

In my private time this morning [14Nov75] I wrote the following thinksheet on a 3x5 in response to the self-question, What am I really up to in this thing called my life? I'd like you to read what I wrote; I'd more like you to skip it and write on the back your response to the question; I'd most like you to do your thing first, and then read my thing. [For parallel thinksheets, see #663("life-regrets") and #704("Purpose in Life" test).]

1. To be loved by God in the sense of to honor him by living "worthy" of him, to use a Stoic sanction Paul adopted and adapted. I can't earn something I already have: he already loves me as one of his creatures and [as Parent] as one of his offspring. But as long as my parents were alive, I had it in my power to please or displease them; and my Parent is eternal.
2. To be admired by a woman. Crazy, isn't it? Women are ^{h^t} all that important, really --are they? But there it is. I'm certain of it. If one woman admires me, here I am: if no woman admires me, where am I?
3. To be loved by a woman. This is far less important, I think, than to be admired by a woman. But what's the significance of my being sure of the latter, and only of the opinion of the former? But how important both are! Among the first three life-goals! What a miserable monk I'd make! No aspersion on religious: a life-goal is as apt to signal a weakness as a strength. This listing of my present understanding of my life-goals is not bragging, but neutral, making me vulnerable to unflattering psychoanalysis. What price self-revelation? And when is it exhibitionism? So should I, or shouldn't I, give old Kildahl a copy of this thinksheet?
4. With my whole being [both coils and everything else in my skinbag], to make sense of life, micro- and macro-["cosmizing," i.e. sense-making without limits and without remainder].
5. To make more sense--deeper, wider, higher. "To make sense" can mean either to discover-create meaning for one's own inner life, or to communicate clearly. The latter has always been, for introvert Willis, far less important than the former. "Communicate" is not one of my favorite goal-words. Then why all these thinksheets? 720 since coming to NYTS [Sept/69]! That's one of the things I haven't managed to make much sense of--yet.
6. To help others, with their whole being, to make sense of life and to grow in sense-making and in enabling sense-making. [Thus Frankl's attraction for me.]

NOTE on 4-6: *So deep are these "sense" life-goals with me that they are the heart of (1) my temptations to lust and greed and (2) my conviction of what I am life-called to do for God (a) to enrich him (as Hartshorne), (b) to save him from his creation's obloquy and amnesia (somewhat as Kazantzakis), (c) to obey him (my Judaism), and (d) to understand and love him in and through Jesus (my Christianity).*

7. To love, and joy in, God's creation from myself to creation's periphery, for God's sake. [Here, for me, Bernard's ON LOVING GOD has never been surpassed.] Concentric circles [to use part of a Douglas Steere title] "beginning from within," myself, Loree, our children, friends, fellow-ministers [meaning clergy and laity I'm in "ministry" with], community, metropolis, world of humans, world of "nature"[fauna and flora, especially flowers]. And, of course, to enable this kind of loving and joying.

NOTE on 6 and 7: *My "social action" orientation is informed and motivated by these two more than any other considerations. "Evil"--cosmic, personal-systemic, personal-active, societal-systemic, societal-active--means, for me, whatever frustrates these two life-goals. I am to be enemy to whatever attitudes, behavior, and conditions impede sense-making, love, and joy. And I am to be prayerfully humble in the face of the complexities and ambiguities, and eager-trustful.*

8. Daily to meditate on, commune with, and witness to Jesus, for me the Center of heart and history.

9. To honor truth in the courage of integrity [the continuous rectification of thought and life in light of fact overcoming ignorance and understanding overcoming perversity], without which all the other life-goals incurve into illusion, corruption, and self-cancelation.