

## *Know Your Objective*

In the book, *Work and Contemplation*, Douglas Steere tells a story from the Great Depression era when work was scarce, but people took great pride in whatever job they did. Instead of receiving welfare checks, able-bodied people were given what sometimes amounted to busywork in order to earn their pay. The program was created to add a measure of dignity to “being on the dole.” Folks who did not have to take advantage of the program openly scorned it, while the workers who did join the program were often embarrassed they had to do so. Steere tells of one incident:

“Some years ago, I heard the labor expert, Whiting Williams, tell of a squad of day laborers who were hired one morning and put to work. The foreman set them to digging holes some three feet deep. When a hole was finished, it was inspected and the workman was ordered to fill it up and come to another point and to dig another hole of the same depth.

“This went on for most of the morning and finally the foreman noted the group talking in a huddle, and then their spokesman came to him and said, ‘We’re gonna quit. Give us our money. You ain’t gonna make fools out of us!’”

“The foreman’s eyes narrowed, and then understanding broke over him, and he said quietly, ‘Can’t you see, we’re trying to find where the pipe is broken.’

“‘Oh,’ said the man, and after a hurried word with the others, returned and said, ‘Where do you want us to dig next?’”

In Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home, we are often encouraged to value one another’s work and to work in a spirit of cooperation. In fact, that is why our company prefers to use the term, “associate,” instead of “employee,” because it suggests that we work together in a team approach. It is easier when every member of the team is informed about the objective. When the objective is finally attained, each is able to share in the satisfaction of seeing his or her contribution to the overall success.

We must, then, focus on the objectives we have identified, and make certain the whole team has a clear understanding of the goals that have been set. As Evangelist Billy Sunday said, “More men fail through lack of purpose than through lack of talent.”

--Beecher Hunter