

Purpose Without Priority is Pointless

How can you lead your team to believe “Less is more” in a “More is more” world?

Every day, ministry leaders spend too much time, managing too much church “stuff,” for too little life-change. It is safe to say that the church in North America is over-programming her calendar and under-disciplining her people.

Behind this reality is a stark irony: The effectiveness of our gospel work is limited, not by a lack of ministry effort but by an excess of ministry action.

The gospel-centered, transformational impact of your church sits as a malnourished beggar beside an every-growing buffet of church ministry programs.

We get too little discipleship precisely because we have too much church stuff.

Church stuff is the whole of the ministry activities that make up your church calendar. Programming that ranges from weekly worship and groups, to monthly programming or quarterly training opportunities.

Church Stuff = Any event service, meeting, class, or group that your church offers this year.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [The One Thing](#), by Gary Keller

YOU WANT LESS. You want fewer distractions and less on your plate. The daily barrage of e-mails, texts, tweets, messages, and meetings distract you and stress you out. The simultaneous demands of work and family are taking a toll. And what’s the cost? Second-rate work, missed deadlines, smaller paychecks, fewer promotions—and lots of stress.

AND YOU WANT MORE. You want more productivity from your work. You want more satisfaction from life, and more time for yourself, your family, and your friends.

NOW YOU CAN HAVE BOTH—LESS AND MORE. In *The ONE Thing*, you’ll learn to

- Cut through the clutter
- Achieve better results in less time
- Build momentum toward your goal
- Dial down the stress
- Overcome that overwhelmed feeling
- Revive your energy
- Stay on track
- Master what matters to you

The ONE Thing delivers extraordinary results in every area of your life—work, personal, family,

and spiritual. WHAT'S YOUR ONE THING?

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Complexity is the curse of organizations of almost any size. Many churches today are program profound and doctrinally dense – they are unnecessarily complex. The complexity is strangling their ability to grow and thrive. To the extent that today's church has become political, institutional, or programmatic, we are making it more complicated than it needs to be.

We have bombarded our people with too many competing little ideas and the result is a church with more information and less clarity than perhaps ever before. The lack of clarity that churches give their people impedes the church's ability to accomplish the mission of Jesus. "More" results in less clarity.

It's time for the power of priority.

Purpose has the power to shape our lives only in direct proportion to the power of the priority we connect it to. Purpose without priority is powerless.

To be precise, the word is **priority** – not priorities – and it originated in the 14th century from the Latin "prior" meaning "first." If something mattered the most it was a "priority." Curiously, priority remained unpluralized until around the 20th century, when the world apparently emoted it to mean generally "something that matters" and the plural "priorities" appeared.

Watch your language. You may have many ways to talk about priority, but no matter the words you choose, to achieve extraordinary results your meaning must be the same - ONE Thing.

When each day begins, we each have a choice. We can ask, "What shall I do?" or "What should I do?" Without direction, without purpose, whatever you "shall do" will always get you somewhere. But when you're going somewhere on purpose, there will always be something you "should do" that will get you where you *must* go. When your life is on purpose, living by priority takes precedence.

There can only be ONE. Your most important priority is the ONE Thing you can do right now that will help you achieve what matters most to you. You may have many "priorities," but dig deep and you'll discover there is always one that matters most, your top priority – Your ONE Thing.

Gary Keller with Jay Papasan, [*The ONE Thing*](#)

A NEXT STEP

Again, select three potentially good ideas for ministry action, and write them on a chart tablet.

These can be three new ideas or from Solution 1 above.

Plot each as a journey of activities, and highlight who is involved in each step such as volunteer leaders, staff members, congregation, guests, community members, etc.

Highlight those that are crucial to each step and discuss with your team if those stakeholders listed above remain motivated throughout the whole journey. What is their motivation?

How many steps does it take until the motivation becomes unclear? How many steps can it take for the motivation to be lost? Put a red dot by the steps that are unclear.

Repeat the steps above with the other two ideas and make the final count of red dots. The idea with the least red dots is the one that should be considered as the priority.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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