

GOAL SETTING FOR FUTURE GOOD

Are you a big dreamer? Do you have thoughts and desires inside that head of yours that you would love to see happen? You think, "I don't know how in the world this could happen, but if I could do anything I wanted to do, this would be it." Or, do you think, "I think the Lord has been telling me something. I think He has been telling me that He wants me to do this big thing and I don't know if I know how to do it, I don't what to do to get there." There are a lot of people in the Bible that were big dreamers and they were mocked for having these dreams. In some cases, someone came against them and said "Who do you think you are? What makes you think you could do anything like that?" Does that sound familiar? We have all been there.

If these dreams are inside you, you can certainly identify with Joseph in the Bible. He got a big dream from God about the time he was 17 years old. He was cocky and had a lot of lessons to learn. Even when you are given the big dream you need to be careful about whom you share it with, when you share it, and how you say it. Most people spend more time planning their vacation than they do planning the rest of their life.

Interesting isn't it. Part of achieving what you want is to stay with it, through thick and thin, good times and bad, and never give up on that dream. However, without goals you will never make it. The dream is like a car, and the goals that you have to set to get there are like tires. They are what take you from one place to the next, to the next, to get you there. Most of the time, you do not have a dream and then suddenly it happens, all of it in its entirety. No. You get there slowly. It says in Isaiah, "Line upon line, precept upon precept, will God speak." Even as you start out, God will begin telling you what is the first thing you need to do. Without goals in life, people's lives become very dull and repetitive. They spend their whole life living for Friday, and dreading Monday. This happens because there is no passion in their lives. There is nothing from God that keeps them going and excited. Yet, I have heard it said that when you do not have goals you work at about 70% capacity. That means the other 30% is bored, not really accomplishing anything. I think most people are like that, but that is not how God wants it. God wants us to plan. God says in His Word, "I want you to set goals, I want you to have direction. I want you to come to Me for the direction." God has such a wonderful plan for your life. It is bigger than you would ever imagine and there is no way you can do it by yourself. You are going to have to die to get there. You are going to have to learn how to walk with God to get there. You are going to have to learn how to set goals. If you have been watching this series that I have been doing on Leadership Skills for the 21st Century, there is a four-part series in the first part, and a four-part series in the second part. I hope you will get them. If you have a desire to learn how to be a leader and to be trained in leadership, I think they will help you. I know there are a lot of people that live in other parts of the world that watch this show and they do not have the opportunity that others have. I hope this series helps you. Learning how to set goals determines how far you go. I see people that say, "I don't set goals. I just get up and whatever happens happens." Usually not very much happens. Then you will see a person who has a purpose in his heart, a direction in his heart. Slowly, steadily he works at it, chipping away. The next thing you know he is where other people wish they were. That is what we want to talk about today.

In the last lesson, we talked about the scripture I am about to give you. Now we are going to talk about it in Lesson 4. Get your Bible out and look at this scripture and underline it. If you have goals and plans, put today's date by this scripture and write your dream underneath it. Then for the rest of your life, you can look back in your Bible and say, "I remember that day when that lady was on television. It really was not her talking to me, it was God. She was not talking to me, God was talking to me and I know it." Look at the scripture, Proverbs 16:9. "We can make our plans but the Lord determines our steps." If it was not right to set goals, God would not have that in the Bible. It says we can make our plans, but God determines our steps. That is the way you want it. Some of you might say, "No, I want to do it all by myself. I don't want anyone helping me. I know what I want to do. I know how I need to have it done, and I am going to do it." You could do that, but when you get there what would you really have? You might reach your goal but what did you lose in the meantime? If you let God determine your steps, it will be done decently, in order, and at the end of it you will be a highly blessed person. Remember that scripture. We can make our plans, but God determines the steps.

However, we have to talk about how you make the plans. I have said this saying on another lesson, and I want to say it again. A man with a plan cannot be stopped by a man without a plan. Even Al-Qaeda has

plans and they do not let anyone stop them. When they bombed the World Trade Center in 1994, everyone was so shocked and scared. Then they kind of disappeared on American soil. In 2001, they were back in the same building with a different plan, but they still had the original goal. Your enemies can have goals and you can have goals. God is on your side if you determine in your heart, "Lord help me to set these goals. I am going to set the goals that you lead me to set." Hard times will not stop you if you have goals. Goals almost have a life to them. They have energy and excitement. Have you ever watched an ant? They have a crumb they are trying to carry and there is a giant boulder in front of them. It might be just a tiny stone but to the ant it is a boulder. That is how our boulders look to God. We think, "Oh Lord, I will never get over that. I don't know how in the world I could ever do that. It is so big, Lord." God laughs because he is looking down this way and saying, "I will get you over that. That is not going to be hard." Are you listening? There is someone that God was talking to just then. Was it you?

