

# Goals and Planning

## Prepare to Plan: Conduct a review of last year.

1. Identify your highs and lows of the year.
2. Ask yourself some probing questions, like:
  - What were my top three wins?
  - What were some notable events or projects?
  - What were some key things I learned?
  - What was my greatest faith decision?
  - What was my most regretted sin?
  - What were some losses that caused grief?
  - What were my biggest joys?
  - What relationships did I gain or deepen?
  - What devotional method did I use?
  - How faithful was I in my devotions?
  - What was my biggest answer to prayer?
  - What are some prayers that weren't answered yet?
  - What person or people did I reach for Christ?
  - Which characteristic of God did I learn most, and how?
  - Which of my activities was the biggest waste of my God-given time?
  - Which of my goals from last year did I complete, and which did I neglect?
  - Why did I fail to complete goals? Were they irrelevant? Too challenging? Unrealistic?

The answers to these questions will help you to know what you should celebrate, what you should grieve over, and what areas of your life require deeper analysis and transformation.

3. Using the answers to these (and other) questions, determine what you must...
  - Start doing
  - Stop doing
  - Keep doing
  - Do less of
  - Do more of

A thoughtful assessment of last year will often provide the background information you need in order to do your goal planning for the upcoming year.

## Choose your Goals Framework

1. Possible Goal Frameworks
  - Your Responsibilities: Studying, teaching, preaching, homemaking, homeschooling
  - Your Roles: Missionary, pastor, leader, teacher, citizen, church member
  - Your Priorities: Spiritual life, marriage, children, health, personal growth, finances

2. Questions to ask yourself:
  - What has God given me that I should exercise stewardship over? (Health, time, finances, relationships, ministries.)
  - What are my priorities?
  - What do I desire?

## Create SMART Goals

1. Specific: results-oriented; achievement status is binary; include when, where, how, how long, with whom, and why.
2. Measurable: data-driven, number-related, methodical; you should be able to track your progress and know when you are done.
3. Actionable: goals include actions and tasks, so use action verbs.
4. Realistic: you should be capable of accomplishing your goals.
5. Time-Bound: include time, length of time, or a deadline.

## Different Types of Goals

If you do not understand the unique nature of the various kinds of goals, you may find yourself making unrealistic goals and becoming discouraged by unmet expectations. After all, every goal looks the same size when you write it down on paper. It is only as you live it that you recognize that there are different dynamics at play. As you create goals, it helps to alert yourself about what kind of goal each is.

1. Task Goals: typically task goals are easy to achieve with minimal effort and time; a one-time task that is over and done. Often a first step to a bigger goal. Task goals have relatively little resistance, require little analysis, and take up very little calendar space. Examples: Sign up for language school this month.
2. Habit or Routine Goals: Habit goals are done daily; routine goals are often done in groups of tasks and repeatedly at regular intervals. These goals take up a lot more time because of their repetitive quality; you will feel more resistance to them than to tasks because of their ongoing nature; and they often require a fair amount of analysis. Best tracked not in a planner or calendar but with a separate habit tracker or routine tracker. However, when these take root in your life, they become automatic, and that is powerful. Consider stacking tiny habits into groups. Example of a habit: Take vitamins at every breakfast. Example of routine: Complete my morning routine before breakfast every morning. Record expenses in Every Dollar App before leaving the cash register. Habit Stack example: Make coffee, take vitamins, unload the dish drainer, and defrost meat for dinner.
3. System or Process Goals: a step by step guide to completing a fairly complicated task that you do repeatedly. These require more time in your calendar than task or habit goals. They tend to garner more resistance, since you are completing a multi-step process. The analysis in the set-up is heftier, and it can be challenging to learn a new system. However, having a process for complicated, repeated actions can turn what seems like a huge project with many obstacles into a routine, a habit, and then eventually just a task. Examples: Send a prayer letter every other month to our email list on Mailchimp with pictures and a link for a printable copy that is made on

Canva. This kind of goal tends to start out as a massive project with a steep learning curve. (Sign up for an email platform. Sign up for Canva. Learn how to use these new tools. Figure out a format that works for our ministry. Learn how to insert pictures. Start a YouTube channel so video can be linked. Create a website to make everything easier. Make a list of social media links so prayer partners can keep in touch. Write the email. Edit the email. Send the email to myself so I can check it. Check links in the email. Hit send. Reply to those who reply.)

