

Quarterly Letter



**Managing
GOD'S Money**

GOALS

A goal is God's destination for you. What He wants you to do; where He wants you to go.

A plan is the steps needed to get to His goals. A goal without a plan is like a hockey game without a puck!

Combine devotion to Jesus with a passion for His goal, and you will be unstoppable. Ask Him!

WHOSE GOAL?

Goals are discovered, not made.

– Richard J. Foster

GOD'S GOAL

God gives us goals that are clear, complete, concise and measurable, such as Exodus 3:10 (NASB) He gave Moses:

"Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

WHERE TO AIM?

The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it – Michelangelo

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I like Richard Foster's quote: *Goals are discovered, not made.* When we go through life with *our* goals or *no* goals, we miss *God's* goals, and *we* get lost!

Usually, I think about two types of goals: *personal life goals and material goals.*

In *Managing God's Money-The Basics*, I suggest the third step to managing God's money is to *find out your personal life goal*— God's purpose for your life.

A *personal life goal* is akin to a company's mission statement; it provides its direction. After defining its mission, to carry it out, the company develops compatible strategies, goals, plans, and budgets.

God gives each believer the *Great Commission* to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20) as the believer's general, on-going mission. So each believer has the same *general life goal*; but God chooses a specific mission for him as his part of the Great Commission. I call this specific mission, the believer's *personal life goal*.

With her personal life goal, God gives the believer compatible daily, weekly, monthly, strategies, goals, and plans. I call these regular goals, *material goals*. Congruent with personal life goals, each material goal teaches us to be more like Jesus. Like personal life goals, we get material goals in God's timing.

Why distinguish the personal life goal from material goals? The first is our mission; it's on-going, helps with daily choices, and once we get it, as with Joseph, David, Apostle Paul and others, it's likely to remain with us during our lifetime.

My personal life goal is to *teach biblical stewardship of time talents and money*. It is on-going, and the path God chooses for me to present Christ to others.

Material goals God gives me, independent of my gifts, talents, and skills, include presenting specific seminars, writing specific books, and appearing on identified TV programs.

Through my personal life goal, today, God has shown me I should not provide consulting to secular businesses. So, when a business asks me to consult (a material goal), I know that's not in God's path. Without a personal life goal, I would look at my schedule, and if I am available and the price is right, I might do it! But this would distract me from God's call on my life and I would be busy doing my stuff rather than doing God's work.

Busyness and discontent with your job could be signs you need to get off the treadmill and sit at Jesus' feet to learn your personal life goal!

Scripture shows a consistent goal-setting-doing pattern. God gives His people clear, complete, concise (3-Cs) material goals to sanctify them to become like Him. Besides, He defines a plan and then gives us all we need to do it. Still, not one person sees or understands everything at the time, because each time He gives only what we need.

But what about those who do not believe in Jesus? The first goal God prepares for each person is to get to know Him personally. That's first base! After that, to those of us who surrender our lives to Him, in His time, He shows us the special personal life goal He prepares for our lives.

Still, many folks don't get to know Him so they miss their personal life goals. These folks seek to know about Jesus and other religious leaders. They will tell you Jesus was a great prophet, a good person, but this shows they don't understand who He is.

To see two men who knew God with all their hearts, and who sought after Him, read King David's inspired writings in the Psalms, and Apostle Paul's letters in the New Testament.

Do you believe God created you for a purpose? Surrender your life to Jesus, receive His Holy Spirit to teach and guide you in God's truth, and ask Him to show you, your personal life goal. Let's look in the Bible at some Bible folks' personal life goals:

Bible People	Life Goal
Abraham	Go where God leads (Genesis 12:1-3)
Joseph	Rule over Egypt (Genesis 41:38-45)
David	Be King of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1-13)
Paul	Take the gospel to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 9:15)
John The Baptist	Jesus' forerunner (Matthew 3:1-3)
The Apostles	Follow Jesus (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9)

These folks' personal life goals were not tasks they carried out rarely. Rather, God gave each, specific long-term missions. What can we learn from God's interaction with these folks to help us get and understand our personal life goals?

