

DAILY BIBLE VERSES AND PRAYER THOUGHTS:

MONDAY - VERSES: Deuteronomy 20:1-4; Jeremiah 42:9-16

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank God for bringing you to this point in your life and faith. Beg Him to continue to be with you and vow that you will continue to follow Him in the new year.

TUESDAY - VERSES: Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; 3 John 1:11; Romans 6:20-21 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God to help you look at the direction your life should take this year and on into the future.

WEDNESDAY - VERSES: Consider the song "Be With Me, Lord"; Hebrews 13:5-6; Ephesians 6:13-18 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God for the courage to face the unknowns, the strength to overcome the challenges, and the perseverance to reach the goals He wants for you.

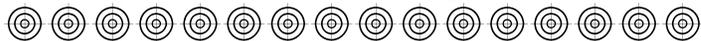
THURSDAY - VERSES: Psalm 119:63; Revelation 1:9; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God for others who have the same goals to come and walk with you and share in the journey toward those goals.

FRIDAY - VERSES: Luke 14:26-33; Luke 9:62; Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 16:9 PRAYER THOUGHT: Ask God's help in setting meaningful, challenging, but realistic goals in your life as a Christian.

SATURDAY - VERSES: Romans 3:23-26; Psalm 32:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank God for the grace He offers when we miss the target, and ask Him to forgive you for those failings and give you the courage to try again.



Many of us spend half our time wishing for the things we could have if we didn't spend half our time wishing. - Alexander Woollcott



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Daily read over this material and read or sing the song.
2. Place the scripture where you will see it often each day.
3. Think of times when you have had a strong desire to do a particular thing for God.
4. Write down the ways you strengthened your goal seeking.
5. Plan to tell the class how you or someone else's desire to seek God's will and heaven, or tell how you have failed in your efforts to seek God and heaven more.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH REGIMEN - WEEK 24

GOALS - 12-30-12 to 1-5-13

SCRIPTURE - (Phil 3:14) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

COMMENT – As Christians we should recognize the drawing of God. He pulls us, entices us, pleads with us, encourages us, He has done everything he can to bring us to Him and heaven. We in return need to do everything we can to move toward him.

SONG – HIGHER GROUND

1. I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I onward bound, "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."
2. My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts a rise and fears dismay; Though some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim is higher ground.
3. I want to live above the world, Though Satan's darts at me are hurled; For faith has caught the joyful sound, The song of saints on higher ground.
4. I want to scale the utmost height, And catch a gleam of glory bright; But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, "Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

REFRAIN: Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on heaven's table land, A higher plane than I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

THOUGHTS

"If we do not know where we are going, we will not know when we get there."



A fanatic is one who redoubles his efforts after he has lost sight of his goal.



"If you hit it every time, the target is too near."



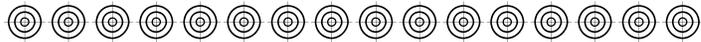
A stranger was walking down a residential street and noticed a man struggling with a washing machine at the doorway of his house.

When the newcomer volunteered to help, the homeowner was overjoyed, and the two men together began to work and struggle with the bulky appliance.

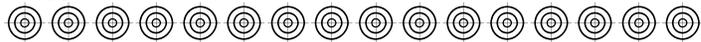
After several minutes of fruitless effort the two stopped and just stared at each other in frustration. They looked as if they were on the verge of total exhaustion. Finally, when they had caught their breath, the first man said to the homeowner: "We'll never get this washing machine in there!" To which the homeowner replied: "In? I'm trying to move it out of here!"



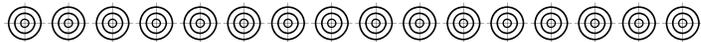
Someone is reported to have asked a concert violinist in New York's Carnegie Hall how she became so skilled. She said that it was by "planned neglect." She planned to neglect everything that was not related to her goal.



The FBI went into one town to investigate the work of what appeared to be a sharpshooter. They were amazed to find many bull's-eyes drawn around town, with bullets that had penetrated the exact center of the targets. When they finally found the man who had been doing the shooting, they asked him about the technique he used to attain such accuracy. The answer was simple. He shot the bullet first, and drew the bull's-eye later. That may be an easy way to have the appearance of hitting the mark, but it is at best a deception and at worst a lie. So it is with goals. We should use them to direct our work and determine if we have accomplished our purposes, not to defend what we happened to do.



