

Dream Big, Plan Boldly

How to Set Spiritual Goals and Trust God Completely

BEST LIFE #2

Goal Setting & Planning

This discussion guide comes from a devotional in *The Best Life* series, which helps us develop spiritual life skills with God's guidance. The series explores 20 key areas of growth through devotionals, podcasts, and practical insights—all rooted in biblical wisdom. You can read the full post on goal setting at deepspirituality.com.

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Where there is **no vision**, the people **perish**: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

— Proverbs 29:18 KJV

- Many people live reactively rather than intentionally, drifting through life without clear purpose.
- By engaging with the Bible and seeking spiritual guidance, we can discover our strengths, recognize deeper desires, and find direction.
- Aligning decisions with spiritual purpose can lead to fulfillment beyond our initial expectations, impacting career, relationships, and family positively.

Question:

- Why do you think we ask ourselves simple questions like “**What job should I take?**” rather than deeper questions like “**Why did God put me here?**”

Living with purpose

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Therefore I do not run without a definite goal; I do not flail around like one beating the air [just shadow boxing].

— 1 Corinthians 9:26 AMP

- The Bible makes it clear: **God doesn't want us to live aimlessly**.
- He calls us to **examine** our lives, **recognize** where we are spiritually lacking, and **trust** him as we set goals that align with his purpose (Romans 12:2)
- The way forward starts with recognizing where God is leading you—and having the courage to follow.

Questions:

- What areas of your spiritual life might be described as "shadow boxing," where you're **putting in effort but not making real progress**?
- How do you personally recognize when God is leading you toward something? What steps can you take to **become more aware and responsive to his direction**?



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Scriptures for reflection

Let God teach you how to think.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

— **Romans 12:2 NIV**

So, brothers and sisters, be careful that none of you has the evil thoughts that cause so much doubt that you stop following the living God. [13] But encourage each other every day, while you still have something called “today.” **Help each other** so that none of you will be fooled by sin and become too hard to change.

— **Hebrews 3:12-13 ERV**

- We can only discern God's will when we let him influence the way we think.
- If we want to let God transform the way we think and embrace a life of big dreams, we need to invite the influence and encouragement of spiritual friends into our lives.



Let God guide your plans.

A man's heart plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

– Proverbs 16:9 BSB

Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.

– Proverbs 16:3 NLT

- When fear, control, or worldly desires drive us, our goals follow suit. This can manifest itself in many different ways:
 - Choosing the **comfortable** path over the faithful path.
 - Making decisions based on **fear** instead of trust.
 - Clinging to **personal plans or ambitions** instead of seeking God's vision.
 - Choosing a path based on **peer pressure or people-pleasing**.
- When we commit our plans to him, he leads us to success.

Stay focused on the right goals.

Keep your head up, your eyes straight ahead, and your focus fixed on what is in front of you. [26] Take care you **don't stray from the straight path**, the way of truth, and you will safely reach the end of your road.

– Proverbs 4:25-26 Voice

- Fear, people-pleasing, and wasting time on things that don't move us closer to God can all distract us from reaching our God-given purpose.
- Following Jesus's example of staying focused on God, we must learn to say "no" to distractions and "yes" to the life God is calling us to live (Luke 13:31-32)

Make goals for God, not for people.

Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

– Galatians 1:10 NLT

- People's approval is fickle (Matthew 6:1-4) and it traps us in fear (Proverbs 29:25).
- God wants to give us an eternal purpose much greater than temporary applause.

Track your progress with perseverance.

Practice and work hard on these things; be absorbed in them [completely occupied in your ministry], so that your progress will be evident to all.

– 1 Timothy 4:15 AMP

- Spiritual growth isn't instant—it's built through small, consistent steps.
- The path to God's purpose often includes obstacles, setbacks, and moments of doubt. That's why it's more important to focus on our progress than our perfection.

Questions for reflection

- ? **What's driving my approach to time and goals—faith or fear?** Am I avoiding goal-setting because I fear failure or discomfort, or am I trusting God's plan and stepping forward in faith?
- ? **What distractions or habits keep me from living with purpose?** Am I prioritizing God's calling, or letting procrastination, people-pleasing, or comfort hold me back?
- ? **How can I align my daily actions with God's purpose?** What's one small step I can take today to seek God first and stay on track with His plan for my life?

Resources for purposeful planning

- Here are practical tips and resources to help you strengthen your goal-setting and planning skills on your spiritual journey. This list isn't exhaustive, but it's a great starting point to guide you in the right direction.

Start with prayer and reflection

- Before setting goals, take time to pray and reflect on what God is calling you to focus on.
- Pray about the purpose of your life and why you have the unique strengths and experiences you have. **Think big-picture rather than survival.**

Use a proven goal-setting framework

- Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals can help bring clarity and direction.



Write it down and track progress

- Studies show that writing down your goals increases the likelihood of achieving them. Use a journal, planner, or goal-tracking app.



Stay focused and overcome distractions

- Avoid multitasking and saying “yes” to everything. Prioritize what moves you toward God’s plan for your life.



Find accountability and support

- Surround yourself with people who encourage and challenge you to think spiritually and stay on track. Regular check-ins with a mentor or spiritual friend can help.



Be flexible and trust God’s timing

- Plans may change, and setbacks will happen. Stay open to God’s guidance, and trust that he is leading you where you need to go.

Read the full devotional at deepspirituality.com/goal-setting