First, God chose each goal, not one of those folks did.

Second, not one person did anything on his own to prepare for his personal life goal. Rather, God used each, as he was, warts, and all.

Third, apart from Apostle Paul, when He chose these folks, God did not explain why He chose them, or what their tasks might entail. To His apostles, Jesus said *follow Me*, a clear statement for a journey that would end in heaven.

Fourth, not one asked where he was going—how unlike us! David was a boy when Samuel anointed Him. He didn't ask God about God's plans. After his anointing, David went back to shepherding until God was ready to move him in the king's job. Paul was doing the opposite to what God called

Him to do. He was persecuting Christians! God refocused His zeal.

Fifth, though God prepared each person's life goal before He created him, each knew his personal life goal at different life stages. In Joseph's youth, God showed Joseph his personal life goal in dreams, but Joseph didn't see it.

Sixth, tasks they did along their trip that seemed unrelated helped prepare them for their personal life goals.

The personal life goal is on-going and each person gets it in God's time, for God's lifetime assignment. To seize your personal life goal, you need to be ready to do what God asks even when you think you don't have needed gifts, training, or skills.

Shortly after my wife surrendered her life to Jesus, He started to lead her to teach Bible studies. She felt inadequate and unprepared. Still, she obeyed God, studied, and taught His Word. In the many locations we lived, God led her to teach Bible studies. Looking back, we see clearly God's call on her life—teach His Word.

Do you need to know your personal life goal to be effective for God? No! You will know it when God is ready. Meantime, do as He asks. But when you know your personal life goal, it will provide direction for the path God selects for you. You might not see it clearly, still tread it daily! Recall it to guide your actions. If you don't follow this path, you will go the wrong way, your way. You will look for your gifts, find them and they might trap you!

To be sure, when you see your gifts, you will try to use them in your way. That's looking backwards; your personal life goal does not flow *inevitably* from your gifts. God gives the personal life goal and then He equips you! Do you see the difference?

How do you get your personal life goal? Be alert to what God is doing in your life and work *with Him* in those areas. Take your eyes off you, your gifts, and your circumstances. If you don't know your personal life goal that's all right. Simply be alert to what God asks you to do, and do it. You will see a path; follow it. *Don't look at your gifts; look at God.*

Before she started teaching the Bible, my wife didn't think God gifted her to teach. Had she focused on gifts she would not have taught. But she

obeyed God's call, trusted Him to give her what she needed, when she needed it, and He did.

I got my personal life goal from God in my mid 40's, a few years after I surrendered my life to Christ. After I got it, God led me to start a non-charity ministry, and then led me out of my job as a business executive; this wasn't my goal.

At first, I did not appreciate what God was showing me, and I defined my personal life goal like this: "to serve Jesus whatever the cost," in essence this is part of every believer's general life goal. My executive job fitted that path and I was sure God wanted me to continue my business career until 65.

Later, as I listened and did His material goals, I realized the personal life goal He gave me was this: "as He leads, teach biblical stewardship of time, talents and money." Everything I do need to show this. At age 55, He led me to my present unpaid full-time non-charity ministry, Managing God's Money.

The Goal Isn't The God!

How do you *see* hurting people when you are rushing about doing your goal? Be open always to setting everything aside to do Jesus' moment-by-moment goal! These points might help:

- * Invest time with Jesus daily.
- * Be alert to your circumstances. Don't rise above them, notice them and give them to Jesus.
- * Before acting, review plans with Jesus; ensure they are His, not yours.

In summary, God calls each believer to take part in fulfilling the *Great Commission*. Has He shown you your role? That's your life goal, your mission on earth that stays with you until God chooses to change it. Often, like Joseph, you do preparatory tasks, but you don't understand their later effects.

God gives you your personal life goal; you do not choose it. So, don't try to find your *gifts* and then try to use them! Rather, ask God to show you what He wants done; He will equip you. *Work with Him, not for Him!*

If you feel rushed continually, unfulfilled, dissatisfied with your job, first, check your attitude, next; ask God if you are working His goal or yours!