

# STUDY ONE: DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND MINISTRY VISION AND GOALS

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*'It's best not to wait for a crisis to discover what's important in your life.'*

## A. INTENTIONAL GOAL SETTING - WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS ABOUT GOALS?

In Ephesians 5 Paul identifies a number of life principles or goals:

Verse 1: To imitate God as dearly loved children.

Verse 10: To find out what pleases the Lord.

Verse 15: To live carefully and wisely.

Verse 16: To make the most of every opportunity.

Verse 17: To not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

These goals help us to define what we want our lives as Christians to look like. Here are some more biblical principles that help us identify our personal mission statements:

How do the following scriptural principles help you to identify your personal goals and mission statements?

John 6:28 & 29 – The principle that believing in Christ is the most important thing

Psalm 1:1-3 - The principle of directing one's life by the Word of God

Romans 14:22 - The principle of living with a clear conscience before God

Matthew 3:12, 1Corinthians 3: 10 – 15 - The principle of distinguishing between what will endure and what will not

1Corinthians 7:31 - The principle of having a correct attitude to material things.

Hebrews 12:1 - The principle of getting rid of everything that keeps us from the ultimate goal

1Corinthians 9:24-26 - The principle of self discipline

James 1: 5 - The principle of asking God for wisdom

2Timothy 2:3 - 2Corinthians 6:4-10 The principle of enduring hardship

Philippians 4:6 - The principle of prayer instead of anxiety

1Corinthians 15:58 - The principle of commitment

John 15:5 - The principle of dependence on Christ

1Corinthians 12:12,27 - The principle of unity of the body of Christ, and understanding one's part in it

Ephesians 4:11- 14 - The principle of dependence on the Word of God for stability and strength

Luke 9: 57 – 62 - The principle that Jesus is our first priority

Luke 14: 25 – 34 - The principle of counting the cost of following Jesus before you commit

Luke 12: 35 – 48 - The principle of being always ready for the return of Christ

**Complete Study One Worksheet Section #1 now.**

## B. DEVELOPING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

**Begin with the end in mind ...**

'To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction. ...

'How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and, keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most. If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster.' [p98 Stephen Covey: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*]

So, how do we define what our goal or mission or purpose is? Is there a right and wrong way of going about this?

Stephen Covey suggests ten alternative centres around which people commonly base their lives:

Spouse	Pleasure
Family	Friend
Money	Enemy
Work	Church
Possessions	Self

While some of these seem obviously better than others, Covey believes that each of them has potential inbuilt problems as the centre of our lives, impacting and inhibiting our felt or perceived security, our decisions, our wisdom/outlook and our ability to act and move forward. Because of these limitations he suggests a better alternative: that we should be **principle centred**.

As Christians we have received from God a range of pre-determined biblical principles, some of which addressed in the *Setting Biblical Foundations* studies, and some we have looked at in Section A above. It is on these principles that our lives as Christians should be centred, and from which we can develop our personal mission statement [purpose statement] by which our short and long term goals will then be determined. By making God-given principles our centre we are effectively making God the centre from which all of our life – its priorities, its goals, its standards, its choices - will emanate.

A Christian's mission statement could be as simple as 'My mission in life is *to glorify God and enjoy him forever*' [taken straight from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*]; or 'To love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbour as myself'; or: 'to honour Christ in all I say and do'.

Our mission statement gives our life both boundaries and direction. If God-focused Biblical principles are the basis for your mission statement this will

- provide a stable foundation and criteria for your choices and outlook in every area of your life.
- minimize the difficulty of decision-making,
- help you avoid taking on tasks or responsibilities that are contrary to your fundamental objectives.
- help to protect you against pressure to conform to the norm.
- help you to build the biblical mindset commanded by the scripture.

**Complete Section #2 of the Study One Worksheet now.**

### C. GOAL SETTING

*'The smallest deed is better than the grandest intention.'*

Basically there are **Eight Key Areas** of your life you need to consider in relation to goal setting. As a Christian you need to look at each of these in terms of:

What you are currently doing.

What you want or ought to be doing.

How what you are doing or want to do fits with Biblical Priorities and Biblical Principles

How what you are doing or want to do fits with your person Mission Statement.

**The eight areas of life, and what is involved in them for the Christian, are:**

**Spiritual:** This relates to your relationship with God. Fundamental to your relationship with God is your knowledge of God and your obedience to God. Under this heading your goals will relate to things like

Deliberate reading and studying of the Word of God.

Regular prayer

A determination to know and believe the truth about God.

A determination to trust the God's promises.

A determination to obey God's commands.

A determination to serve God. [Relates to 'Vocation/Career' below.]

Setting up an accountability relationship if you struggle with specific sins.

Being part of a Bible study group or discipleship program.

**Family:** This is potentially a very large and important area, depending on the size of your family, and your current family status. Your goals may relate to

Maintaining loving and supportive relationships with family members.  
Improving or mending relationships that are currently fragile or broken.  
Being the kind of son, daughter, husband, wife, parent, etc that God wants you to be.  
Living within the sexual and sexuality boundaries set by God.  
Being a role model of Christian faith within your family.  
Praying and working towards the conversion of unbelieving family members.  
Finding a life partner.  
Becoming a parent, or having more children.

