Setting Spiritual Goals For 2016
Text: Phil. 3: 7-21

A. This is a time of year when people vow dreams about what they want to be.  
   1. We make New Years resolutions which are no more than verbalized ambitions.  
      a. Can you remember what your New Years resolutions was last year? Most don’t.  
      b. Did you accomplish your resolution from 2015? Most didn’t.  
   2. People forget resolutions because they aren’t goals ... just aspirations, wishes.

B. Goal setting is one of the rungs in the ladder to success.  
   1. Success seldom just happens or comes easy. It takes hard work and planning,  
   2. When leaders are trained, goal setting is always part of the curriculum.  
   3. Goals are fundamental to success:  
      a. In one’s personal life: academic, career, social/relationships, spiritual life  
      b. In professional life one envisions: What do I want to achieve? How? When?  
      c. Goals contribute to success because they focus on achieving a specific objective.  
   4. Goals are essential to the success of any church. Without goals they fall in a rut.  
      a. Churches stagnate when they have no goal. Striving to achieve gives them life.  
      b. A church must plan where it wants be in five years and how to get there.

C. What is a goal?  
   1. An observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe.  
   2. As opposed to just an “objective” which is: Something one desires to achieve

D. How does one set a goal?  
   1. The S.M.A.R.T. acrostic is helpful.  
      a. Specific (Compose a concise written statement)  
      b. Measureable  
      c. Action oriented  
      d. Realistic  
      e. Time and resource constrained  
   2. A goal must be:  
      a. Something to which you are willing to commit  
      b. Consistent with your core values
3. Once a goal has been set:
   a. Put up reminders to keep focused on it. (pictures, charts, logos)
   b. Pray about it regularly.
   c. Visualize yourself accomplishing it.

I. The setting of goals is a biblical concept.

A. God set a goal to provide salvation from man’s sins. (pyramid principle)
   1. The sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was preplanned.
      Acts 2: 23 – this Man (Jesus), delivered over by the predetermined plan and
      foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of
      godless men and put Him to death.
   2. This “predetermined plan” was made before creation.
      I Pet. 1: 20 – For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,
      but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you
      21 who through Him are believers in God, ...

B. Jesus set goals during His earthly ministry.
   Luke 13: 32-33 And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out
   demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day
   I reach My goal.’” 33 Nevertheless I must journey on today and
   tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would
   perish outside of Jerusalem.

C. The Lord’s Apostle set goals.
   1. Phil. 3: 14 – I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
      in Christ Jesus. (cf – II Tim. 2: 7-8)
   2. When teaching the word revealed by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle had a goal.
      I Tim. 1: 5 – But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a
      good conscience and a sincere faith.

D. Christians must also set goals in order to grow in Christ.
   1. Spiritual growth is a process that never ends ... NOT an accomplishment.
   2. Unlike physical growth, spiritual growth doesn’t just happen over time. It’s a goal.
      Phil. 3: 17 – Join in following my example, and observe those who walk according
      to the pattern you have in us.
      Phil. 3: 12 – Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect,
      but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I
      was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
II. Some characteristics of spiritual goals.

A. A goal is a specific mark, a target to which we strive to attain. (aim at)

1. III. – If one aims at nothing, he’ll hit it every time. Story of young boy drawing bull’s-eyes around bullet holes in the side of the barn, on trees, etc.

2. At his death, the Apostle was confident that he had achieved that his goal. II Tim. 2: 7-8  I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day;

B. Spiritual goals must be scriptural.

1. They must not violate any tenant set forth in scripture.

2. Example of unspiritual goal:  I’m going to save $10,000 year.
   Matt. 6: 19 – Do not store up treasures on earth ... treasures for yourselves in Heaven

C. Spiritual goals must be pleasing to God.

1. The goal of Jesus was to please the Father.
   John 8:29 – And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

2. It should also be our goal to please God.
   Col. 1: 10 – so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work ...

D. Spiritual goals should produce spiritual growth.

1. Eph. 4:15 – but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

2. I Pet. 2: 2 – like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

3. If I’m the same as I was last year, I have fallen short of what God expects.
   a. Growth requires that we add to what we already had.
   b. Adding which causes growth creates change. (Change isn’t always comfortable.)

III. What are some areas in which we need to set some spiritual goals?

Note: Goals are individual. These are just areas where goals are needed.

A. We all need to have goals in regard to our knowledge of the word of God.

1. We’re commanded to keep growing in our knowledge of the word. (I Pet 2:2)
a. Eph. 5: 8, 10  for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ( 9 ... )
   10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ( ongoing process )

b. II Pet. 3: 17–18  You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ...

