

## Job Review-Judgment Day

I am sure that there are several here this morning that have faced job reviews. Job reviews, goals and managing by objectives, starting especially in the seventies, became a major part of American management. It was called MBO.

Despite its acceptance by upper management, it was ever really popular with the rank and file work force. In many instances, it was out and out disparaged by employees. This past year, I did some writing with a business consultant, and we published a little book, Talking like a Leader.

One major insight from the book was picked up in reviews. It was the issue of management establishing goals and objectives with their employees and using these objectives in job reviews. A job review is really an exercise in judgment. When a person comes for a job appraisal, the person is being judged on whether they hit their objectives for the year. The manager judges based on agreed upon goals that have been set for the year.

The real problem with corporate goal setting and management by objectives is that most frequently the goals are mostly from the top down. Management will ask for input from managers, but basically the input will be reworked dramatically at the top. Thereupon, goals are passed down the system that are markedly different and numerically overstated. These overstated and overbearing goals are then used as the basis of judging the employees' contribution and worth to the organization. Judgment day comes when the employee is evaluated in terms of overstated goals. The manager/employee sits with a superior who engages in a straight forward monologue with the employee, such as

“Here is what we expected, and here is what you achieved.” It is a judgmental and nerve-racking experience; it is the top down monologue judgment.

Successful goal setting and management by objective must come from a rather different type of culture. It must come from a culture grounded on a continuous effort to dialogue with its employees and engage in a style of dialogical judgment. This dialogical judgment encounter might sound like this, “Well, it is nice to have you here Fred for your year-end review. First, I would like to establish that it is a two way review. We spent time with you formulating some goals for your department. How did you feel about these goals? I mean did you feel that they were reasonable and achievable?” Then the manager might ask Fred to evaluate his own performance and room for improvement. After a dialogue, the manager states that he has

learned much from the dialogue. It is then that he puts forth his judgmental advice to Fred. He tells the employee that he has done an excellent job, but they agree there is room for continuous improvement on goal setting and achievement.

In Samuel, God is using Nathan to review the performance of King David. Samuel is one of Israel's judges. Indeed, the book of Samuel clearly introduces that our relationship with God involves judgment. God reviews David's performance and asks, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Then Nathan must remind David about all God has done, "I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you." In Psalm 89, we learn that God has entered into a dialogical relationship with David and judges him on the basis of this relationship, "Your love, O Lord, forever will I sing; from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness. For I am persuaded that your love is established forever; you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens,"

The teachings of scripture and the church are clear that at the end of our life that we enter into a type of life review dialogical judgment before God. I suggest that Jesus everyday calls us into a type of dialogical judgment. Is it not, therefore, a wise practice at the end of each day to enter into a prayer dialogue with Jesus, and ask if we have a house of cedar for God? With coming of the Christ child, we have become the new house of cedar, and God asks us it we have built a new person this day. What does God primarily ask us in our job review? God, as we in Samuel, wants our gratitude.

God's judgment has often been misunderstood. We have often presented God as a punitive monologue judge who will judge us disapprovingly at the end. First, it important to realize that God's judgment is not necessarily a onetime deal. The God of the Old and New Testament is revealed as a God of dialogue, and in the dialogue he slowly reveals to us the best of our personality and potential for acting according to God's will. When we come to Jesus in love, we must enter into a dialogue with the Father about becoming a better person. In other words, being so touched by God, we enter into a rewarding self-judgment about our strengths and weaknesses.

The process of a dialogical judgmental relationship between a person and God at the end of life is a continuation of the life long process of self-disclosure and judgment between the believer and God. In the Johannine concept of judgment, it is not a matter of possible divine rejection, rather it is a dialogue of self-exposure before God in all His loving radiance, "When he is revealed, we will be like him, for we shall see him as his." (1 John 3:2).