In Alice in Wonderland, at one point Alice says to the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where," said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. As with Alice, so with us and the church. Without objectives, we will have nowhere to go, and we'll just keep wandering aimlessly.



"I would rather fail in a cause that will someday triumph, than triumph in a cause that will someday fail" (Woodrow Wilson).



In the June issue of R.C. Sproul's Table Talk a preacher shares some lessons learned after being convicted by one of his own sermons (an occupational hazard) on time. He heard himself saying, "God could not give you more to do in a day than can be done. If you are in that situation, then you and/or other people have put things on your schedule that God did not!" While not cured, this is what he has learned in the process of remission. . . 1. God cannot give you too many goals. 2. Block out time for five non-negotiable activities that are God's priorities: communion with God, time with friends & family, study, physical conditioning, restoration and recreation. 3. Find a system of ordering tasks as they "come up" to your awareness in the proper order and with the proper emphasis. 4. Discover your biggest "time wasting" habits and be accountable to someone to get rid of them.



Lily Tomlin humorously reminds us all of the necessity for goals. She said, "I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific." As Christians we all share the common goal of being more like Christ, but if we aren't deliberate and specific about it, we might end up looking more like somebody else instead of Christ.



PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

I. I _____

II. TOWARD THE _____

III. FOR THE _____

IV. OF THE _____ CALL OF GOD

V. _____ CHRIST JESUS

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

SCRIPTURE - (Phil 3:8-16) Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ {9} and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by 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} if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. {12} Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. {13} Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, {14} I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. {15} Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. {16} Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

I. I PRESS

A. "PRESS" IS A TERM THAT INDICATES A CONCENTRATED EFFORT

B. WE MUST KEEP ON KEEPING ON UNTIL WE ATTAIN OUR GOALS OR PERFECTION OR DIE – Phil 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

II. TOWARD THE GOAL

A. GOALS ARE NECESSARY - If you don't have goals in your life you will never be able to tell if you're a failure.

B. I like to think of a goal as a target. The bull's eye is 100. Concentric rings are 80, 60, 40, and 20. I aim for 100, but sometimes I hit 80 or even 20. But if I don't aim for 100, I will hit zero every time. Someone said, "I would rather attempt to do something great for God and fail, than to do nothing and succeed."

C. "Success does not necessarily mean that we must earn a great deal of money and live in the biggest house in town. It means

only that we are daily engaged in striving toward a goal that we have independently chosen and feel is worthy of us as persons. A goal, whatever it may be, is what gives meaning to our existence.'

III. FOR THE PRIZE

A. PAUL'S GOAL WAS THE RESURRECTION – THE PRIZE WAS ETERNAL LIFE.

B. HE HAD NOT REACHED HIS GOAL YET NOR HAD HE REACHED PERFECTION, HEAVEN WAS STILL IN THE FUTURE - Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. {13} Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

IV. OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD

A. GOD CALLS EACH OF US UPWARD TOWARD HIM

B. GOD WANTS US TO BE CONSTANTLY IMPROVING AND GROWING - (Eph 4:11-16) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; {14} that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, {15} but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; {16} from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

C. GOD WANTS US ALL IN HEAVEN WITH HIM - (2 Pet 3:9) The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

V. IN CHRIST JESUS

A. THE UPWARD CALL IS FOR THOSE "IN CHRIST JESUS"

B. ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSING ARE IN CHRIST - (Eph

1:3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

C. NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST - (Rom 8:1-2) There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. {2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

D. ETERNAL LIFE IS IN CHRIST - (Rom 6:23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

E. "IN CHRIST" IS USED 87 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. 20 TIMES OTHER FORMS OF THE PHRASE ARE USED.

CONCLUSION

A. ARE YOU IN CHRIST? GOD WANTS YOU TO BE.
IT'S UP TO YOU.

B. IF YOU ARE IN CHRIST, ARE YOU PRESSING
TOWARD HEAVEN?

C. IS HEAVEN YOUR GOAL?

D. ARE YOU LIVING A LIFE THAT SHOWS YOU WANT
TO BE IN HEAVEN?

Philippians 3:14

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