

## GOD'S GOAL FOR MY SUCCESS

Many of us who struggle with addictive behaviours are not happy with our lives because we're not really doing what we want. Happiness and satisfaction are related to having goals and working towards those goals with reasonable measures of success.

Living effectively with goals includes planning, doing, and having accountability around how we are progressing towards our goals. Some goals are for short term activities, like what we will accomplish today or this week. Others are more long term as we plan a couple of years of our life and sort our priorities to fit that part of our journey. These are all important components of a satisfying and successful life. However, surrounding all these goals are those character goals that God has told us will make us successful for the long term - for the rest of our lives. What does God see as important and how do we practically make plans and organize our lives around these goals?

***Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love***  
(2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV).

What would character development look like in my life if I applied common "goal setting strategies" to the process?

1. Identify a few things that are really important to me in the short term and in the long term (over a couple of years)
2. Narrow the list by asking yourself, "What am I willing to work on?"
3. Make the goal practical and specific by asking, "What can I do in the short term to help develop these?"
4. Write down those steps or activities -- it's like making a "to do" list
5. Choose a time frame to accomplish the activities
6. Do something to motivate yourself -- a note on the mirror, a reminder in your calendar, a reward activity at a certain time interval for completed actions; ask a trusted friend to help you be accountable
7. Keep track of all the short term goals met as you move towards the longer term changes.

8. Don't give up if you miss one short term goal. Keep that stumble in perspective. Keep your eye on the goal and make a new move in the positive direction.

Our first task is to agree that God's goals are those we will make our central concern. Those character goals are --goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Focusing on God's goals will lead to ultimate success: success in God's terms. Peter promises that, as these qualities increase in our life through practice, we will be useful and fruitful, and we will never stumble. Sounds like a great relapse prevention plan.

As we work on growing our character and being responsible to live right in God's eyes, we must never forget that God loves us and will never leave us. When we succeed God cheers us on. When we stumble, God forgives and encourages us to try again. Should we feel good about ourselves in this process? Of course! God has not called us to be a failure, so let's follow His formula and be the success He has called us to be one step at a time, one small goal achievement at a time.

A school teacher visited the home of one of her troublesome students. She noticed that the house was dirty and messy. The next time she visited, she brought the most beautiful plant in the world and placed it in the center of the dining table. At first the people in the house did not realize the beauty of the plant. However, as time passed, people began to see the beauty radiated by the plant and felt a deep sense of shame about the way they kept the house. So they began to clean up and made the house fit for the beauty of the plant.

God has created us in His image and through the Holy Spirit has come to live in us. Everything about God is beautiful. Let's keep cleaning up our lives so the beauty that God has created us to be radiates to others around us.

### **Questions For Reflection and Discussion**

1. What did I do today ( or in the last 24 hours) that was like a plant in the house of the troubled student?
2. In what areas listed in the Bible quote am I specifically working to grow and change?