A leader cannot let things like hard times or difficult situations, or even unsolvable problems, stop him. One of the goals has to be, "I am going there. I am going to get there. I don't know how I am going to get there." There are some things in life that there is not an answer to right now. It does not mean that God does not have the answer. It does not mean he is not going to lead you to discover the answer. You just have to have your mind made up that that is where you are going. Think about all the scientists in life and all the medical researchers. They could look at a disease that right now there is no cure for. Remember cancer years ago? If someone whispered, "She has cancer. He has cancer," everyone was petrified. Now people have cancer; they go through chemo or radiation, or alternatives ways of dealing with it, and they are healed. It is not what it used to be. It was the giant killer, except some people said, "I am not going to be stopped. I am going to find the answer," and they did.

Why don't people set goals if those are the wheels that get you there? One reason is they have never been taught to do that. Did your parents teach you to set goals? When you went through high school and college, did you ever have a class that they taught you how to set goals? I did not. I had some goals, but I did not know that was what you called them. I did not have the teaching I have today, and the teaching I am going to share with you today, but I did get there. You can get there with a little bit of knowledge. Today, I want to help you get more knowledge.

What is another reason that people will not set goals? They are afraid it will not happen. They are afraid they will be disappointed and feel like a failure. They are afraid they will look foolish in the eyes of people if they do not reach the goal.

Another reason is that it is too much trouble. People would rather just sit around and wish things would change than figure out what you have to do to make it change. It is just too much trouble.

Some Christians wonder if it is okay with God if they make goals. Or, they might just sit around and let God drop something in their head, and then they go. Look back up at the scripture, Proverbs 16:9. We can make our plans, but God determines our steps.

A poor self-image is another reason people do not set goals. You do not think you deserve it. God planned and had a goal for you to be on this earth. I do not care what the circumstances are of your birth, who your parents were, or what they did or did not do. Once you are an adult, you can get yourself healed of all of your insecurities. You can learn how to walk free. You can be anything God wants you to be. In fact, I think God delights in taking people that others might say, "How did that ever happen to them?" They can only say, "God put it in my heart, and I believed Him. I stepped out and I did the work, and it happened."

One last thing that I think stops people today from setting goals is all of the bad news on television or the internet, even magazines and newspapers. If you are not careful, you will let that distract you from really trying to do something. You will say, "What is the point? The whole world is going to blow up anyway.

Who knows what is going to happen to money or what is going to happen to the economy, or with terrorists. We might as well give up." All the way through the Bible, and especially in Psalms, it says, "God laughs at his enemies." It does not matter how powerful they are, they are no match for God. If God has decided you are going to do something, it is going to happen. Nothing will stop God from determining your steps. Even if you make a big mistake, God will use that to strengthen you even more and set you back up on your feet on a steady pace, and there you go again. Remember this, God is never stopped by bad news. I do not care if it is an illness. Jesus is the healer and He loves to heal people. He wants to heal you.

Let's think about goals and the average person today. Think about where you fit in this. A study was done at Harvard and discovered that 87% of all people have no goals and dreams. Ten per cent have thought about what they want out of life, 3% have written their goals down on paper. The 3% that have actually gone to the trouble to write them down on paper achieve 50 to 100 times more than those who

actually gone to the trouble to write them down on paper achieve 50 to 100 times more than those who just think about them. There are probably not any mathematical terms on the ones that do not think about them. They do not achieve anything. Where do you fit in there? I know where I used to fit in. I had goals and I thought about them. I had not had a lot of training but I knew what I wanted out of life. I knew what I wanted in a husband. I knew what I wanted in a career. I set out to do it and I had goals. Probably my first goal was to graduate from college in three years instead of four because my family did not have the money to pay for more than that. If I wanted to get out, I had to do that. Then I had a goal to get a Master's Degree, and I got pregnant in the middle of that. There are always obstacles. Remember that you make your goals in concrete and your plans in sand. You may have to change things, you do not know.

What are you going to do about your goals? You have to have your life in balance. If you do not have your life in balance and you take off after one particular area of goals, you could end up losing everything in another. I think there are many men today who have lost their marriage, their family, everything, because they were pursuing their business and career. They got so caught up in it that they lost everything. When you have goals, how many can you have? I have been to a lot of goal-setting seminars and read a lot of books on it. I asked a man, "How many goals can you have? I know there are probably four major areas of your life that you have to have goals. Do you have five for each area or three? What do you have?" The man said, "You can have as many goals as you want to in each area as long as they are all moving you in the same direction." That is interesting isn't it.

You have these four areas of your life and for a time you may have to pull one area out and really work on it because it needs a lot of work and attention. You work on it and then when it is back in order, you put it back in the pie and your life is balanced and continues to be balanced. What are these four areas for setting goals. Write these down. In our family every January we write goals down. I think the first time I ever did it was in maybe 1979. I still have them and look at them, even now, to see which ones I got. Sometimes it takes two years before it happens; sometimes it takes 10 years. It happens because you write them down.

