

A COMMITMENT TO A BETTER YOU

WEEK USED: January 10, 2018

PRAY: Have a time of prayer for the Lord to prepare your heart

ICEBREAKER: What New Year's resolution or goal have you set?

EDIFICATION: Luke 14:28, Philipians 3:13-14, Hebrews 12:1-3, Proverbs 24:27

TOPIC: Commitment to a Better You

It is a new year! According to Forbes over 40% of Americans have made a new year's resolution. According to University of Scranton research out of the 40% only 8% of those resolutions will be achieved. With statistics like that we must ask the question, why? Why do so many people fail at reaching their goals?

It all starts with the vision. Proverbs 29:18 says "Where there is no vision the people perish..." There must be a clear vision that pulls us to reach further.. An example of this would be instead of saying I want to pray more, you envision the intimacy with the Lord and how He will speak to you more. Instead of trying to complete a task you have a vision that is pulling you to accomplish your goal!

Once you have a vision, create a plan to achieve it. A vision without action is just that, a vision. The plan you create is what is going to materialize your vision and make it a reality. A plan is best created when you can break it down into smaller tangible goals that are measurable. If you can create daily disciplines that over time will get you to your vision, it makes the vision attainable. It also removes the feeling of the vision being out of reach or overwhelming. When creating a plan it helps to set small rewards for motivation. Determine a reward to set when you reach a certain threshold. An example of this would be each time you memorize 10 scriptures you get an ice cream.

Once the plan is created immediately take action. A great plan will not do anything until you put it in motion. There is such a feeling of accomplishment knowing you are acting on what you planned.

Set times to assess where you are in accomplishing the goals. It is so easy to get busy with life and forget where you are heading. Think on your vision continuously. Keep it in the forefront of your mind.

Read: Proverbs 15:22, Proverbs 21:5, 2 Chronicles 15:7, Phillipians 4:8

Here are some of the pitfalls to be aware of that will kill your goals:

Procrastination: Do not put off tomorrow what you can accomplish today.

Complacency: When things are going well fight the urge to settle in and coast. Continue to reach beyond where you are at the moment.

Perception of Failure: When you are stretching for goals that are just outside of reach. There will be times when you come short of the goal. People learn far more through failure than through success. Thomas Edison said "I have not failed. I've only found 10,000 ways that won't work"

Negative Thinking: The majority of achieving your goals is done in your mind. If you believe you can achieve you are far more likely to succeed. Resist the urge to focus on everything going against you. God performed mighty miracles in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. He gave them a vision of the promised land on the other side of the wilderness. Their negative thinking and complaining caused them to stay in the wilderness. They complained about the water, the weather, the food, the difficulty, and the leadership. They indulged themselves in enough negative thinking that God canceled the trip for those complaining. They did not reach the vision God gave them. The battle is in your mind.

Now is always the best time to set your goals. Don't wait for another January 1st. Seek the Lord for a vision. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." (Proverbs 16:9) Have your mind made up! You will reach your vision! With the help of the Lord, you will accomplish what you have set out to do! This is going to be a great year! The best is yet to come!

DISCUSSION: (If you are having this devotion with your family, read the questions aloud and wait for their input. If necessary break the questions down for children and let them get involved in the discussion. Avoid answering the questions for them.)

1. Are setting goals really necessary?
Success does not happen by accident. Goals are achieved because people are determined to reach them. If you aim for nothing chances are you will hit it.
2. What are some other ideas you can do to obtain your goals?
Get a mentor. Surround yourself with people that are like what you want to become. Have someone you can be accountable to. Post your goals in a place you will see them every day.
3. How important is it to set a time when you expect to have achieved your goals?
Crucial, if you do not have a specific time set out. There is no urgency to complete it. You can easily fall into complacency. This can also happen with goals that have too much time allowed before completion.
4. Write your goals for 2018? (Allow time for each person to write their goals.)
 - A. Personal
 - B. Family
 - C. Ministry
 - D. Occupational