

Do You Have Worthy Goals For Your Life?

A Topical Sermon

by M. F. McKnight

Man was designed for accomplishment. He was engineered for success. He was endowed with the seeds of greatness. God didn't waste His time making a nobody. He created everyone in His own image. The devil puts the failure image into our hearts. If you are a nobody, you are a self-made or "devil-made" nobody. God didn't make you that way.

But in order to be the person God wants you to be, you must set some worthy goals for your life. Thus, our topic is this: Do you have worthy goals for your life?

We will begin with some definitions. Goal-setting and success are so closely related that I am going to define both *goal* and *success*. Mr. Webster says a *goal* is an aim or a purpose. That is about the simplest definition I could find. Do you have an aim in life? Do you have a purpose in life? If so, then you have a goal. Mr. Webster further says that a *goal* is the end that a person intends to accomplish. *Success* is the satisfactory accomplishment of a goal.

I. GOD AND DIVINE GOALS

Our God is a God of goals. Our God is a goal-setting God. Have you ever thought about this truth? We can begin in Genesis 1:26. Listen to the first purpose or aim He had after the creation of the physical world. He said, "Let us make man in our image." See the end God intended to accomplish.

In Genesis 6:5, 6, God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and it grieved Him. Therefore, He decided to destroy man from the face of the earth. In Genesis 6:7 He said, "I will destroy man. . . ." The next verse says that Noah, a preacher of righteousness, found grace in the eyes of God. We are glad he did. The human race would have become extinct otherwise. But, nevertheless, God had a goal, a purpose.

God told Abraham that "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." God planned

or purposed to bring His Son into this world that all the nations of the earth could be blessed. Isaiah is more specific about this goal. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel." God was successful in fulfilling His purpose because in Matthew 1:23 that same prophecy of Isaiah is spoken of as being fulfilled in Jesus.

Not only does God set goals for Himself, but He also sets goals for others. In Acts 9:15 God told Saul of Tarsus that He was sending him to the Gentiles. He had a purpose for him. In Acts 18:6 Paul said that from that time forward he was going only to the Gentiles. This was the fulfillment of the purpose God had for him.

Jesus said He had a goal. In John 5:30 He said His desire was to do the will of the Father who sent Him. Jesus also said, "My meat is to do the will of the Father who sent me" (John 4:34).

Jesus also gave goals to others. In Matthew 28:19, 20, He said for us to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He said in Mark, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel."

Romans 1:10 says the apostle Paul had a desire and a purpose. He had a goal to go to Rome. He told the Roman Christians he intended to come to see them. In Romans 15:28 he said, "I purposed to go to Spain." He said, "When I come by Rome, you can help me on my way to Spain." I don't know whether he ever accomplished his goal to go to Spain or not. I do know he accomplished his goal to go to Rome because Acts 28 reveals that he did. Nothing great was ever accomplished without a very definite, specific goal.

Paul stated his ultimate goal in Philippians 3:13, 14: ". . . but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward

to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He had a purpose and a goal in life.

II. ACHIEVERS AND PHYSICAL GOALS

In 1953 the Yale graduating class was polled. It was discovered that 3 percent of the graduating class had definite, specific goals in life. Then in 1975 the graduating class was checked upon again by the same department, and it was found that the 3 percent who had goals had accomplished more than the other 97 percent put together. That is the way it always works. Zig Ziglar in his book *See You at the Top* talks about being a *wandering generality* or a *meaningful specific*. Each one in this 3 percent of the Yale graduating class was a meaningful specific. He had some purpose, some definite goal in life. The others were just wandering generalities, going wherever they were pushed.

J. C. Penny said, "Give me a stock clerk with a goal, and I'll give you a man who makes history. But give me a man without a goal, and I'll give you a stock clerk." That is just a businessman's way of saying what was said about the Yale University class.

Do you have a very definite, specific goal in life? Are you just drifting along as a wandering generality, or do you have a very definite, specific goal?

Imagine this situation. Two teams are in a college basketball tournament. They have come down to the finals. Here are the two top college teams in the nation. They have eliminated everybody else. We come into the gymnasium, and the teams are warming up out on the court. It is just about time for the game to start, so each coach takes his team back into the dressing room for that last pep talk. He gets them so charged up they nearly run over each other trying to get out the door to get on the court. They get out on the court and notice that somebody has removed the goals. Now what is going to happen? Why, they are going to be frustrated. You say, "The fact someone has taken the goals shouldn't matter. They need to just get out there and play." Their frustration turns into anger. They know that without any goals they won't know whether they are hitting or missing. They

won't know whether they are on target or off target. They won't know whether they are any better than the competition. It would be ridiculous to play without goals, wouldn't it?

That is how ridiculous it is for you to go through life playing the game of life without goals. You say, "I can play the game of life without any goals." All right, tell me: What is the score? You couldn't have a basketball game without goals, could you? You can't have a successful game of life without goals either. Make fun of them if you like, but they have to be there. They are a challenge to a man.

