



Global College of Ministry

EXPLORE

The Christian & Goals

Goals for Souls

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”
(Acts 1:8).

The Book of Acts begins with Jesus’ vision and final words for His disciples. The disciples went about accomplishing His vision one soul at a time (by taking the gospel to others, one step at a time). The Book of Acts is a record of their progress in completing Jesus’ giant vision.

In a popular book *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice came to a crossroads leading in two directions. She asked, “Which way should I go from here?”

The response was, “That depends on where you want to go.”

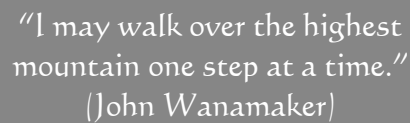
Alice said, “I don’t care where!”

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” came the answer. “If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, but in the direction we are moving.”

It has been said, “If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.” Evangelism is no exception. Without a goal, we will not advance the cause of Christ.

The points found in this lesson are applicable to individuals in any walk of life. For the Christian and the church, everything we do should have its basis and end in world evangelism.



“I may walk over the highest mountain one step at a time.”
(John Wanamaker)

**“Before taking steps, the wise man knows the object and end of his journey.”
(W. E. B. Du Bois)**

What Is a Goal?

Jack Canfield in *The Power of Focus* defines a goal as the “ongoing pursuit of a worthy objective until accomplished.”

Ongoing	Continuing; it takes time.
Pursuit	A chase may be involved.
Objective	Intention (al).
Worthy	Something valuable or admirable.

Rick Pitino in *Success is a Choice* explained, “Dreams are where we want to end up. Goals are how we get there. Dreams are our vision of where we are after the struggle, the prize at the end of the journey. Goals are the individual steps we take to ultimately deserve the prize.”

Charles Givens in *Superself* said, “Goals are the stepping-stones toward the realization of your dreams.” He believes “running your life without goals is about as effective as attempting to drive your car from the passenger’s seat.”

Givens also said, “Success is the progressive, timely achievement of your stated goals.”

Goals get you where you want to go. The two main types of goals are:

📖 Work

📖 Personal

Elbert Hubbard said, “Many people fail in life not for lack of ability but simply because they have never organized their energies around a goal.” He also said, “People who never do any more than they get paid for, never get paid for any more than they do.”

Goal setting is seriously lacking in the church. “There is at best a vague understanding of the church’s goals and at worst an uncaring attitude about whether the church has goals or not.”
(Real Evangelism)

Bruce Howell, a former missionary to El Salvador said, “The only year the El Salvador church did not grow was the year they did not set goals.”

Studies show that the most powerful predictor of success is the passion to pursue well-defined goals.

Goals give us purpose and direction and assist us in defining where we will place our energies.

Other words for goals include: aims, objectives, targets, milestones, tasks, assignments, desires, plans.

Napoleon Hill in *Think and Grow Rich* claimed that all successful people have one thing in common. They “set a specific goal and devised a plan for achieving that goal.”

“Only when you aspire to
excellence in your life can you be
free from mediocrity.”
(Peter L. Hirsch)

Without goals it is difficult for a person to ever rise above the mud of mediocrity.

Long-term success is a direct result of what is achieved each day. Goals help with the daily routine, keep us organized, and create discipline in our lives. Rick Pitino claims that setting goals is one of the major building blocks to personal success. He encourages “start out with short-term goals that are easily attainable to get into the habit of improvement; then you make the goals more demanding as you begin to have success.”

Peter L. Hirsch in *Living With Passion* relates a conversation with Napoleon Hill. “If you want success in any endeavor, there is one and only one quality you will require—definiteness of purpose; you must have the knowledge of what you want and a burning desire to possess it . . . Our world has a habit of making way for anyone whose words and actions show that he knows exactly where he is going.”

Accomplishing goals is the outcome of hard work. It has been said, “Working hard is not always fun. That is why it is called work.”

Jim Rohn claims there are two major pains in life:

1. Pain of discipline.
2. Pain of regret.

Doing the work and being involved in the pain of discipline is much preferable to the pain of regret.

James Berry said, “The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story but instead he writes another. And his saddest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with the one he vowed to write.”

It does not have to be like that. Let us do our best. Like Paul, we can finish the race. We can hear Jesus say, “Well done!”