4. **Project Goals:** Requires multiple lists of task goals and perhaps even habit or system goals. Project goals must be eventually broken down into smaller goals, each with their own deadlines. Project goals take up a large amount of time and space in your planner. Each portion of a project goal will face individual bouts of resistance, and there will be a steep planning process requiring time-consuming analysis, as well as a need to check-in on your progress. Systems tend to work on repeated activities, but projects are often one-off endeavors or not repeated frequently. (Examples: Plant a church on the mission field. Write a dissertation. Start a Christian school. Go on furlough.)
5. **Accomplishment Goals:** Often requires a combination of all three of the above kinds of goals to achieve a very challenging but rewarding goal. This is a project goal on steroids. It requires analyzing the steps, processes and habits you will need in order to succeed. It will take a large amount of time and sacrifice of other activities, and you will face great internal resistance and many obstacles; however, the result is very rewarding. (Examples: Graduate from a Ph.D. program. Complete a full marathon.)
6. **Award/Recognition Goals.** These tend to be wishes, not goals. They generally include an award you desire to win, but although you have control over your actions, you do not personally have control over other people's choices. If you are determined to have this as a goal, treat it like a project or an accomplishment goal, with the goal of doing the actions that would position you to win. Aim high, but with low expectations. (Example: Publish revamped dissertation as a book and hit the New York Times Bestseller List. Win first place in a marathon. Become an NBA Player. Take home a gold in the Olympics.)

## Conclusion

In the end, goals are a tool, not the cure for our sins and failures. Goals do not equal righteousness, and follow-through is never guaranteed. (This is why it is premature to admire other people for their goals.) Goals are also never an end in and of themselves. Making goals, however, is an activity that, by nature, involves a purposeful reassessment of our life. It is a *means* to obedience, Christ-likeness, and new steps of faith in our lives. A prayerful look at the past and preparation for the future is biblical, and following a Biblical pattern of planning can be transformative.

For each category below, create three SMART goals that will help you to glorify God and accomplish the work He has given you. SMART goals are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound. Each goal should include a specific action you will do and a deadline for completing it.

**SPIRITUAL LIFE**

*What will help me grow spiritually and glorify God?*

1

2

3

**MARRIAGE**

*How can I build my relationship and live out my God-given roles and responsibilities?*

1

2

3

**CHILDREN**

*How can I help my children grow in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man?*

1

2

3

**HEALTH**

*What can I do to strengthen my body, increase my energy, and exercise stewardship over my health?*

1

2

3

**PERSONAL GROWTH & EDUCATION**

*What can I do to learn new skills, extend my education, and grow as an individual?*

1

2

3

**FINANCES**

*How can I steward the money God has given me to oversee?*

1

2

3

Review these goals each week or month during your planning process.

# MINISTRY GOALS

2026

For each category below, create three SMART goals that will help you to glorify God and accomplish the work He has given you. SMART goals are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound. Each goal should include a specific action you will do and a deadline for completing it.

## EVANGELISM

How can I evangelize the unsaved around me? How can I shed gospel light into a dark world?

1

2

3

## DISCIPLESHIP

How can I help believers grow in Christ and follow Him more closely?

1

2

3

## TRAINING

How can I train nationals for the work of the ministry? Who are good candidates for this mentoring?

1

2

3

## CHURCH INDEPENDENCE

How can I help develop independence in the church?

1

2

3

## SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

Goals for Bible institutes, seminaries, medical clinics, schools, or other special ministries.

1

2

3

1

2

3

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1	1
2	2
3	3
1	1
2	2
3	3
1	1
2	2
3	3

Review these goals each week or month during your planning process.

# WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
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