

Pr Mark Turner: Goals & Desires (25/1/2020)

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:7-14

At the beginning of a new year, you may have been processing your life, deciding on new goals for the year ahead.

How can we tell the difference between good and bad goals? How can we convert bad goals into good goals?

1. How successful am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be more successful if...
2. How significant am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be more significant if...
3. How fulfilled am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be more fulfilled if...
4. How satisfied am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be more satisfied if...
5. How happy am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be happier if...
6. How secure am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would be more secure if...
7. How peaceful am I? 1 2 3 4 5
- I would have more peace if...

Once our basic needs have been met, these are seven of the innate desires that each of us strives after. The question, however, is one of definitions. How do we choose to define these things that we strive after? And what qualifications can help us to relate to these seven desires in a healthy way?

Identifying bad goals:

How do I know if my goals are good or bad?

God has built into us a feedback system that helps us to determine the validity of our goals - our feelings.

Feelings are God's red flag or warning. Three ways in which we are often flagged are:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Depression

Anger can signal a blocked goal.

When these goals become blocked, we have a tendency to become frustrated and angry with those who are blocking them.

eg. imagine you are held up in traffic on the way to an important interview. How do you respond to the traffic?

or, imagine you have a goal to have a happy family. A good goal, but what happens when our family members get in the way of the success of that goal?

Anxiety can signal an uncertain goal.

When we foresee the potential for uncertain goals to become blocked we often develop anxiety.

eg. imagine placing all your hopes and dreams on achieving a certain thing that isn't guaranteed to happen. How do you feel if it does not happen?

Depression can signal an impossible goal.

When a goal is looking less and less possible, we often sink into depression.

eg. imagine that you have been praying for a family member for 20 years. They seem to be getting further and further from God. How do you feel?

Wrong responses to those who frustrate our goals:

- Attempting to manipulate people and/or circumstances.
- Becoming bitter, angry or resentful.
- Seeing yourself as a martyr.

How can I turn bad goals into good goals?

The key to determining whether or not a goal is good, is to distinguish between goals and desires.

Godly Goal:

Any specific orientation that reflects God's purpose for our lives and is not dependent upon people or circumstances that are beyond our ability or right to control.

Godly Desire:

Any specific result that depends upon the cooperation of other people, the success of events, or favourable circumstances that we have no right or ability to control.

What does the Bible say?

God's Desire:

- "...[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." **1 Timothy 2:4** (NKJV)

God's Goals:

- Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay." **Habakkuk 2:2,3** (NASB)

Jesus' Goal:

- "And He [Jesus] said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I reach my goal.'" **Luke 13:32** (NASB)

Paul's Desire:

- "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved." **Romans 10:1**

Paul's Goals:

- "So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him." **2 Corinthians 5:9** (NLT)
- "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." **Philippians 3:14** (NKJV)

The goal is to become the person that God called you to be:

God's basic goal for our lives is spiritual maturity (character development).

“God’s will is for you to be holy” **1 Thessalonians 4:3**(NLT)

Sometimes the things that get in the way of our goals are the very things that are supposed to make us more mature.

So, rather than running from these things, as though this would improve our life, we should let them improve us - rather than running from our own immaturity.

The tribulations we face are actually a means of achieving our supreme goal of spiritual maturity.

“...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” **Romans 5:3,4** (NIV)

Conclusion:

Instead of praying that God would change everyone else, we should pray that we would be the best version of ourselves.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” **James 1:2-4** (NIV)

Our accountability to God is ourselves. We are responsible for making the best of the life we have.

“As you enter upon a new year, let it be with an earnest resolve to have your course onward and upward. Let your life be more elevated and exalted than it has hitherto been. Make it your aim not to seek your own interest and pleasure, but to advance the cause of your Redeemer. Remain not in a position where you ever need help yourself, and where others have to guard you to keep you in the narrow way. You may be strong to exert a sanctifying influence upon others. You may be where your soul’s interest will be awakened to do good to others, to comfort the sorrowful, strengthen the weak, and to bear your testimony for Christ whenever opportunity offers. Aim to honour God in everything, always and everywhere. Carry your religion into everything. Prepare for eternity with such a zeal as you have not yet manifested. Educate your mind to love the Bible, to love the prayer meeting, to love the hour of meditation, and, above all, the hour when the soul communes with God. Become heavenly-minded if you would unite with the heavenly choir in the mansions above.”

Ellen White, My Life Today, pg 369