

" GOAL SETTING AND THE BIBLE "

A goal is a predetermined purpose, pursued according to a specific set of planned action steps.

Galatians 4v19 "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you"

1. GOD OPERATES ON THE BASIS OF GOALS.

A. Creation is the first evidence of goals.

God moved in a series of progressive steps to accomplish His purpose. At the end of each day, He surveyed the work and approved it. When it was complete, He rested.

B. God's decision to make man is the first recorded statement of the planning of a goal.

God said, *"Let us make man in our image"*. He then proceeded to carry out His plan.

C. God's plan for the salvation of man is an example of a long-range goal carefully carried out over many centuries.

It was foreshadowed in *Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* and clearly announced throughout the Old Testament. The coming of Jesus completed the establishment of the plan, and the growth of the church is the instrument He chose for propagating it.

2. GOD DIRECTLY LEADS PEOPLE TO SET AND PURSUE GOALS OF HIS CHOOSING.

A. God moved Noah to build the ark.

He accepted God's goals and worked diligently toward it.

B. God told Jonah to go to Ninevah.

He accepted God's goal and accomplished it grudgingly. As a result, he gained no joy from having achieved it.

- C. Jesus accepted the Father's goal for Him in sacrificing His own life for our salvation.**

He deliberately set His feet on the path that would bring about His death because that was necessary to meet the goal. Luke 9:31.

3. JESUS APPROVED THE SETTING OF GOALS.

- A. He took it for granted that people planned ahead.**

Luke 14:28 cites the wisdom of "counting the cost" before beginning to build a tower.

- B. The parable of the ten wise and ten foolish virgins approves looking ahead and being prepared.**

Those who did so achieved the goal - joining the wedding party; those who did not, missed the bridegroom. Matthew 25:1-13.

- C. The parable of the talents shows His approval of those who planned and used the talents they were given and His anger with those who refused to honour their Lord by using what they were given.**

Matthew 25:14-30.

4. PAUL SET GOALS.

Writes About Them In His Letters, Tells What He Is Willing To Do To Achieve Them, And Urges Others To Set Goals.

- A. Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,*
- B. Philippians 3:11 so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*
- C. Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. 15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.*
- D. Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- E. 2 Corinthians 10:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

5. THE GOALS WE SET MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S WILL AND UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP.

- A. David desired to build a temple to honour God, but this was not in keeping with God's plan. He, therefore, modified his goal and began collecting materials that Solomon would later use to build the temple.**
- B. Gideon accepted the goal that God inspired and undertook to lead the Israelites into battle. He made his plans to raise an army, but God instructed him to change his recruiting strategies. He did, and his goal was achieved successfully.**
- C. When the sons of men began to build the Tower of Babel, God recognized it as an undesirable goal for those men. Since they were not open to hearing God's voice, God stepped in and confounded their speech to frustrate their goal.**
- D. On one of his missionary journeys, Paul "assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not". He tested his goal against the leadership of the Holy Spirit, found it not in keeping with God's plan, and passed by Bithynia and went to Troas.**

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUR CHURCH GROUP.

- A. Your basic goal must always be the command of Jesus: Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.**

Matthew 18:19,20.

- B. The basic goal outlined by Jesus lacks the specific details of how we will go about achieving this purpose in this exact time and place where we find ourselves. Because we are made in the image of God, we have the ability to plan, to look ahead, to strive for a holy purpose. God expects us to use these abilities, always under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.**
- C. God continually opens doors of opportunity to His children. If we are prepared, we can enter the door; if we are not, we may not even**

recognize it. Then we would never even know we had missed something we could have accomplished for the glory of God.

- D. We are asking fellow Christians to help us financially. They are doing so out of their love for God and their purpose to promote the growth of His kingdom. We must have concrete goals and plans for the effective use of these funds; otherwise we are failing in our task, and we lessen the effectiveness of the stewardship of those who have trusted us with the gifts they offer to God.**
- E. It is imperative that we seek God's leadership at every step of the process of setting goals for our work.**

God wants us to know His will. His will is always the path that is for us. But God does not force His will upon us. We must seek it.

A programme of goals for directing your church is an active seeking of God's will. He will honour your efforts and guide you to the path that is best for you as individuals and that will make your church the most effective it can be in making known the name of Christ to the millions who do not know Him.

SOME PRACTICAL HINTS.

A good goal-setting programme will be S-M-A-R-T: in other words it will be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible.

SOME CONSIDER GOAL SETTING AS PRESUMPTUOUS!

The fear of considering goal setting presumptuous. Some may not set goals because of the verse which says, "Keep back your servant also from willful or presumptuous sins" (Psalm 19:13). But goal setting meshes perfectly with the sovereignty of God.

Several years John Haggai was lecturing a group of Brazilian Christian leaders. The editor of a large denominational publishing house queried, "Dr. Haggai, how do you reconcile goal setting with the sovereignty of God? Is not goal setting a presumption on God's will?"

We had been discussing goals as they related to the number of people we wanted to see evangelized in the Third World. I asked him, "How many children do you have?" "Three".

"May I assume your great passion is that they might give their lives to the Lord and live God-honouring, Christ-centred lives?" "Of course".

"May I also assume that you and your dear wife are praying fervently, instructing the children, and creating the atmosphere in your home most conducive to leading them to such a spiritual commitment, while at the same time maintaining care not to pressure them? In other words, you want the decisions to be their own decisions. Am I correct in this?"

"Yes,. Our great desire is that they may know the Lord". "May it not be said, then, that you and your wife have set a goal, and that this goal relates to the salvation of your children? If that be true, do you think you are profaning the sovereignty of God?"

Within the parameters of God's sovereignty, He gives freedom for our choice". We do not profane God's sovereignty by setting goals. Rather, we are to set our goals with reference to His will as we understand it. The goals then are the steps we take in carrying out the will of God! ***The Living Bible paraphrases Proverbs 24:3-4 "Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts".***