Not the polished, public-facing answer that sounds good in a mission statement or an interview, but the deep, unvarnished, soul-level answer that drives you out of bed on the mornings when motivation has evaporated, when recognition has not come, when the work feels thankless and the results feel invisible. The why behind your work is not merely a philosophical question. It is a spiritual one, and how you answer it will determine the quality, the longevity, and the ultimate fruitfulness of everything you build as a leader.

The world offers leaders a menu of whys: success, significance, financial security, personal fulfillment, legacy, the desire to prove something to someone who once doubted them. And while none of these are entirely without merit, they share a common fatal flaw, they are all anchored in something that can be taken away. Success can be reversed. Significance can be stripped by a single headline. Financial security is subject to markets and economies. And the need to prove something to someone is a hunger that is never fully satisfied, no matter how much is accomplished.

At Inspiring Biblical Leadership, we teach that the only why durable enough to sustain a leader through every season, through obscurity and through prominence, through failure and through success, through opposition and through open doors, is a why that is rooted in the unchanging purposes of God. When a leader understands that their work is not ultimately for a company, a congregation, a client, or even a cause, but for the Lord Christ Himself, everything changes. The ordinary becomes sacred. The mundane becomes meaningful. And the leader who once worked for applause discovers the profound freedom of working for an audience of One.

SCRIPTURE FOUNDATION

Scripture consistently elevates the why of work above the what and the how, revealing that the motivation behind a leader's labor is as important to God as the quality of its output. These passages anchor this week's devotional:

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

Paul's sweeping declaration leaves no category of human activity outside the reach of divine purpose. Whether you eat or drink, the most ordinary, unremarkable acts of daily life, or whatever you do, including the most complex and consequential decisions of organizational leadership, all of it can and must be done for the glory of God. This single verse dismantles the sacred-secular divide that causes leaders to compartmentalize their faith from their work. There is no meeting, no email, no difficult conversation, no budget decision, and no personnel evaluation that is outside the scope of God's glory. Every act of leadership can be an act of worship.

"I sent messengers to them with this reply: 'I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?'"
Nehemiah 6:3 (NIV)

Nehemiah's response to Sanballat's repeated attempts to lure him away from the rebuilding project is one of the most powerful expressions of purpose-driven leadership in Scripture. He was not simply building a wall, he was carrying a great project assigned to him by God, and that awareness made every distraction, every threat, and every invitation to compromise answerable with the same conviction: I cannot go down. The leader who knows why they are doing what they

are doing is extraordinarily difficult to manipulate, discourage, or distract. Purpose is one of the most powerful forms of protection available to a leader.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.”
Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NIV)

Solomon’s counsel in Ecclesiastes carries the urgency of eternity into the present moment of leadership. The awareness that the window of opportunity to work, to build, to influence, and to serve is finite and irreplaceable is not a reason for anxiety, it is a reason for wholehearted engagement. Leaders who understand that their season of leadership is a limited stewardship, not an indefinite entitlement, bring a quality of attention, energy, and intentionality to their work that those without that awareness rarely sustain. The brevity of the opportunity is not a burden, it is a gift that clarifies what deserves the full investment of the leader’s strength.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

Jesus’ instruction to let your light shine reframes the entire purpose of a leader’s work and influence. The goal is not personal glory, it is that others, seeing the quality, the integrity, and the excellence of what you do, would glorify your Father in heaven. This is the highest possible why for any leader’s work: that every project completed with excellence, every relationship stewarded with genuine care, every decision made with integrity, and every team member developed with investment would point not to the leader’s greatness but to the greatness of the God who formed and called them.

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

There is a famous story, perhaps apocryphal but deeply instructive, of a visitor to a construction site who asked three different workers the same question: “What are you doing?” The first worker, barely looking up, said: “I’m laying bricks.” The second, slightly more engaged, replied: “I’m building a wall.” The third set down his tools, straightened his back, looked at the visitor, and said with unmistakable conviction: “I’m building a cathedral that will stand for a thousand years and draw people to God.” Three workers, the same task, three entirely different whys, and three entirely different qualities of engagement, endurance, and satisfaction in the work.

The Apostle Paul understood this more profoundly than perhaps any leader in the New Testament. Writing from a prison cell in Philippians 1:12–14, Paul declares that his imprisonment has actually served to advance the Gospel, that the palace guard has heard about Christ, and that other believers have grown bolder in his chains. Paul’s why was so deeply rooted in the purposes of God that even the most adverse circumstances could not reframe his work as wasted. His prison was his pulpit. His chains were his credentials. His suffering was his testimony. When the why is God’s glory and the Gospel’s advance, no circumstance is powerful enough to make the work meaningless.

Consider also the profound difference between the why that animated Jesus’ earthly ministry and the whys that typically animate human leadership. In John 17:4, Jesus prays to the Father: “I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.” Notice what Jesus does not say. He does not say “I have built the largest following,” or “I have established the most impressive organization,” or “I have received the most significant recognition.” His entire measure of success was a single, simple metric: I finished the work You gave me to do. His why was not self-constructed, it was received from the Father, and that made it both unshakeable and perfectly sufficient.

Leaders are to regularly return to the question of why, not as a theoretical exercise, but as a spiritual discipline. The why must be revisited, renewed, and reanchored in God’s purposes repeatedly throughout a leader’s journey, because the noise of the urgent, the weight of the difficult, and the seduction of recognition will consistently attempt to replace a God-given why with a self-serving substitute. The leader who guards their why with the same vigilance they guard their strategy will find that their work carries a quality of purpose, resilience, and joy that no amount of external success can produce or external adversity can destroy.

He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.

Friedrich Nietzsche

People don't buy what you do. They buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe.

