

“Making Goals for Growth”

Text: Luke 2:52

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How many of you have made goals for yourself in 2009?

Why even talk about making goals for ourselves? Psalm 90:12 says, “*Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*” God wants us to maximize our days so that we may become wise. And one of the important ways to do this is by making goals.

- Did you know that 5% of Americans have written goals for their lives?
- Surveys show that the 5% who do write down goals are the top five percent wage earners in our culture.
- Those who set written goals have greater income. It’s a correlation. They know what they want in life.

You don’t want it to be February and one-twelfth of the year is over and you still haven’t set any goals.

This morning I want to give you four developmental goals. As Christians, our ultimate goal is to become like Jesus Christ. So, let’s look at how Jesus developed? Luke 2:52 tells us four ways that Jesus grew:

The Bible version I’ll be using throughout 2009 is the NIV. *Read **Luke 2:52***

PRAY!

The Bible says if I want to become like Jesus Christ, I must develop the four areas Jesus developed.

- Jesus developed in wisdom – that’s intellectual development.
- Jesus developed in stature – that’s physical development.
- Jesus developed in favor with God – that’s spiritual development.
- Jesus developed in favor with people – that’s social development.

If you want to be well rounded and balanced in 2009, I want to challenge you to set at least one goal in each of these four areas. Leadership trainer and author Ken Blanchard gives guidelines for the type of goals we ought to make:

- The goals you set must be ones that you can accomplish—they must be **specific** (Lose 15 pounds or whatever, not “I want to be like Jesus.” How are you going to measure that?)
- You must be **motivated** by the goal.

- The goal must be **attainable** otherwise you will be discouraged (Don't say, "My goal is to pray for three hours a day." You'll get discouraged and give up.)
- The goal must be based on your own values and priorities, not someone else's (You ought to ask yourself, "What are the values that I really believe are important?")
- The goal must be **measurable**. How do I know if I reached my goal?

Keep this all in mind, as we look more closely at the four growth areas of Jesus and our own.

1. First, develop in wisdom—the intellectual area.

- A. Ask yourself, "What do I want to learn this year?" Remember the ad that said, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." God gave you your mind. It's a gift. It's like a muscle. If you use a muscle, it gets stronger. If you ignore a muscle it atrophies. Same thing with your brain. You don't want to have an atrophied brain.
- B. Proverbs 19:8, "*Those who get wisdom love their own lives; those who cherish understanding will soon prosper.*" What this verse says is "be a learner". All leaders are learners. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. So, as a Christian, you must constantly be challenging yourself to grow and to develop. Ask yourself, "What do I need to learn this year?"
1. Book reading goals, educational goals, learn a new language, learn the computer.
 - Tele-Coaching, Charley Self
 2. You need intellectual goals that will challenge and stimulate you so that a year from today you're smarter than you are now, because you've gained knowledge. God can use that in your life. It's good stewardship of the brain God gave you.

2. The second area is develop in stature—a physical goal.

- A. What will improve my health this year? Lose some weight? Go to bed earlier? Get on an exercise plan? Change my eating habits? Develop some kind of stress relief? Start walking everyday? The Bible is full of health tips.
1. Let's look at Proverbs 17:22, "*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*" For some of you, God's health tip is "Lighten up!" Don't sweat the small stuff. Realize it's all small stuff in God's eyes. Lighten up. "Being cheerful makes you healthy."
 - Mark, treadmill and weights
- B. Figure out a good physical goal for your life in 2009.

3. The third area is develop favor with God—spiritual goals.

- A. What will deepen my relationship with God? What one thing would make the biggest difference in my relationship with God? Not ten things – but one thing.

B. 2 Peter 3:18, *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

1. If you are a Christian, have you been baptized? Have you said to the world that I am not ashamed to say that I’m a believer in Jesus Christ? If you haven’t been baptized, that may be your first goal (Mark “information on baptism” on the Connection Card)
2. Maybe you ought to join a church family, a Bible believing church family like ours (CLASS 101, membership on Feb. 22nd—need to have attended PBPC for two months)
3. Maybe you ought to join one of our Life Groups (small groups). We have six of them (mark “interested in a Life Group on the Connection Card)
4. Or maybe you need to start tithing – a spiritual practice.
5. Maybe your goal is to start having a daily quiet time (Daily Bread, One-Year Bibles, Bibles)

4. The fourth area is develop favor with people—social goals.

A. What will my ministry be to others? God doesn’t want you just to think of yourself. God does not bless selfishness.

B. 1 Peter 4:10, *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

1. Anytime you help somebody else, that’s called ministry. It’s called service. You serve God by serving others. This year is going to be the year for many of you to get off the bench spiritually. You have gifts and talents and abilities that God has given you and He wants you to put them in action. God wants you to have a ministry. Set a goal to discover and get involved in a ministry this year.
 - RAK opportunities this year. There will be many.
 - Children/Youth ministries
 - Choir/Bell Choir/Praise Team
 - Three major outreach opportunities
 - Bring a friend to Alpha
 - Maybe write down the name of a person who needs Jesus. Be praying for them, sharing your faith and inviting them to come to church with you.

Tape these to your refrigerator door or the mirror in your bathroom or in your blackberry. Somewhere where you’ll see them and remind yourself on a regular basis.

You’re thinking, “I’ve tried this. I’ve set goals but I just don’t follow through. I don’t have the power to change.” You’re right. That’s why you must walk with Jesus Christ on a moment by moment basis.

- Philippians 4:13, *“I can do everything through Him (Jesus) who gives me strength.”* Self-help books tell you all the right things to do. They don’t provide the power. Jesus gives you the power to make commitments, and then to keep them.

When you say, “I want to do what’s right, but I don’t”—welcome to the human race. That’s called your sin nature! And we all have it. Isn’t it true that we often do things that we know are bad for us, wrong for us, harmful for us? Isn’t it true that even when we know the right thing to do, we don’t do it? That’s called sin nature. That’s why Jesus Christ came to die on the cross to deal with our sin nature.

- Romans 6:10, “*The death He died (Jesus’ death), He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.*” Another translation says, “*When Christ died, He died to defeat the power of sin. Now see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin and alive to God.*” Most Christians do not understand the power of the cross. When Jesus died on the cross He paid for three things:
 1. He paid the penalty of your sins in the **past**. That means I can be forgiven and that’s good news.
 2. He also paid to break the power of sin in the **present**. That means He gives me the ability to break the habits, hurts, and hang-ups that are messing me up.
 3. He paid so that one day I will be released from the presence of sin **forever**. That’s called heaven where there will be no sin. I’ll be freed from not only the penalty and the power of sin in my life, but the actual presence of sin in my life permanently.

That’s the power of the cross. When we talk about our 2009 goals and the power to change our lives; we must look to the power of the cross. The fact is Jesus has set us free from the power of sin if we will grab hold of it now. **I can change with the power of Christ within me.**

PRAY!