

Happy and Prosperous New Year

It is common at this time of year for many people to make New Year's resolutions. Many of these are Financial resolutions. Unfortunately, as in years past, most of those financial resolutions will not become a reality.

Most resolutions are mere wishes and not Destiny Dreams. A wish is something one hopes will happen but there is no plan, no extra effort. A Destiny Dream is one, *that you are willing to do whatever is Biblically necessary to make it a reality*. One of the Biblical necessities is to target your faith by setting Proper Goals -- called **SMART** Goals.

GOAL SETTING, BECAUSE FAITH NEEDS A TARGET. Proper goal setting is a powerful step of faith. It provides a target, and faith needs a target, as evident in Hebrews 11:1,

"Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"

The "substance of things hoped for" is a target. A goal towards which you can release faith (actions and words). Goal setting is essential to maximizing your harvest. This understanding really came alive for me one day nearly 20 years ago and has been a powerful ally ever since.

It was relatively early, 3rd year, in my Business career as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) specializing in planning for Business-Owners. As was the custom in the firm, at year-end we would sit down with the executive GM, Doug, for a one on one planning session. My previous years had been successful and I was looking forward to strategizing with him for the upcoming year.

Part of the process included a new 8 page questionnaires requesting specific numerical goals for each aspect of the Financial planning cycle. To be honest at that time, although I had been to Graduate school, earned a MBA and was a CPA, I did not buy into his goal setting too much. Accordingly, I performed only a cursory review of his questionnaire - leaving many questions unanswered.

Doug, a good Christian, challenged me about the need for these specific goals. We discussed it back and forth. Looking back I can't believe one of my replies. It was along the lines of..."Doug, I did well this year, I'll work harder, see more clients and do more next year, I know what I am doing." (Thank God for His Mercy).

Finally, frustrated Doug said "Give me a goal! What do you want to make next year?" I gave him a high number (just to get him off my back). Fortunately, he saw through it. He replied, what if you make only this amount (and gave me a number \$30,000 less)...would you be happy? I replied "yes" (as his # represented an increase over the good year I just had).

Doug replied firmly and I still remember it - *"Then your number it is not a goal. A goal is something specific. And a goal is something that if you do not make it, you will be surprised, it must be something that stretches you and if not accomplished, you are disappointed."*

It may not sound that profound, but on that day nearly 20 years ago, I caught it. All the previous goal setting principles now made more sense! I promptly apologized and asked to rescheduled the meeting for that afternoon. After lunch, I returned with a complete goal strategy which I immediately began to implement.

My practice grew, so much so that within 2 years of that meeting I was honored in TIME Magazine as one of top Financial Planners in the country. I was convinced of the need for goal planning and have implemented them ever since for personal, business and ministry needs.

Two decades later, I can attest first-hand to the drastic results that proper goal setting can have on one's finances and Destiny. Most people have never been trained in proper goal setting or ignore what they have heard because it is too complicated. Proper goal setting requires various components but does not need to be complex.

As a minister, in our Financial Champions Breakthrough weekends, I teach that an easy way to incorporate proper goal setting is to remember the word **SMART**. Set **SMART** goals:

S=SPECIFIC. Goals must be specific. Clear and concise as to what you want to accomplish. This will assist you in recognizing distractions and staying focused.

M=MEASURABLE. A goal must be easily measurable. Without quantification, there is no method to ensure you are on track to accomplish the goal. Too often statements such as "make more money", "get out of debts", "give more", "grow the ministry" are camouflaged as goals. These are good ideas, but they are not Goals. They are directional statements (mere wishes). Goals must be measurable, quantified.

Instead of A Wish	Have A Goal
"make more \$"	"make 25 % more this year"
"get out of debt"	"reduce credit card balance by \$3,000 in 2006."
"save for college education"	"save 300/mo. for towards college for the kids."
"give more"	"give 50% more than last year."
"buy real state"	"buy one rental property/year for next 5 years."

You get the idea. Put a number to your goal.

AR=Attainable and Reasonable. Challenging but not impossible. Out of reach but not out of sight. Never want to stifle anyone's faith, but for someone making \$50,000/yr., an income goal of \$1,000,000 this year is not an Attainable and Reasonable Goal, unless they have incorporate drastic changes in their business and created new revenue streams.

T=Time. Defined Goals need a specific time to them. Obviously, annual goals expire at year end and should be tracked quarterly, even monthly. You should also have short-term (3 years), intermediate (5-7 years) and long-term (10 years) goals in your finances, business and ministry.

Goal Setting is by no means the only step. However, it is the first step in the journey to changing resolutions into realities. This year is a year of Great Harvest. Setting **SMART** goals will assist you in staying on course, pushing through resistance and reaping your harvest.

I cannot promise you that you will end up in Time Magazine. However, I can promise that it will cause something more important - an elevation of your finances, life and ministries as you build the Kingdom of God.

God bless you richly,

Bob