Simon Sinek

The leader who works for the applause of people will be devastated when the applause stops. The leader who works for the glory of God will never run out of reason to keep going.

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REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you examine the true motivations that are currently driving your leadership. Answer them slowly, honestly, and in the presence of God.

1 If you stripped away your title, your salary, your reputation, and all external recognition from your current leadership role, what would remain of your motivation to do the work? What does your honest answer reveal about the true depth and durability of your why?

2 Paul found meaning, purpose, and even joy in a prison cell because his why was anchored in the advance of the Gospel rather than the comfort of his circumstances. In what current season of difficulty, obscurity, or unrecognized effort in your leadership is God inviting you to discover a deeper, more durable why?

3 Jesus measured His entire earthly ministry by one standard: finishing the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4). How do you currently measure the success of your leadership? Are those metrics aligned with what God actually gave you to do, or have they been shaped primarily by what the culture, your organization, or your ego rewards?

4 Colossians 3:23–24 calls us to work as though the Lord Himself is our employer. Which specific areas of your leadership would change most significantly if you genuinely treated every task, large and small, observed and unobserved, as an act of direct service to Christ?

5 Matthew 5:16 tells us that the ultimate purpose of our good works is that others would glorify our Father in heaven. Looking at the overall quality, integrity, and impact of your leadership this past month, would those you lead and serve be pointed toward God by what they observe in you? What would need to change for that to be more consistently true?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

A God-rooted why must be cultivated, articulated, and regularly renewed. Here are five concrete steps to deepen and anchor the why behind your work this week:

1	Write Your Personal Leadership Why Statement Set aside 30 quiet minutes this week to write a personal why statement for your leadership, not your organization's mission statement, but your own deeply personal articulation of why you lead. Ground it in Scripture, connect it to your specific gifts and calling, and make it honest enough to sustain you through your hardest days. It should be able to answer the question: "If no one ever applauded, recognized, or rewarded what I do, would I still do it, and why?" Keep this statement somewhere you will encounter it daily. Read it every morning before you engage your first leadership responsibility of the day.
2	Consecrate Your Work to God Each Morning Beginning tomorrow, establish a brief but intentional morning consecration practice. Before you open your laptop, check your phone, or engage any leadership task, speak aloud a simple prayer of dedication: "Lord, I offer this day's work to You. Every meeting, every decision, every conversation, every task, let it be done for Your glory and in Your strength." This practice, sustained over time, does not merely add a religious dimension to your work, it fundamentally reframes the entire atmosphere in which your leadership operates, shifting it from self-directed productivity to God-directed stewardship.
3	Connect Your Team's Work to a Larger Why This week, in a team meeting, a staff email, or individual conversations, take time to explicitly connect the daily work of your team to a purpose that transcends the immediate task. Help them see not just what they are doing but why it matters, to the people they serve, to the community they impact, and to the God who designed them for this contribution. Research consistently shows that teams connected to a meaningful why outperform, outlast, and outcommit teams that are merely executing tasks for a paycheck. The leader who regularly articulates the larger why of the team's work is the leader who cultivates a culture of intrinsic motivation and lasting engagement.
4	Identify and Cleanse One Impure Motive Paul's instruction in Philippians 2:3 warns against doing anything "out of selfish ambition or vain conceit." This week, honestly examine your current leadership activities and identify one area where a self-serving motive, the desire for recognition, the fear of looking inadequate, competitive comparison, or personal advancement, has subtly infiltrated what should be God-directed work. Name it honestly before God. Confess it. Ask Him to purify your motive and replace it with the genuine desire to serve for His glory alone. Motives matter to God as much as methods, and a purified motive produces a quality of leadership that a mixed motive can never sustain.
5	Find the Sacred in the Ordinary This Week Choose the most mundane, repetitive, or seemingly insignificant task on your leadership agenda this week and approach it with the explicit awareness of Colossians 3:23, doing it with all your heart as working for the Lord. Give it your full attention, your best thinking, and your most careful effort. Then reflect on how that awareness changed the quality of your engagement with that task. The leader who can find the sacred in the ordinary has discovered one of the most powerful secrets of sustainable excellence. Visit InspiringBiblicalLeadership.org for additional resources on purpose-driven leadership, calling, and leading with a whole heart for God's glory.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

I confess that my why has not always been as pure as my work has appeared. There have been seasons when I led for the approval of people rather than the glory of God, when I worked for recognition rather than faithfulness, when the applause of the crowd mattered more to me than the quiet pleasure of my Father. Forgive me, Lord, and purify the deepest motivations of my leadership.

Today I choose to reanchor my why in You. Let everything I do, every meeting, every decision, every difficult conversation, every act of service that no one will ever notice or reward, be done as unto You. Let the quality of my work be an offering, not a performance. Let the endurance of my leadership be a testimony, not a transaction.

At the end of my leadership journey, may I be able to pray what Jesus prayed: 'I have brought You glory on earth by finishing the work You gave me to do.' That is enough. That will always be enough. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

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

Colossians 3:23–24 (NIV)

MY NOTES & PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Use this space to record what God is speaking to your heart this week. Write down what He is revealing about your current motivations, your personal why statement as it takes shape, or any specific steps the Holy Spirit places on your heart as you reflect on the why behind your work.

About Inspiring Biblical Leadership

Inspiring Biblical Leadership (IBL) is a Christ-centered platform dedicated to Christian growth, discipleship, and the development of biblical leadership. We serve Christians, corporations, and small businesses through Scripture-based resources, reflections, and practical leadership guidance, equipping people to grow spiritually, recognize their God-given potential, and lead with humility, integrity, and compassion.

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