Goal Setting in the Work Place

When involved in setting goals with employees or people under your leadership three options prevail:

1. Set the goals for the person.
2. Set the goals with the person.
3. Let the person set the goals.

It is important that the team, leader, and employees agree on work goals. Hold regular meetings to check on the progress of the goals.

Jesus and Goal-setting

Jesus had a plan and purpose for His life. At the age of twelve, He said, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Throughout His earthly ministry, He continued to explain His purpose, vision, and goals.

📖 "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

📖 "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

📖 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

Because Jesus knew His purpose, vision, mission, and goals, He was able to say on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

Paul understood his vision and goals, and he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Florence Chadwick tried to swim the English Channel. She asked to be taken out of the water a few hundred meters from land. When asked, "Why couldn't you make it?" she said, "I would have made it but fog moved in and kept me from seeing the shoreline. If I could have seen the shore, I could have made it." If we keep our eyes on our goals and vision, we can make it to the finish line.

☑ "I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing. Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead. I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven" (Philippians 3:12-14, *New Living Translation*).

Study Questions

1. What happens when we aim at nothing? _____

2. According to Jack Canfield, what is a goal? _____

3. What is the difference between goals and dreams (according to Rick Pitino and Charles Givens)? _____

4. According to Charles Givens, what is success? _____

5. What advice does Rick Pitino give concerning setting goals as the building blocks to personal success? _____

6. According to Peter L. Hirsch, what does our world have a habit of doing? _____

7. What are the two major pains in life (according to Jim Rohn)? _____

8. What did James Berry say concerning the life of every man? _____

9. What are the three options when setting goals with employees or those under your supervision? _____

10. When Jesus was twelve years old, what did He say about the plan and purpose for His life?

Additional Notes

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? _____

Additional Notes

Reaching Maximum Potential

“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

This lesson is being written on the first day of a new year. Its only predecessor is a long list of New Year’s Resolutions documenting goals, and dreams expected to be achieved over the year’s fifty-two weeks.

The dawning of a new year is an opportune time to reflect over the past and envision the future. It is encouraging to look back and see the trace of advancement, but depressing if the view is as complicated as walking or driving through heavy fog. No one wants to stroll aimlessly through life. A sense of satisfaction accompanies progress, growth, or improvement.

Our Key Scripture seems to allude to the parable of the Sower found in the Gospels. The church grew like grain—the blade, then the stalk, and was multiplied to the full ear of corn. It was good soil.

Parables – Secrets of the Kingdom



Jesus spoke in parables (earthly stories with eternal implications) so he could reveal the secrets of the kingdom.

Let us look at the growth of some individuals who make up the body of Christ and how we can reach our maximum potential. This will require studying the “Parable of the Sower.” Jesus used this story because His listeners were familiar with planting and harvesting. In each account (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-29; Luke 8:4-15) three components can be found:

- The Sower
- The Seed
- The Soil

The Seed is the Word

“The sower soweth the word” (Mark 4:14). The farmer sows the word but not just any word. Luke explains further, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

God’s Word is designed to produce fruit (Isaiah 55:11). If nothing is being produced it is the fault of the soil and not of the seed.

As Christians we need to become rooted and grounded (Ephesians 3:17). We must be good soil for this to happen.

The soil is our major concern in this lesson.

Plowing Hardened Hearts

An understanding of the soil is necessary for the production of successful crops. The ground contains the nutrients needed by the plants. In order to reach the highest productivity and harvest possible the ground must be prepared. This is done through plowing and cultivating the soil for growing crops. Much of the land in Bible times was covered with thorns. Palestine was plagued with nearly fifty kinds. Farmers prepared the ground by clearing away the weeds and thorns.

Our hearts can be hardened, untilled, and overgrown with weeds and thorns as well. If so, we need to humble ourselves, repent of our sins, and leave the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). This will enable us to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).

We can cultivate a heart for God. Repentance plows through unproductive and hardened hearts.

“Plow up the hard ground of your hearts! Do not waste your good seed among thorns. Cleanse your minds and hearts before the LORD, or my anger will burn like an unquenchable fire because of all your sins” (Jeremiah 4:3-4, *NLT*).

The Word of God can plow away the thorns and weeds from our heart. *Matthew Henry's Commentary* says that these undesirables can “choke both our endeavours and our expectations.” They can yield us unproductive and of no use to our Master. He expects us to produce “much fruit” (John 15:5-8).

“For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are” (Hebrews 4:12, *NLT*).

