

HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

—by Prof Nicolene Joubert

A new year often begins with time spent on New Year's resolutions and goal setting. The words 'resolution' and 'goal' indicate an outcome, result or end. At the beginning of a year we plan and decide how we want the year to end and we envisage a certain outcome.

The goals we set to reach this outcome may vary from smaller goals such as losing weight, tackling a new course or getting a driver's licence to higher goals such as buying a car, changing jobs or even a life-changing goal like immigrating.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

Some of us might resist the goal setting process out of fear that we will fail to reach our goals. To avoid the pain and disappointment of unfulfilled goals, no goals are set. Avoidance behaviour may protect us against the pain of failure but it may lead to aimless behaviour and procrastination which in turn leads to depression and apathy.

The Bible encourages us to set goals and provides guidelines for this. The guidelines pertain to motivation (why we should set goals), attitude (the value we assign to goals), effectiveness (the behaviour we adopt to fulfil the goals) and clarity (knowing what we want to achieve).

1. MOTIVATION

In Luke 14:28-32 Jesus teaches on discipleship and in this passage He illustrates the wisdom of calculating the cost of a decision before acting on it. "For which one of

you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build

and was not able to finish.'" Luke 14:28

Goal setting enables us to assess what we're letting ourselves in for and to ensure that we are able to finish a task. Goals direct attention and effort and help us to use our time well. It may inspire us to use our abilities or to take on new challenges and acquire new knowledge and skills. The consequent result is personal growth.

2. ATTITUDE

The word goal means, amongst other things, the terminal point in a race. Paul uses the metaphor of a race to depict our life on earth and advises us how to run this race. In 1 Corinthians 10:24 he states: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win."

Our attitude in everything that we do should be to put in all the effort we can to 'win'. Win in this sense signifies that we approach and chase our individual goals by putting in our best effort.

The more valuable a goal is perceived to be, the more motivated we will be to achieve the goal and the more self-satisfaction we will experience by achieving the goal.

3. EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness in fulfilling a goal is enhanced by commitment and focus. A positive relationship is created between a goal and performance in the presence of commitment to the goal, the ability to attain the goal and the absence of a conflicting goal. From a Biblical point



of view true effectiveness in achieving goals is based on engaging God in the process.

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it." Psalms 127:1 In all the goals we set we should acknowledge God and follow His plan for our lives to make sure our labour is not in vain.

4. CLARITY

Clear, well-defined goals lead to improved task performance. When a person is challenged by a goal, motivation is sparked to reach the goal. Another factor to mention in this regard is the attainability of the goals. Goals that are attainable increase task performance. On the other hand if you have conflicting goals the discrepancy between the goals will counter your ability to perform.

For instance, if your goals are to spend more time with your family and to expand your business, the demands of both situations might create discontent in you and an inability to perform at an optimum level.

5. OVER-ARCHING GOAL

The most important goal to reach is to know Jesus. Paul presents many of his accomplishments to the Philippians (Phil 3) but then points out that he has counted these things to be less in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus.

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain the resurrection from the dead... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Phil 3:10;14

Our challenge is to aim at this high goal as the over-arching goal of our lives. To be effective in reaching our ultimate goal we have to follow Paul's example to forget what is behind and to reach forward to what lies ahead (Phil 3:13). This will enable us to run the good race of faith and to finish well. ■

PROF NICOLENE JOUBERT is the head of the Institute of Christian Psychology and a Counselling Psychologist. Prof Joubert specialises in Christian psychotherapy and trauma counselling. For counselling appointments or studies in Christian Psychology call 011 827 7611 or www.icp.org.za



YOUR EDUCATION TO BENEFIT OTHERS



INSTITUTE OF
CHRISTIAN
PSYCHOLOGY

Tel: 011 021 8930
011 827 0209 / 7611
Cell: 082 048 4792
Fax: 011 827 1954
studentadmin@icp.org.za
P.O. Box 15040
Lambton
1414

Please visit our new website:
www.icp.org.za

BA DEGREE
POSTGRADUATE BRIDGING COURSE IN CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY
BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (B PSYCH)
BASIC CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING COURSE
ADVANCED COUNSELLING COURSE

The Institute of Christian Psychology is a site of delivery of Die Afrikaanse Protestantse Akademie (Association incorporated under Section 21), a registered private higher education institution (DoE Registration Certificate Nr 1999/HE08/001)