**Vocation/Career:** Here you are looking at the area of your 'employment'. It takes up a huge amount of your days and connects with most of the other areas of your life. Because it consumes so much time it is extremely important to have clear goals in place [and clear boundaries – which we will look at in a later study]. If this area of life is not contained within clear goals and boundaries it has the ability to dominate the whole of your life, to the detriment of all other areas. In setting goals here you need to think about:

Does the work you are doing, or plan to do, help or hinder your Biblical Priorities and Principles and your spiritual goals?  
Is the work you are currently doing the work you want to be doing 5 or 10 years down the track?  
Does this work fit with your personality, natural talents and learned abilities?  
Does this work fit with your financial goals?  
Does your current position demand too much overtime or travelling time, robbing your family of your time and energy?  
Does your current work or position cause so much stress that your physical and/or mental health is deteriorating?  
Should you be pursuing formal study in your field of work?  
If you are studying, are you on the right study path for you and for your other goals?  
Does your current work leave you with enough time and energy to serve God in a voluntary capacity in your local church?  
Is part-time or full-time Christian service part of your vocational/career goals?

**Mental/Intellectual:** In setting goals here you will consider:

Formal study goals – towards your career or towards Christian ministry of some kind.  
Informal self-improvement options – deliberate discussion with work colleagues, personal reading, etc.  
If you are older – decide how you are going to keep your brain active.  
Recognizing poor or destructive habitual thought patterns and determining to replace them with godly, faith-based thought patterns.  
Maintaining your mental health, which includes knowing yourself and recognizing signs of impending stress, burn out and depression.  
If you are in a state of poor mental health, seeking professional help.

**Physical/Health/Recreation:** Physical health impacts all areas of life. Your goals here should help you to maintain your physical health. They will cover such things as:

Factoring regular physical activity into your week.  
Factoring margin [empty space] into your daily schedule.  
Making sure your diet is healthy.  
Removing excesses and/or addictions from your life.  
Getting enough sleep.  
Keeping your weight within the right limits for your height – neither underweight nor overweight.  
Getting regular medical check-ups.  
Deciding whether or not to be involved in organized sport or to pursue personal recreational activities.

**Financial/Material:** This relates to your income, your money and your possessions. Here you face up to questions like

Does my work provide enough income to finance my actual needs?  
If not, what am I going to do about it?  
Am I able to distinguish between 'wants' and 'needs'?  
How much of my spending is on unnecessary items?  
Could I live with less income and have more time for the Lord and/or for family?  
How much should I be giving to God and to the poor and needy?  
How can I use my possessions to serve God?  
How do I plan to get out of debt?  
Do I really need a credit card?

Should I be saving for a deposit on a house?

How much should I be regularly putting aside for the future – for children's education etc?

Should I be considering investment options?

Am I a slave of my possessions?

If I'm married, do my spouse and I think the same about finances and possessions?

**Social/Community:** This area is about your interaction with other people [apart from immediate family]. It is not just about whether or not you need interaction with an extended group of people, but also about how you can serve God in the context of social groups and community needs. While we all live in a social and community context, the degree to which you are involved has a lot to do with the kind of person you are and the particular gifts God has given you. Your relationships with other people are important as you seek to shine the light of Jesus Christ into the world. Here you will think about goals in terms of:

Intentional friendship building with your neighbours and others you encounter regularly.

Whether or not to join a social or community group.

Your level of involvement in sport.

How you will serve your community in long term needs or in crises.

**Other:** This category is here because we are all different. There may be something important in your life that is not covered by any of the above.

**Complete Section #3A-C of the Study One Worksheet now.**

### **C.1 Setting long term goals and short term goals**

Now that you have worked out what you really want to do with your life you are ready to create your short and long term goals. You set your long term goals first. These define what you want to achieve by five or ten years down the track. Some of these will be more important to you than others, particularly in fulfilling your over-arching Mission Statement. You need to get clear in your mind which are the most important, or you will find yourself spending too much time, money and energy pursuing long term goals that are not the most important.

Then you set yourself some short term goals that will help you get to the long term goal step by step.

For example, if your list of 8 important ambitions includes getting married and having a family one of your long term goals will be:

Get married

To achieve this long term goal you might set such short term goals as:

Regularly talk to God about my desire to get married.

Keep myself sexually pure for my marriage partner.

Define the kind of person I want as my life-long partner and the parent of my children.

Date only those whose mission statement parallels mine.

Prepare myself for marriage in terms of health, finance, spiritual walk.

**Complete Sections #4 and 5 in the Study One Worksheet**

### **C.2 Working with short and long term goals**

[1] At all times keep your goals before the Lord in prayer – which goals to prioritize, desiring God's honour in all you do, needing his help to achieve anything at all, needing his strength to enable you to press on.

[2] As you life moves forward circumstances change. Sometimes it is necessary to reset your long term goals and your short term goals. That is okay. God is sovereign, not your goals. Do not allow these changing circumstances to throw you into a tail-spin. God knew all about them before you set your goals, and he knows your underlying commitment to him, his glory and his kingdom. He makes use of your circumstances to get you to the place where he wants you to be, particularly in terms of your spiritual growth.

[3] As you study the Word of God you will sometimes realize that the goals you set don't really run in sync with God. That's a good thing to learn. You will need to redefine some of your goals [both long and short] so that they conform more closely to God and his purposes for his children.