2. We need goals in regard to our bible reading.
   a. The only way we become familiar with the content is through repeated reading.
   b. The objective is not just to have read a certain amount, but to gain familiarity.
   c. Repeated reading of limited text is very helpful, e.g., read the whole book of Philippians every day for a full month. -- oral reading Eph–20 min, Phil–14 min
   d. Read the entire bible. You need the O.T. to be able to understand the N.T.
   e. Set aside a specific time and place. ( Reduce TV time, or news paper time )

3. We need a goal in regards to bible study. ( Not the same as reading )
   a. Read all of the cross references and look up more.
   b. Look up the meaning of words. ( Not just the English word ... use lexicon )
   c. Compare the way the same concept is presented elsewhere in the bible.

4. We need a goal in regards to bible meditation.
   a. The American mind has great difficulty meditating because we stay busy.
   b. Facts are of little value until we know how to apply them ... to direct our path.
      Col. 1:10 – so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,
      to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ( Jas 1 .. implanted word saves )

B. We need to set goals in regard to our relationship with God.
   1. Prayer is a direct reflection of our relationship with God.
   a. We’re all busy ... make an appointment with yourself to pray.
   b. We must be dogmatic about our prayer time. ( American life is too demanding )
      Acts 3: 1 – Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. ( compare Muslims )
   c. Incorporate prayer into mindless tasks ... Getting dressed, washing dishes, etc.
   d. Keep a written prayer list and pray it regularly. ( 100 informal prayers daily )
   2. Worship must be as natural as breathing. ( God never tires of hearing your love. )
   a. The assemblies are commanded and essential to salvation, but not only worship.
   b. I Cor. 14: 3, 12, 26 ; Heb. 10: 23-25 ... The assembly of the church must edify.
c. We must worship God EVERY day, not just in the building. (*In our hearts*)
d. Avoid things that interfere with worship ... sin, anger, strife, grudges, etc.

3. Developing **trust / faith** is fundamental to one’s relationship with God.  
a. **Rom. 10: 17** ... Faith come as a results of study.
b. **Jas. 1: 2-3**  ... Faith is strengthened by overcoming trials
c. Faith is reinforced when one applies the word.

  *Heb. 5: 14 – But solid food is for the mature, who **because of practice** have their **senses trained to discern** good and evil.*

C. **Time is limited, there are many areas regarding which we need to establish goals**

  1. Involvement in the work of the congregation.
  2. Developing our abilities ... starting with the weakest one.
  3. Become more active in sharing the gospel and inviting people to church.
  4. Goals in regard to our giving. (**Not just the collection ... meeting needs, missions**)  

IV. **We also need to have goals as a congregation.**  

  A. **This is the elder’s area so I won’t get into it too deeply into this.**  
  B. **Everything that applies to us as individuals also applies to us as a group.**  

  1. Successful congregations know where they want to be next year, in 5, in 10.
  2. If there is no plan to advance, a congregation will surely stagnate. (*rut = grave*)
  3. It’s impossible to get members involved in a program that doesn’t exist.
  4. People give more generously when they know the money is accomplishing works.

C. **As a congregation we need to formulate goals in the areas of :**

  1. Evangelism and restoration
  2. Membership involvement
  3. Monthly fellowships
  4. Leadership development
  5. Building and grounds

**CONCLUSION :**

  A. The ultimate goal is to be face to face with God in eternity.
  B. What is your progress toward that goal ?

**Communion Slide**
Lesson Text:

**Philippians 3: 7-21**

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; 16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
Elements of S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting

by Chris Joseph, Demand Media

The process of setting goals can serve as a road map to your success in areas such as sales or operating a small business. One process for helping you set clear, achievable goals is S.M.A.R.T., which stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time frame. Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals can help keep you motivated and provide a way to measure your progress during your journey.

Specific

The goals for your business need to be specific so they can be broken down into precise steps you need to take. For example, the goal of being a successful salesperson is very general and doesn't really clarify what you're hoping to achieve. However, saying that you want to be the No. 1 salesperson in your insurance agency clearly demonstrates your intentions.

Measurable

Your goals should be measurable, which typically involves breaking them down into smaller, quantifiable increments. To be the top salesperson in your office, previous history may tell you that you'll have to earn $60,000 in commissions for the year. To accomplish this, you must average $5,000 in commissions per month while factoring in allowances for illness and vacation time.

Attainable

To be attainable, a goal should require you to push yourself to achieve it, but it shouldn't be so hard to attain that it is virtually impossible. If your goal will require you to work 80 hours per week to achieve it, there's a good chance that you'll burn out long before you reach it while also possibly harming your health and family life. On the other hand, working 50 hours a week may be demanding but doable.

Realistic

Be realistic about your goals. If your goal is to earn $60,000 in annual commissions but your previous high was $30,000, you'll need to take a close look at your current work habits and prospecting methods. If you're not willing to change how you operate, reaching your goal may be highly unrealistic.

Time Frame

A time frame will keep you focused on your goal as well as help to motivate you. If your goal is to open a new business, setting a firm deadline for a date six months from now can force you to begin to take the necessary actions, such as finding a building, arranging for financing, obtaining permits and hiring employees.