Do You Know Where You Want to Go?

(Goals)

Philippians 3:13, 14

Introduction:

1. “Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal.” − Earl Nightingale
2. Before a map can be helpful, you need to know where you are going.
3. Example of two ships.
   1. If you ask the captain of a ship what his next destination is, he will tell you in one sentence.  He knows where he is going, how he will get there, and how long it will take.
   2. Suppose we start another ship and do not put a captain and crew on it; we give it no aim and no destination, what do you think the chances are that it will reach the desired port?
4. Which ship represents your life?
   1. What do you plan to accomplish this year?  The next five years?
   2. How do you plan to do it?
   3. We must first set a goal in order to work out the details to accomplish it.
   4. A woman who does not plan to bake an apple pie for dinner will not look up the recipe for pie and will not get the ingredients that are needed.
5. Many people go through life with no aim, no goal, no destination.
   1. The loudspeaker of the big jet clicked on and the captain’s voice announced in a clear, even tone:  “Now there’s no cause for alarm but we felt you should know that for the last three hours we have been flying without the benefit of radio, compass, radar, or navigational beam.  This means that we are, in the broad sense of the word, lost and not quite sure in which direction we are heading.  However, on the brighter side of the picture, I’m sure you’ll be interested to know that we are making excellent time!”  Many people go through life making excellent time but have no idea where they are going.
   2. A man was coming to see us in Dalton, Georgia.  He saw a hitchhiker with a cardboard sign:  ANYWHERE.  He said, “I didn’t pick him up.  He was already there.
   3. One of the best marksmen in the country was passing through a small town and everywhere he saw evidence of amazing shooting.  On trees, walls, fences, and barns were countless targets with a bullet hole in the exact center of the bull’s eye.  The man sought out the person responsible for this great marksmanship.  “This is the most wonderful shooting I have ever seen,” the man said.  “How in the world did you do it?”  “Easy as pie,” replied the marksman, “I shot first and drew the circles afterwards.”
   4. Glen Cunningham was born in Atlanta, Kansas, 1909.  He was burned when he was 8 years old.  His goal was to break the world’s record in the mile run.  The Dr. said that he would never live, then that he would never walk.  His goal was still to break the world’s record in the mile run.  He started to shuffle, walk, plow behind a mule.  He ran a mile in 4 minutes, 6.8 seconds in 1934; 4 minutes, 4.4 seconds in 1938.
6. We need a single long range goal to unify our life.
   1. Jesus said we needed a single eye. Matthew 6:22-24
   2. Paul wanted the prize. Philippians 3:13, 14
   3. Without this purpose, we fail. James 1:8
7. The principles for setting a goal are outlined by Paul. Philippians 3:13, 14
8. I DON’T HAVE IT MADE YET – PAUL WAS BIG ENOUGH TO SEE HOW LITTLE HE WAS. Philippians 3:13
   1. Paul had not attained his ultimate goal. Philippians 3:12,13
   2. Heaven is now hope; hope is something we do not now possess. Romans 8:24
   3. Only the poor in spirit, those who feel a need for the Lord, can enjoy the kingdom. Matthew 5:3,6; Luke 18:9-14
      1. This is why some people do not attend Bible study, Sunday night, or Wednesday night.  They don’t feel the need.  The only true Holy Rollers are our brethren who wake up on Sunday morning and feel that they are so holy that they don’t need to go to Bible study and worship.  Then they roll over and go back to sleep.
      2. This is why many do not visit, teach, or work in any other area.  They think they already have it made.
   4. I don’t know how big all the rooms are in your house.  But I hope the biggest room in your life and my life is the room for improvement.
   5. The Christian life is a continual process of growth. 2 Peter 3:18
   6. A congregation must never become self-satisfied, still, stagnated. Revelation 3:15-17
      1. A church of 125 said, “We are big enough.  We don’t want to grow anymore.”
      2. They didn’t.  They declined.
9. WE MUST NOT GROAN OVER PAST MISTAKES OR GLOAT OVER PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS−SOME THINGS NEED-TO BE FORGOTTEN. Philippians 3:13
   1. Sinful things need to be forgotten.
      1. Pleasures of sin. Luke 9:62
      2. Wrongs suffered at the hands of others. Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3
      3. Forgiven sins. Acts 22:16, 1 John 1:9; 1 John 1:7
      4. Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven, and we need to act like it!
   2. Adversity, failure, and hardship should never be an excuse for not pressing on to greater things.
      1. We have all experienced unpleasant things.
      2. So has everyone else.
      3. Our attitude will have a greater effect on our life than adversity.
      4. “I’ve never read the story of a great man without finding that at one time or another in that man’s life he went through days of hurt, and it was the molding influence of the hurt that made the man what he was.  It’s a great principle for life, it’s the heart of a champion.” (*The Heart of a Champion*, by Bob Richards, page 42).
   3. Past accomplishments should only be the basis for greater service.
      1. Paul did not let past accomplishments hold him back. Philippians 3:4-8
      2. Some congregations, after reaching a great goal, will cease to grow.  They point to what they have accomplished in the past.  Such a church is too much like the fabled floogee bird, which is said to fly backwards instead of forward, singing one monotonous refrain:  “I don’t know where I’m going, but just look where I’ve been!”
   4. The past must not hold us back, but send us forth.  The past can be used as a guidepost, but never as a hitching post. Hebrews 12:1
10. WE SHOULD USE SHORT-RANGE OBJECTIVES AS STEPPING STONES TO THE MAIN GOAL. Philippians 3:13, 14
    1. Short-range objectives should be:
       1. Specific, measurable.
       2. Related to a definite period of time.
       3. Challenging.
          1. We need to know where we are.  Two truck drivers were coming into Mexia, Texas.  They argued about where they were and asked the waitress when they stopped to eat.  “Where are we?  Tell us slowly and distinctly.”  “Da - ry - Queen.”
          2. Something that will cause us to work, bring out the best in us.
          3. Aim at the sun, and you may not reach it; but your arrow will fly higher than if -you aimed at an object on a level with yourself.
          4. I had rather aim at a star and hit a mountain, than aim at a mud puddle and hit it every time.
       4. Yours.
          1. When someone else tells you what you are going to do, it is not a goal, it is an assignment.
          2. People who will help reach the goal should help in setting it.
    2. Let’s set some individual goals.  Take your 4" x 6" card.  Divide it into five sections.  Label the sections: SPIRITUAL GOALS, FAMILY GOALS, MENTAL GOALS, PHYSICAL GOALS, FINANCIAL GOALS.  I will make some suggestions to get you thinking.  Write at least one specific goal in each category, and when you plan to reach it.
       1. Spiritual.
          1. Of course HEAVEN is the ultimate goal, but what on earth are you doing for Heaven’s Sake?
          2. Obey the gospel today.
          3. Be restored right now.
          4. Bring three souls to Christ this year.
          5. Give 25% of my income to the Lord. I will start above 10% and increase my giving by 1% January 1 of each year.
          6. Study the Bible 30 minutes each day.
          7. Pray at regular times each day.
          8. Attend all services of this congregation, and begin by repenting of the sin of omission if I have been negligent.
       2. Family.
          1. Eat together as a family a specified number of times each week with all electronics off.
          2. Have a family devotional each week.
          3. Plan time for family work and play.
          4. Set aside a time at the beginning of each year to plan for our family – ten years, five years, this year.
          5. Encourage and coach individual goals for each family member.
       3. Mental.
          1. Read 12 good books this year.
          2. Make all As and Bs on report card.
          3. Memorize one verse of scripture each week.
          4. Graduate from high school.
          5. BA, MA, PHD.
       4. Physical.
          1. Get a physical examination this year.
          2. Have a dental check-up in the next three months.
          3. Maintain a regular program of exercise.
          4. Loose, gain, maintain weight.
       5. Financial.
          1. New dress, suit.
          2. House.
          3. Car.
          4. Promotion on the job.
          5. College for children.
          6. Dishwasher.
    3. Congregational goals.
       1. Much time, thought, and prayer needs to go into setting objectives for this congregation.
       2. Once I was talking with an eldership.  I asked them what their goals were for the next ten years.  One replied, “I really don’t know.  We haven’t really talked about it.  I guess our goal is to just piddle around like we’ve been doing and pay for our building.”
          1. Do you know what that congregation has done for the last ten years?  That’s right.  They have piddled around and paid for their building.  That’s what they aimed to do.
          2. Brethren, I do not believe that Jesus Christ died over 1900 years ago on Calvary in order that His body today would just piddle around and pay for a building, but that is what many are doing.
       3. Members of the congregation should be able to give suggestions.  Objectives and definite time limits should be kept before the congregation.  Every indication of progress should be noted and additional encouragement given.  These objectives should be reviewed and up-dated at least once a year.