Cultivating Hearts for God

Plowed ground is ready to receive seeds. We can become better prepared for the Master's use through cultivating our hearts in the following ways:

- Prayer (Psalms 66:18; 129:23).
- Fasting (Isaiah 58:6).
- Bible reading (Psalms 119:130).
- Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Listening to the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
- Obeying the Word (James 1:21-22; 4:17).
- Being faithful to church attendance (Hebrews 10:25).
- Living right (Titus 2:12).

The Field of Life

In the field of life the seed is sown on all kinds of ground. It is the condition of the soil (heart) that determines the potential for productivity.

“However faithful the preacher, and however pure his message, the effect of the preaching of the Word depends upon the state of the hearer’s heart.” (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*)

Walk into the field with me. What kinds of soil will we encounter? Four. What we learn from each of them, if applied to our hearts, can make the difference between success and failure in our spiritual growth.

Roadside Soil

This soil (heart) is hard and not prepared for the seed. It does not understand God’s message. The Word cannot get beneath the soil. It will be trodden upon or eaten by birds.

We cannot keep the birds from hovering over our heads but we can stop them from building a nest in our hearts. Drive the birds away!

The devil is like the birds. Resist him. He will run from you (James 4:7). Each person will be held responsible for his own heart.

Rocky Soil

A thin surface of soil covers and hides the rocks. It pretends to be good soil. The shallow heart receives the Word with joy. When persecution, problems, and trials appear, the truth is dried up and withers away. The tiny sprout cannot stand the heat!

The Thorny Soil

The ground has not been cleared of thorns and weeds. It is not prepared for planting. The seed is sown and a tender plant pokes its head through the surface. It struggles to climb between the thorns. The seed starts its journey of growth but the thorns zap its strength, rob it of maturity, and eventually choke it to death.

The thorny soil does not “bring fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14). It is destroyed because the pleasures and cares of this world attract its attention away.

In Scripture “thorns” are symbolic of:

- Affliction (Numbers 33:55).
- Adversity (2 Corinthians 4:17).
- Choking the Word (Luke 8:14).
- False Prophets (Matthew 7:16).
- Neglect (Proverbs 24:31).

“I walked in the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one lacking sense. I saw that it was overgrown with thorns. It was covered with weeds, and its walls were broken down” (Proverbs 24:30-31, *NLT*).

Good Soil

This soil understands the Word, keeps it and allows it to take root, and produce. It experiences spiritual growth. There are three levels of productivity.

1. **Thirty-fold:** lowest level.
2. **Sixty-fold:** middle level.
3. **One hundred-fold:** maximum level of productivity (Genesis 26:12). This means that the harvest yields one hundred times more than the seed planted.

Many would like to reach the one hundred-fold level of productivity—maximum potential. But, how many are willing to pay the price?

It is easy to look for greener pastures or better soil in someone else’s field. We need to take personal responsibility for reaching our fullest potential. We cannot blame anyone else for our lack of progress.

Character flaws that are not corrected and/or sin in our lives cause us to fall short of the standard of the good soil.

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit” (Matthew 12:33).

It is only that which is planted in the heart, and permitted to grow that will be seen in our lives.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34).

May the Word of God grow and prevail in our lives allowing us to reach our maximum potential. Lord, help us to be good soil!

Study Questions

1. What is the beginning of a new year an opportune time to do? _____

2. What is a parable? _____

3. Why did Jesus choose to talk about planting and harvesting? _____

4. What are the three components found in the “Parable of the Sower”? _____

5. What is the “seed” referred to in this story? _____

6. What should we do if our hearts are hardened, untilled, and/or overgrown with spiritual weeds and thorns? _____

7. How can we cultivate our hearts for the Master’s use? _____

8. What did the prophet say in Jeremiah 4:3-4? _____

9. What can be used to plow through our hardened hearts (Hebrews 4:12)? _____

10. What are the four kinds of soil in the field of life? _____

11. Quote the words used from the *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* in this lesson? _____

12. What are “thorns” symbolic of in Scripture? _____

13. List the three levels of fruitfulness (productivity) and explain each. _____

14. What causes the seed planted in rocky soil to be dried up and wither away? _____

15. Explain what happened to the seed that fell along the roadside. _____

16. Why is the seed planted in the thorny soil destroyed? _____

17. What do you see in the field of a lazy person (Proverbs 24:3-31)? _____

18. Who needs to take responsibility for reaching your maximum potential? _____