I want to take you to Miami, Florida. We are going to depart from Miami to go on a Caribbean cruise. The ship we are on is just as modern as a ship can be except that a captain and crew will not be on it. We are just going to fire up the engines and head out to sea. I believe every one of you would agree with me that 9,999 times out of 10,000 a ship without a captain and crew is going to end up a wreck. Why? It has no goal; it has no destination. That is the reason there is so much human wreckage on the shores of the seas of time. A person without worthwhile goals or purposes always winds up a wreck.

The north wall of the Matterhorn in Switzerland used to be deemed "unclimbable." That is one of the most majestic mountains in the world. There have been times when I have flown over it that I could just see the top of it sticking up through the clouds. Just a few years ago four young men started out to climb the "unclimbable" north wall. They were interviewed by a newspaper reporter. He said to the first one, "Do you think you're going to make it?" He said, "I don't know, but I'm going to give it my best effort." He asked the second one, "What's your opinion about this climb?" He said, "I'm going to do the best I can." He asked the third one, "What do you think about it?" He said, "I'll tell you this I'll jolly well do my very best." Then he asked the fourth one, "What do you think about it?" He said, "I will climb the north wall to the Matterhorn." One of them did. Do you know which one? The American boy did who said, "I will do it." He had a goal!

Ben Fellman one year sold more insurance than any other life insurance underwriter in our nation. He sold over \$65 million worth of life insurance. I have some friends who work like ev-

everything trying to sell a million so they can get their picture taken and get admitted to the Million Dollar Round Table. Do you mean to tell me that Mr. Fellman is 65 times better than a man who just sells a million dollars worth of insurance? Let him answer that question. Bob Conklin asked him that question and he said, "I've thought about that a lot. A lot of men just strive and do everything they can to reach a million. But the trouble with most people is they don't set their goals high enough." "No," he said, "I'm not 65 times better than they are. I set my goals higher than they do."

Jack Simpla is the richest man in the state of Idaho. He lives in Boise, Idaho. Jack Simpla started out as a potato digger. Today he is the world's largest potato processor. The Internal Revenue Service estimates his wealth in excess of \$500 million. He is one-half a billionaire. He owns more land in the state of Idaho than the United States government does. Someone asked him if he had it to do over would he do anything differently. He said, "I sure would. I made one glaring mistake. I didn't think big enough. I didn't set my goals high enough." You are rarely ever going to exceed your goals. Do you have any?

Patty Wilson is an epileptic. At age 13 she started running with her daddy, who was a jogger. Patty's mother is a registered nurse. She got interested in running and found that the world's record for the women's distance run was one hundred miles. She set for herself a goal. She said, "I'm going to break that record." After her freshman year in high school she ran from her home in Buena Vista in southern California to San Francisco, a distance of four hundred miles. Her mother drove in a van behind her and carried supplies in case Patty had a seizure. Patty decided that when she finished her sophomore year in high school she would run from her home in southern California to Portland, Oregon, a distance of one thousand miles. On this run she broke a bone in her foot. She told the doctor to tape it up. He advised her to quit. She said, "No, if I quit too many other people will give up. I want to show them that epileptics are normal people." She made the doctor tape it up, and she ran the rest of the way with a broken bone in her foot. When she finishes her junior year, she plans to run from her home in southern California to St. Louis, Missouri, a distance of two thou-

sand miles. When she graduates from high school, she intends to run from southern California to the White House. Goals challenge a person. They bring out the best in us.

III. CHRISTIANS AND SPIRITUAL GOALS

Growing churches, almost without exception, have goals. The only exceptions I can find are congregations where people are moving in and placing membership. I don't call that growth. I am talking about growing churches—those out knocking on the doors or, in some other way, trying to penetrate the community. They have goals, almost without exception. There could be some exceptions, but I don't know any.

What kind of goal do you have? It is important to have specific goals in the physical and material realms, but it is even more important to have them in the spiritual realm.

I want to read Mark 11:24 in three different versions of the Bible. In the King James Version, Jesus said, ". . . What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." It didn't say, "Believe that you *will* receive them." It is present tense. Moffett's translation says, "Whatever you pray for and ask, believe you have got it, and you shall have it." This is a little plainer than the King James Version. It is, however, exactly what the King James Version is saying.

The New English Bible says, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Now I am not perverting this passage of Scripture; I am not wresting it out of its context.

Jesus said in John 16:24, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, . . ." Matthew 7:7 says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Romans 8:32 says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" The only thing that limits God's power is our lack of faith.

First John 4:17, 18 says, "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; . . . perfect love casteth out fear, . . ." In Phillips translation verse 17 says, "So our love for him grows more and more, filling us with complete confidence for the day

when he shall judge all men—for we realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us.” My, how beautiful! My, what an aspiring goal! He says, “. . . for we realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us.” Christ in you is the only hope of glory you have.

CONCLUSION

Does He dwell in your heart? Does He rule

and direct the affairs of your life? Do you aspire to be like Him? The greatest goal you can have in life is to seek to be like Him.

Ask yourself the question “Do I have a worthy goal for my life?” The first step toward successful and abundant living is to establish worthy goals for your life. Can you say with Paul, “. . . this one thing I do, . . .” (Philippians 3:13).

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