



# SETTING GODLY GOALS

Charles F. Stanley, [Experiencing Success God's Way](#)  
(Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 22–33.

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- One of the most important questions you can ever ask is, “What goals does God desire for me to set and to achieve, and in the process, to be a success in His eyes?”
- Setting God’s goals for your life is a critical step toward being a success in God’s eyes.
- One of the most goal-oriented people in the Bible is the apostle Paul. In writing to the Philippians, Paul said,



## Philippians 3:7–14 (NKJV)

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,



11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.



- Paul was not a man who wasted time or energy. He was extremely focused in his life, and he had an overwhelming sense of purpose and direction. He clearly stated his life goals to the Philippians:
  - to know Christ Jesus as intimately as possible,
  - to experience the righteousness of Christ in his own life, and
  - to be conformed to Christ in every way.



We know from the descriptions of Paul's ministry in the book of Acts that he also had another goal: to reach as many people as possible with the message of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and to do so with a sense of urgency.



- Paul made no claim that he had achieved his life goals. Rather, he stated that he was continuing to press toward the goal of the prize of the “upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” To press, in this case, means “to diligently follow after.” Paul was zealous in following Christ.
- In your life, have you identified your main life goal? Is it a desire to be fully conformed to Christ Jesus?



# What are Godly Goals?

A goal is an aim, a purpose, a sense of direction toward which a person moves all of his energies, desires, and efforts. Goals are the “targets” toward which we point our lives.

A goal involves an organized, planned “stretching” of your life. If you have already achieved something, it is no longer a goal—it is an accomplishment. A goal is a statement of intention, aimed at the future.

It is a statement of how you desire to grow, develop, mature, or change in a positive, specific, and achievable way.





- Every Christian is called to set “knowing and serving Christ” as his primary life goal. All other goals are to be placed under this broad umbrella goal.
- Goals for the Christian are not based upon how we desire to live for our own pleasure and satisfaction. Rather, we live as unto the Lord. We are His possession, bought with a price—the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We belong to God, and our goals must be ones that bring pleasure to Him.



# What the Word Says

## 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.



# What the Word Says

## Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.



# What the Word Says

## Ephesians 5:2 (NKJV)

2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.



# What the Word Says

## Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



I have found it very helpful in my life to identify and to write down my priority goal.

What are your goals?

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- I encourage you to reflect upon your priority goal in life, and to state your priority goal and your secondary goals in writing.
- In your life, have you identified a “priority goal”?
  - Can you state it in concise terms?
  - In your life, have you identified your secondary goals?



Goals help a person maintain focus. They help a person avoid stray topics, relationships, and activities that can become distractions and sometimes deterrents. They help a person set his schedule, not only over long periods of time, but daily. Goals help put life in balance. Take a look at the chart below and consider your own life:

**Person with No Goals**

Adrift

No excitement in living

Accepts mediocrity

Critical of others who are successful

Disappointed with life

Settles for living in a rut

Bad steward of God's gifts of time, energy, resources

**Person with Goals**

Sense of direction

Excitement in living

Pursues excellence

Appreciates others who are successful

Strong sense of purpose, value, and worth

Seeks a creative, active life

Seeks a balanced life marked by emotional and physical health

- *How do you feel about your own life? Which type of person do you desire to be?*

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# Should Christians Set Goals for the Future?

- There are those in the body of Christ who contend that Christians should not set goals. I want to take a look at two main passages of Scripture that critics of goal-setting often use to support their belief.

## The Case for Contentment

- The first passage often used to teach that goal-setting is not biblical is Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”



- To be content, in the context of this verse, is in direct relationship to the statement, “Let your conduct be without covetousness.” We are never to covet what others have. Contentment is realizing that God is the Source of all that we need for our present happiness.
- It is being thankful for what the Lord is providing, even as we plan for our future. It is trusting that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us.
- It is experiencing the peace of God in the midst of any circumstance or situation, even as we make our requests known to God.



# What the Word Says

Philippians 4:11 (NKJV)

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

What the Word Says to Me

## What the Word Says To ME...



# What the Word Says

## Exodus 20:17 (NKJV)

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

## What the Word Says To ME...



# What the Word Says

## Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## What the Word Says To ME...



Matthew 6:31–34 is another passage that is often used to counteract a need for goal-setting: Living Each Day as It Comes.

