

Goals Provide Power and Purpose

How many of you made new year's resolutions last year? How many are still keeping those resolutions? Fewer hands went up the second time. That's ok. Someone said that new year's resolutions are made to be broken anyway! And besides that, the great people in the Bible didn't even make new year's resolutions. They did something far more powerful. Successful Bible people set and achieved meaningful goals.

How many of you want to be a better husband, wife, parent, son, daughter, or other family member or friend? How many would like excellent health, make more money and save for financial security, make better grades in school, or excel in your favorite sport or hobby? Who would like to read more or learn something new, develop a deeper prayer life and closer relationship with God, serve others, and win souls to Christ? We can set goals to pursue anything for which we have the right to pray. Obviously, we must keep God's Word and will in mind.

This lesson will show what the Bible says about using goals to achieve more of our potential. You can begin immediately to use the simple and powerful ideas in this lesson to translate your goals into results. To help you easily remember this lesson, let's call these ideas the Five Ps of Goal Setting. Five key words beginning with the letter P will help you recall these ideas.

1. Goals supply Power!

People with goals discover meaning in life. When Daniel was a teenager, he and some of his friends were captured by the Babylonians and taken away from Israel into captivity. The king of Babylon ordered them to drink wine and eat food against Daniels's religious convictions. Daniel refused as it says in **Daniel 1:8** because long ago as a boy he purposed in his heart and set a meaningful goal to serve his God. A purposed heart can resist powerful temptations and achieve high goals. Daniel demonstrated that goal-setters are achievers.

Psalm 17:3 says that David purposed that he would say nothing wrong because he made it his goal.

Psalm 112:7 teaches us that goals help fix our heart and give us confidence to continue. Goals help us overcome discouragement. A person with a fixed heart is a goal-oriented person.

Did you ever hear a person say, "I have half a mind to do something." Half a mind is a curious thing. Can you tell me what half a mind ever accomplished? Did half a mind ever invent, create, paint, play, or produce anything? What great business was ever built with half a mind? Would the New Testament Church have ever been established and grown with half a mind effort? What temptations can be resisted with half a mind?

Set your mind to reach your goals and purpose in your heart like Daniel and David. Goals supply you the **power** to achieve!

2. Goals must be Personal!

If you haven't figured out where you are going, you're lost before you start.

Jesus always knew where he was headed. **Luke 9:51** says that Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Jesus' goals gave Him direction and determination even in danger.

Luke 19:10 reveals that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Jesus' goals helped Him focus on his mission. He knew why He was coming, what He would do, when He would do it, and when it was finished. Jesus was the most goal-oriented person who ever lived. He purposed, planned, and had goals long before his birth on earth. We need that goal-power of Jesus in our lives.

In **Acts 19:21** Luke writes that Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem and Rome. Paul clearly knew what and where to concentrate his time, energy, and resources.

Our goals must be **personal** to us as Jesus' and Paul's goals were personal to them.

3. Goals should be Positive!

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:24** that "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Your goals should not conflict with each other or with your values. Your goals should support your values. Goals in conflict cause confusion and frustration.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:8** to think and meditate on those things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. He urged people to focus on the positive and worthwhile not the negative destructive things of life. When you accentuate the positive, you help eliminate the negative.

You must have long-range positive goals to keep you from being frustrated and discouraged by short-range defeats. Listen to Paul's long-range positive goal in **2 Timothy 4:6-8**. "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." Paul focused on heaven not hell. Paul focused on his reward not on his problems.

Fix your goals in your mind as though you already have achieved them. Hold that mental image and visualize your success. A boxer one time said about his championship victory "I've won it a thousand times." He had fought that championship fight and won it in his mind many times before entering the ring that night. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Quitters never win and winners never quit. If you want to be a winner, your goals should be **positive!**

4. Goals focus on the Present!

Goals are what you work on now, not just something you achieve in the future.

Read Matthew 14:22-33 and notice verse 30. "But when Peter saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, Lord, save me!" When Peter took his eyes off Jesus (his goal) and saw the wind, he began to sink. Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

Paul said not to let your past hold you back. He said in **Philippians 3:12-14** "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 a goal-directed achiever.

Marksmen when shooting have learned that you don't hit your target unless you aim at it. You don't hit anything unless you aim at it. If you aim at nothing, you will hit the bulls eye every time. Success is not only achieving what you aim at, but in aiming toward what you ought to achieve. Goals focus on the **present!**

5. Goals require Persistence!

Goal-directed people move in the right direction with persistence. Paul used the Olympic games to teach persistence in achieving. **Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.** "²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

It may be a long way to the goal, but it is never far to the next step toward the goal.

Before you can score, you must first have a goal. We know that is true in sports. It is the same in the game of life. Set some challenging goals for yourself. You may not reach them all, but you will build a lot of muscle climbing toward them.

God will help us, but He expects us to do our part. Our part includes ask, seek, and knock. In **Matthew 7:7-8** Jesus said "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." Goals require **persistence!**

Don't Quit

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns.
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow;
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup.
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver lining of the clouds of doubt.
And you never can tell how close you are;
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit;
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.
- Author unknown

Use the 5 Ps to help you learn to set and achieve your goals - Power, Personal, Positive, Present, Persistence.

Often our goals seem impossible. I am reminded of the quest for what seems impossible at times by the song: **The Impossible Dream (The Quest)**. It is the main song written by Joe Darion for the 1965 musical *Man of La Mancha*. It became a popular hit.

The song is sung all the way through once in the musical by Don Quixote as he stands vigil over his armor in response to Aldonza (Dulcinea)'s question about what he means by "following the quest". I am inspired by these words as I apply them to my own life.

To dream the impossible dream,
To fight the unbeatable foe,
To bear with unbearable sorrow,
To run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong,
To love pure and chaste from afar,
To try when your arms are too weary,
To reach the unreachable star!

This is my quest to follow that star,
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far.
To fight for the right without question or pause,
To be willing to march into Hell for a heavenly cause.

And I know if I'll only be true
To this glorious quest,
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm,
When I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this,
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,
Still strove with his last ounce of courage,
To reach the unreachable star.

Faith is the other part of goals we have not yet talked about. Jesus said it this way in **Mark 9:23** "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Belief makes anything possible. And He said in **Mark 10:27** "With men, it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." God makes anything possible. Enjoy setting and achieving goals God's way.

I hope your number one goal is serving God, living the Christian life, and going to heaven when you die.