

## **The Base - 6 January 2023 - Biblical Goal Setting**

God has a lot to say about goals, intentional planning, and stewarding well what we've been given. Goals are good! God desires for us to live on purpose, not by accident. The fact that you're asking and seeking His will means you want to do this life well. His Word is about to illuminate for you how to set the right goals and stay motivated to achieve them.

But, don't expect to find a checklist or a quick-fix formula for goal setting in the Bible. If it were that easy, we might read the list, check it off, and never talk to God about our plans. **It's not about following rules, it's about a relationship with the One who created you with unique gifts and talents to use, God Himself.**

The alternative to setting good goals? Wandering around aimlessly, letting life happen to you. Think about it. Did any of the key figures in the Bible just sit around doing nothing? Sure, they had their missteps, but Moses, David, Esther, Ruth, Paul, and Jesus Himself had goals, and they went after them with God's strength and wisdom. You can do the same, one step and leap of faith at a time.

### **Read the Following Passages**

#### **Nehemiah 1 Nehemiah's Prayer**

**1** The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, **2** Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

**3** They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

**4** When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. **5** Then I said:

"Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **6** let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. **7** We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

**8** "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, **9** but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

**10** "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. **11** Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king.

## **Nehemiah 2**

### **Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem**

**1** In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, **2** so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, **3** but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" **4** The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, **5** and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." **6** Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

**7** I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? **8** And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. **9** So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. **10** When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

### **Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls**

**11** I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days **12** I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

**13** By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. **14** Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; **15** so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. **16** The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

**17** Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." **18** I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

**19** But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?" **20** I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

## Group Discussion

1. What was Nehemiah's goal?
2. What do we learn from Nehemiah about planning and preparedness?
3. How does prayer work together in this process?
4. How did Nehemiah respond when he faced ridicules?

**In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps. Proverbs 16:9**

5. Where are we in terms of this "Discipleship Scale"?  
Consumer >> Connected >> Committed >> Compelled
6. How can grow in our spiritual walk with God?

## Setting God-Led Goals

What do God-led goals look like? Can you have a goal that doesn't explicitly have to do with ministry?

Some goals and practices are already laid out for us in scripture: read your Bible (Psalm 119:9), spend time in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18), be with other believers (Hebrews 10:25), and share your faith (Psalm 96:3). God desires these things of us to keep us close to Him—to keep us fruitful and faithful. This isn't a checklist to follow, but rather the result of a heart that's been transformed by God's grace. We are compelled to do these things because He loves us so much.

But what about the rest of life? **God wants us to do all things for His glory** (1 Corinthians 10:31)—the big goals He has for us and the seemingly mundane. Whether it's building a business, completing a degree, making wise financial decisions, or taking care of your body, if those things are done with the aim to please God, you could use them to be a light for Him. **It doesn't mean we have to be perfect in those things or our progress, we just have to be faithful.**

When we do all things for His glory, people see something different in us. They wonder where our hope comes from and, Lord willing, we'll get an opportunity to share the Source.

**Personal Reflection**

1. Brainstorm some tangible goals. As you think, ask yourself, how will meeting these goals bring more glory to God? How will these goals allow me to draw closer to God as I pursue them?

Spiritual	Personal	Family
Vocation	Social	Financial

2. What are the obstacles in achieving these goals? What are some boundaries you can set in place to combat these obstacles and keep you on track?

God isn't concerned about whether or not you achieve perfect progress in a goal; He wants your heart. And step by step, prayer by prayer, moment by moment as you seek Him, you will stay on the right path. Connection with Him will keep you in check with Him.

### **Faithful Now - Vertical Worship**

I am holding onto faith  
'Cause I know You'll make a way  
And I don't always understand  
And I don't always get to see  
But I will believe it, I will believe it

'Cause You make mountains move  
You make giants fall  
And You use songs of praise  
To shake prison walls  
And I will speak to my fear  
I will preach to my doubt  
That You were faithful then  
You'll be faithful now

And I am standing on Your word  
And calling Heaven down to earth  
And You will fight my enemies  
And this will end in victory  
And I will believe it, yes I will believe it

'Cause You make mountains move  
You make giants fall  
And You use songs of praise  
To shake prison walls  
And I will speak to my fear  
I will preach to my doubt  
That You were faithful then  
You'll be faithful now

And I know that I know, You never fail  
Oh yes, I know that I know, You never will  
And I know that I know, You never fail  
Oh yes, I know that I know, You never will

### **Canvas and Clay - Pat Barrett**

In my mother's womb,  
You formed me with Your hands  
Known and loved by You,  
Before I took a breath

When I doubt it, Lord, remind me  
I'm wonderfully made  
You're an artist and a potter  
I'm the canvas and the clay  
You make all things work together  
For my future and for my good  
You make all things work together  
For Your glory and for Your name

There's a healing light,  
Just beyond the clouds  
Though I've walked through fire,  
I see clearly now

I know nothing has been wasted  
No failure or mistake  
You're an artist and a potter  
I'm the canvas and the clay  
You make all things work together  
For my future and for my good  
You make all things work together  
For Your glory and for Your name

And when I doubt it, Lord, remind me  
I'm wonderfully made  
You're an artist and a potter  
I'm the canvas and the clay  
And I know nothing has been wasted  
No failure or mistake  
You're an artist and a potter  
I'm the canvas and the clay

### **More To Come - Passion**

You're the God who makes the giants fall  
You bring down the walls of Jericho  
You're the God who gives the miracle  
We believe

You're the God who parts the ocean wide  
Just to bring us closer to Your side  
You're the God who brings the dead to life  
We believe, Oh we believe

God, how great You are  
Great things You have done  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come  
Every victory  
Every battle won  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come

We are confident in all Your ways  
'Cause we know You never make mistakes  
God You fill us with the greater faith  
We believe

God, how great You are  
Great things You have done  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come  
Every victory  
Every battle won  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come

All of our hope in  
All of our trust in  
All of our future in the God who never fails  
All of our faith in  
All of our strength in  
All of our future in the God who never fails

God, how great You are  
Great things You have done  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come  
Every victory  
Every battle won  
For everything we've seen  
There is more to come