### **Matthew 6:31–34 (NKJV)**

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.



- This passage has nothing to do with planning or not planning. Rather, it is about feeling anxious about whether God will provide our day-to-day needs for food, shelter, and clothing.
- This is also a great statement about our priorities. Note that Jesus says we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- Seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness is a goal. It is the foremost thing worth pursuing and worth establishing in one's life.



- Seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness does not happen automatically. It happens because we set our minds and hearts toward those things that build our inner character and that yield eternal reward.

### **Colossians 3:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

## **What the Word Says To ME...**





# Four Questions to Ask About the Goals You Set

As you set any goal in your life, ask these four questions:

- 1. Why, Lord, is this important to You?** If you understand the answer to why a goal is important to the Lord, you'll be in a good position to seek answers to other questions: How? When? Where? With whom?
- 2. Lord, does this fit into Your plan for my life?** Some tasks may be good, but not be God's best for you. Ask the Lord what fits you best, given your talents, abilities, and skills.



# Four Questions to Ask About the Goals You Set

**3. Is this goal totally in line with God's Word?** God will not lead you to pursue a goal that is contrary to the principles established in the Bible.

**4. How might the accomplishment of this goal bring blessing to others?** God gives us goals so He might do two things simultaneously—He desires to perform a refining work in our own lives, and, at the same time, to perform a work that will benefit others and be for their eternal good.

In your life, which of your goals do NOT meet this four-fold criteria? Which ones do?



# We Need God To Help Us Fulfill Our Goals In Life.

## What the Word Says

### Matthew 7:7–8 (NKJV)

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

## What the Word Says To ME...



# HOME WORK



# Writing Down Your Goals

It is important that you write down your goals. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah: “Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you” (*Jer. 30:2; see also Jer. 36:2*). The Lord said to the prophet Habakkuk,

- Write the vision
- And make it plain on tablets,
- That he may run who reads it. (*Hab. 2:2*)



- Put a Date with a Goal
- Some goals are lifelong, but even lifelong goals can be broken down into smaller goals that can be accomplished in short- and medium-range time periods. Identify your goals that are
- immediate—things to be done each day, or that can be accomplished in a week or month; short-range—those goals that may take one to three months or even as long as a year; and long-range—those goals that may extend beyond a year.



## Consider All Areas of Your Life

- Goals can be set in each of life's main areas:
  1. Spiritual
  2. Personal
  3. Family
  4. Vocation
  5. Social
  6. Financial
- Take a look at the goals that you believe are God's plan for you. Do you have goals in each of these areas? Do your goals tend to cluster mainly in one or two areas? If you are neglecting certain areas of your life, or are placing too much emphasis on one or two areas, your life is not truly balanced. Seek to establish wholeness.
- In your life, are you setting and seeking to accomplish goals in each area of your life?



## Be Specific

State precisely what you intend to accomplish—avoid fuzzy generalities. When Jesus met Bartimaeus at the outskirts of Jericho, He asked Bartimaeus one simple question: “What do you want Me to do for you?” (Mark 10:51). Jesus could see that Bartimaeus was blind, yet Jesus asked Bartimaeus this question so that Bartimaeus might confront his need and face fully the prospect of his own healing. Do you truly want the specifics of the goals you have written down? Why do you want to accomplish what you have stated as goals? What are your motives? Do you truly want to live the way you would live if your goals were accomplished?





## Set Goals You Cannot Reach on Your Own Strength and Ability

- A truly God-given goal always has a “faith factor” to it. It is a goal that will stretch you, challenge you, cause you to grow in spirit, and that will cause you to rely on God for help, wisdom, strength, and results.



# What the Word Says

## Ezekiel 33:13 (NKJV)

When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.

## What the Word Says To ME...



- Take one step at a time as you establish your goals. Wait upon the Lord for His direction and guidance.
- Test your goals against the Scriptures and see if they endure over time. Few things worth attaining can be accomplished in a day.
- What matters most is our slow, steadfast, obedient pursuit of those goals to which God calls us. He is as concerned about our ongoing faithfulness, discipline, faith, obedience, and reliance upon Him as He is about our accomplishing the goals He helps us establish.



- What new insights do you have into the relationship between goals and godly success?
- How do you feel about the goals you have set for your life?
- In what ways are you being challenged to set new goals or revise old ones?

