

Guidelines for Setting Goals

"For when David had served God's purpose
in his own generation, he fell asleep"
(Acts 13:36 *NIV*).

Setting and achieving goals help us fulfill our purpose. Deep within each of us is a desire to make a difference. Dan Reiland in the "Pastor's Coach" (December 2000, received by e-mail) mentions five things that never change. (Note that he mentions our desire to make a significant impact.)

1. The desire to know and be known; love and be loved.
2. The drive and desire to connect with our Creator.
3. The need for spiritual leadership.
4. The passion and desire to make a significant impact in our lifetime.
5. The longing for peace, contentment, and joy in the midst of stress and confusion.

Mother Teresa in *The Love of Christ* says, "What we are doing is but a drop in the ocean. This may be only a drop, but the ocean would be less if it weren't there." Through goal setting we are achieving more drops in the ocean.

Why People Do Not Set Goals

Few people take the time or make the effort required to set goals.

1. They do not know how to set goals.
2. They are wandering through life aimlessly without a plan or vision.

3. They have tried setting goals and have failed.
4. They are too lazy to set goals. Goal setting eventually means work.
5. They have an "I do not care" attitude. Whatever will come will come.
6. They feel it is not scriptural or spiritual to plan ahead or set goals.
7. They lack self-discipline.
8. They are content in their comfort zone. The pothole allows them to control life; they know exactly what to expect.
9. They feel they are too busy to take time to set goals.
10. They do not know what they want in life.
11. They are not willing to confront their weaknesses; so they do not set goals for personal change.

Tips on Goals

Wynn Davis in *The Best of Success* wrote, "The purpose of goals is to focus our attention. The mind will not reach toward achievement until it has clear objectives . . . It is then that the switch is turned on, the current begins to flow, and the power to accomplish becomes a reality."

1. Goals should be meaningful. Ask, "What is important to me?"
2. Goals should be specific.
3. Goals should be measurable.
4. Goals should be realistic.
5. Goals should be believable and attainable.
6. Goals should be well defined.
7. Goals should have a purpose (a good reason).
8. Goals should be flexible. (Be open to better opportunities coming your way.)

9. Include family and relaxation time in your goals.
10. Arrange your goals according to your priorities.
11. Goals should be challenging. They should excite you.
12. Goals show you where to put your time and energy.
13. Evaluate your progress along the way. Goals need to be fine-tuned like the engine of a car. Goals may need adjustments.
14. Performance should be compared against goals to guarantee progress is being made.
15. Establish the time frame necessary to accomplish goals.
16. Make a list of the goals and divide them according to short-, mid-, and long-term goals.
17. Break each goal down into sub-goals.
18. Set a target date for the completion of each goal or sub-goal.
19. Celebrate when a goal is achieved. Replace it with a new goal.
20. Give yourself a reward for completing the goal.
21. Concentrate on results (getting the goal completed). Goals help you to be more effective and productive.
22. Everyone working on the goal should understand it. The clearer the goal, the easier it will be to accomplish. The goal must be communicated.
23. Goals should be demanding (something that will make you work in order to achieve it). Goals should stretch you.
24. Set goals that help overcome your weaknesses.
25. Put goals in writing and learn how to verbalize them. Read your goals often. Some suggest that you read them every day. This helps you maintain focus.
26. Keep a copy of your goals where you can see it every day (even several times per day).
27. Share your goals with like-minded people.
28. Associate with goal-setters. Their lifestyle is contagious.
29. Get others to help you accomplish your goals (and be willing to help them).
30. Goals should have deadlines (due dates). It has been said, "Goals are dreams with deadlines." Set a time schedule for each goal.
31. Goals provide a measure of happiness. Research has shown that those who set goals are happier than those who do not.
32. Utilize reverse goal-setting techniques. Look at where you want to end up in your vision and determine the steps it takes by working backward from where you want to be.
33. You can have any number of goals. However, you should not work on all your goals at once. If you do a little of everything, you will end up with a whole lot of nothing. Focus on your priority goals. One proverb says, "If you chase two rabbits, you will catch none." When you divide your attention by trying to achieve many goals, you cannot do any of them with excellence.

Looking for a Shorter List?

Wow! That is a long list! Let us look at some shorter ways to remember the basics of goal setting.

Use the acronym SMART (adapted for our use) to assist in setting achievable goals. (Regretfully, acronyms do not translate well

in various languages. Perhaps the words can still be used.

S	Specific (focused)
M	Measurable
A	Attainable
R	Realistic
T	Time-related

Another acronym to help guide goal setting is CROW.

C	Concrete (definite, definable)
R	Realistic (attainable)
O	Observable
W	Worthwhile

Time Divisions for Goal Setting	
Short-term goals	Up to one year.
Mid-term goals	One to five years.
Long-term goals	More than five years.

Goal-setting Questions

Jack Canfield in *The Power of Focus* provides a number of questions to focus on when determining goals.

1. What do I want to do?
2. What do I want to have?
3. Where do I want to go?
4. What contributions to society do I want to make?
5. What do I want to become?
6. What do I want to learn?
7. Whom do I want to spend my time with?
8. What will I do to create and maintain my best health?

To this list add:

1. What do I want to leave behind as a legacy (a gift to others)?
2. Do my goals fit into God's plan for my life?
3. Do my goals honor and glorify God, or are they selfish, carnal, or worldly?
4. Did I pray for direction before setting my goals? Are these goals from God?

Top Ten List of Goals

A small girl was drawing a picture when her proud daddy noticed. He complimented her and asked, "How do you draw so well?"

She responded, "First, I think. And then I draw my think."

Goal setting is "drawing our think." It is good to put "our think" into writing.

Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson in *One Minute Manager* teach that a goal and its performance standard should be written in 250 words or less. The shortness of the goal ensures that anyone could read it in a minute.

Make a list of ten goals that will help you achieve your vision. Utilize the points given in this lesson. Use additional paper, if needed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Study Questions

1. What is the purpose of goals?

2. Explain what is meant by the acronym "SMART"?

3. What are the time divisions of goal setting?

4. According to Dan Reiland, what passion and desire do we have?

5. What happens when we give attention to many goals at the same time?

6. What is reverse goal setting?

7. List three reasons people do not set goals.

8. Why should goals be written down?

9. Using what Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson said, comment on the number of words to be used in writing a goal.

10. What is the meaning of the CROW acronym?
