



Do You Set Spiritual Goals?

Have you watched the excellent DVD : “**Young People - What Will I Do with My Life?**” One of the key lessons it was trying to impress on us was that of putting spiritual matters first in our lives. To do that it encouraged us to have spiritual goals. That applies to all of us, **regardless of age**.

What things do most people view as important in life?

What do they want to achieve?

Eg.1) One man named **Kenichi** had just one goal in life: “I have to find the gold that must be somewhere in these hills.” So every single day for 35 years he searched and dug in the hills near his Japanese hometown. “I haven't got time for either a wife or friends,” he would say. He became a very lonely man, driven by the search for wealth. Then, at age, 65 Kenichi found what he had been seeking - the gold. What was his reaction after reaching a lifetime goal? “At first I just wanted to be rich. But now the gold doesn't really mean very much.”

Although Kenichi was rich, in the quest he had used up 35 of his best years; time he would never see again. This man found that achieving his goal was simply not worth it; he had sacrificed all other good things in life, and did not have even one friend.

Eg.2) Since he was young, Mark rode motorbikes and wanted to be the best motorbike racer in California. At 19 years of age Mark reached his life's goal “I reached the point where I won many races. I had fame; all the money I wanted and the love of any girl in town. But after winning a big race I asked myself, 'Is this all there is? Here I am at the peak of my career, and where is that great sense of accomplishment?’” Achieving his goal brought him no real satisfaction.

Yet, other people were closely observing his racing career and were making his life-style their own goal. "They were trying to get what I had, but the whole thing was ridiculous. I really had nothing and here they wanted exactly the same!"

A psychologist Daniel Levinson, after studying the lives of some people who had achieved their goals, reported that often these begin to ask, "Is this all there is? Was it worth all I had to give up along the way?"

In time, Mark studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and saw the value of seeking more worthwhile goals. After becoming one of the Witnesses, he devoted his life to seeking God's approval and helping others spiritually. Reflecting on his life since then, Mark said: "I now found genuine friends and the pleasure of helping others spiritually. At last I felt my life was accomplishing something of lasting value to people."

After observing a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses, a Canadian newspaper reported that the key reason for their growth lies "with the incredible sense of commitment and dedication shown by the Witnesses." Many of these have found real happiness by seeking the goal of life rather than other pursuits.

If we want to make real progress and please Jehovah, we also must have spiritual goals. **1 Tim 4:15**

Rather than being materialistic, career-driven, leisure-mad, or being content to just drift along doing nothing, we must have goals that will motivate us.

The first human pair, Adam and Eve, had some very worthwhile goals. These were set for them by Jehovah God. First he gave this assignment - **Gen 2: 19, 20**. Then he commanded this - **Gen 1:28**. These tasks gave them a real purpose in living.

What do we do with our lives? Most people have a daily routine: Have to get up, wash/shower, dress, eat, care for domestic duties, or go off to work or school, then return home, eat and sleep. But what do we do with the remainder of our time? There is not enough time for everything we could or would like to do. So unless we set goals, we may find that the things of lesser importance crowd out the things of greater importance; All our spare time will be spent relaxing, or on selfish interests.

One way to identify goals is to make an honest assessment of ourselves to see in what areas we may be lacking and then try to improve in those aspects. Because everyone is different we should set goals according to what we can do personally. Otherwise, we may end up disappointed if we do not succeed, because the goal was too hard.

But having identified our goals, the next step is to work out how to go about reaching them. Jesus gave this advice - **Luke 14:28** So we need to work out how and when we will tackle our goal.

We should progress gradually, step by step in our efforts. **Eg.** Imagine that you decide to learn to cook. How pointless it would be to attempt to become a master chef overnight! You can, however, master the cookery skills one step at a time — perhaps first learning how the kitchen equipment works, then starting with basic things: beans-on-toast, microwave meals, preparing vegetables and then moving on to cooking meats, breads, casseroles, or delicious desserts. Eventually you will do most foods.

Similarly, you can reach what should be your long range goal - spiritual maturity - if you approach it by gradual steps/goals. These serve as indicators of your spiritual progress. Each time you successfully complete a step, you build your self-confidence. This can spur you on to tackle the next step.

Do you remember Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare? The tortoise won the race, even though he was much slower than the hare. Why? Because the tortoise had a steady, disciplined approach, whereas the hare sped off to start with, but then he became complacent and fell to sleep. The tortoise did not quit but chose a speed that he could realistically keep up, and then he stuck to it until he crossed the finish line. Likewise an organized, steady person makes consistent progress, and so he remains motivated and is thus less likely to quit.

Types of goals

Commenting at meetings (regularly).

Read the weekly Bible assignment regularly (takes less than half an hour). Or we could read the Bible to our own schedule. **Do it daily**

Reading one of the Society's publications in its entirety. Or Reading every issue of the Watchtower and/or the Awake! magazines.

Regularity in the field service. (At least once per month on Sundays).

Learn the new (magazine) presentation.

Ensure that we do all our weekly study - esp the Watchtower, any Q&A.

Reach out to be an unbaptized publisher.

Joining, or make progress in the Theocratic Ministry School.

Becoming a good teacher or public reader; As was case with Timothy - **1 Tim. 4:13.**

Becoming more skilful at making a defence of your faith. **1 Peter 3:15**

Cultivating each of the fruits of the spirit. **Galatians 5:22, 23**

Improving our prayers. (Quantity and Quality)

With good organization, can the family help at least one of its members to occasionally pioneer?
Becoming a pioneer or ministerial servant.

Construction work.

Bethel service.

When you achieve your first goal, another goal can be set. So, step by step, spiritual progress can be made. Never overlook that setting a goal is only half the battle. It takes persistence and determination, and at first there may be set-backs; nerves, lack of effort or organization, obstacles from others, etc. But keep trying, not giving in. If you have set a worthwhile goal, stick to it; In Jehovah's eyes, you will be leading a more meaningful life.

As we aim to reach our goals, the quality of our service to Jehovah will improve. There is a sense of accomplishment that comes from successfully achieving a goal.

Our desire should be to please Jehovah by doing our best spiritually. Goals can aid us to accomplish this. Goals are good for us as individuals and Jehovah will bless our efforts to meet such goals. Would it not be good, then, with all of us realize the importance of pleasing Jehovah and to work out for ourselves reasonable personal goals for ourselves? Jehovah will bless our efforts. **Heb 6:10**

(See also:w16 July (se) p7, w15 8/15 p19, w14 3/15 p7, g90 9/22 p21, yp 1 p273, fl p186)