Conclusion:

1. Summary.
   1. We must be big enough to realize how little we are – “I don’t have it made, yet.”
      1. We must realize the need for growth.
      2. A man hunting was caught in a thunderstorm.  He crawled into a hollow log.  The log got soaked and swelled.  He tried to move and couldn’t.  He knew he would starve to death there.  His life began to pass before him.  His sins both of transgression and negligence came to him.  The more he thought, the more he knew he was displeasing in the sight of God.  When all this really began to bear on his mind, he felt so small he crawled out of the log and went home, determined to be better and do more for the Lord.
   2. We must not groan over past mistakes or gloat over past accomplishments.
      1. When Charles M. Schwab was over a Steel mill, he sent a telegram one day to his boss, Mr. Andrew Carnegie:  “BROKE ALL RECORDS YESTERDAY.”
      2. Mr. Carnegie wired back: “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TODAY?”
   3. We need to set short-range objectives and use them as stepping-stones to the long-range goal.
      1. “Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.”
      2. In flying cross-country, a pilot gets the airplane on course with the compass and then picks out an object in the distance that is on course.  Then he flies to the determined objective, knowing that it is on course.  He then picks out another point that is on course.  If he will fly over the things that are on course, he will arrive at his mark or destination.
2. To be successful, we must have a goal and keep our minds upon it. Colossians 3:1-4.
3. In a little churchyard in Switzerland, there is buried a man who perished in an Alpine accident.  There is inscribed on his tombstone a simple statement that I hope will be true of my life whenever it comes to an end, and I hope it will be true of yours too.  On his tombstone, it simply says, “He died climbing.”
   1. Can that be said of you?
   2. Do you need to start climbing toward heaven?
   3. Have you fallen and need to get back on the way?
   4. Come now!