These are the four areas. You have spiritual goals. You have family goals. You have personal goals. You have financial goals. Is that pretty much your life? Does that cover just about everything in your life? Remember, you have to write them down, but your plans are in sand. We are going to come up with the plans, but the goals do not change. One time I wanted to go on a mission trip. This was probably one of the first times I was learning to write it down and think about what we had to do to make it happen. We wanted to go on a mission trip as a family. This was in about 1976. We wrote it down. Someone came along and said to us, "I can tell you something you can do to make it happen even more, and it will shock you. Get a picture of what you want. Get the closest thing you can to a picture, and put it up where you see it all of the time." I went to a travel agent and got a brochure on Hawaii because that was where the mission trip was going to be. In this brochure, there was a picture of a church with a steeple, an old fashioned one with a tall steeple. It was white and trimmed in green. We cut that out and put it up where we saw it all of the time. This was going to be a family mission trip and it was going to take four times the money it would normally take. We had that as a goal and we believed it was going to happen. We would look at that picture and think about it. The day came when we were on the island of Maui. We got up to go do our mission work for the day. We went up over a hill and, as we came down the hill, we all were surprised because there was that same exact church. We all looked at each and thought, "That was God." What a testimony! It was just wonderful. As you set these goals, you have to teach your children how to do it, too. Who is going to teach your children how to set goals if you do not learn how to do, then do it and teach them how. So many children get out of school and they have never been taught. You can do it. You can share this with them.

As you are setting goals, say for the spiritual, you need to set measurable goals that you can check off.

Think about these goals. The first one might be a better relationship with God. That is not measurable.

You can say you do but it is more like a dream. How are you going to get there? Remember the tires to get you there? "I will read the Bible every day for five minutes." You might think, "How in the world could reading the Bible for just five minutes help me reach that goal of getting closer to God?" If you do it consistently, it adds up, and God speaks to you. You can do it more than that, but that is a pretty goal to start out with. If you have never set goals, you do not need to say, "I am going to develop the first rocket ship to Mars that finds out there are people living there." You are not going to do that. It is too big a goal.

You need to set smaller goals and get to the big goals after you see success with the smaller ones. Here is a goal for your family. "A better relationship with my spouse." That is a good dream, but it is not measurable. You could check it off, but we are talking about specific, "Yes, it happened." An example of that would be "We will have a date every Friday night, just the two of us." As you have several children, and you get busy, it is so difficult to make sure you still have the great marriage, the good marriage. They have done a lot of studies on that and have asked children, "What is so important for you to see about your parents." They say, "That they love each other." I remember that we set a family goal because we were so incredibly busy. We were building a daytime business and a nighttime business. We set a goal

that every Monday night was family night. Our goal was to become close as a family, so we said every Monday night would be family night. It is hard to stick to something. There are all kinds of interruptions that keep you from doing the thing you have to do to reach your goal. We turned the phone off and we said no television and no phone. The children were not happy, but we said no. We said to them, "You get to pick what we do. You get to pick where we eat and you get to pick what games we play." They loved that because they had daddy and mom all to themselves. It was just a great thing to do. What would be a personal goal? Get a body like an NFL player. That is a dream for most people. It is a nice dream, but how are you going to get there? That is your real goal. "Work out at the gym five days a week." A financial goal could be, "My business will grow this year." That is a great dream, but how are you going to know. Here is your goal, "My business will increase by 10%." That is a big, heavy goal. It does not sound important when you are thinking in terms of 100%. Most businesses in America grow about 7% if they have a good year, so that would be a really big goal. You want to set goals that will stretch you and stretch your faith. There is a good one. It will stretch you. If you can reach it without God's help, it is not going to bring you closer to God. It is going to make you think, "I can do all of this by myself. I don't need God." If you have goals that you think, "God it is not going to happen if You don't help me," then you get a better relationship with God. That is what you are really looking for. It is not a shame if you did not get it this year and you set it to get this year. Just move it to the next year. You are going to set goals again next year. That is an example of a person who will not quit. J.C. Penney said, "Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I will give you a man who will make history. Give me a man without a goal and I will give you a stock clerk."

Did people in the Bible have goals? Yes they did. Noah built an ark. Abraham had a son. Moses brought the people out of Egypt. David killed Goliath. Jesus died for the sins of the world. Paul pressed toward the mark. Just remember, there will always be opposition. You will get tired. People will oppose you. You will get discouraged. You will be tempted to compromise and rationalize. Remember this, the Holy Spirit lives inside you and He is very powerful. You have the mind of Christ. You can do this. Trust God. Bless you for going and setting goals. You are going to love it. You are going to be glad you did it. God bless you. I love you.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What does Proverbs 16:9 tell us about setting goals?
2. What are the reasons we don't make goals?
3. What scriptures or people from the Bible are helpful to you in setting your goals?
4. List the four areas in life that you should set goals for?
5. How does God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit offer help to us in setting and achieving your goals?

To watch the video on GOAL SETTING FOR FUTURE GOOD, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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