

7 Ways To Accomplish Your Goals in 2020

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Reading Time: 6 minutes

Time is truly filled with swift transition. It is hard to believe that 2020 is upon us already but is. With the New Year comes new goals, dreams, and aspirations. Almost half of the United States engages in making yearly resolutions though we all could admit that we struggle to keep them. One writer has said we can't help but set goals for ourselves—it is how we are wired. Sometimes we make goals as individuals, families, or even as a congregation. It is a good thing to be striving toward something each year, especially things that will make us more like Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:12-14). Do you ever reach the goals that you have set for yourself? Do you find yourself in December forgetting what you purposed to do in January? Do you look back year after year and remember quitting or abandoning your worthy goals in late February or early March? We do not have to give up prematurely or reach the end of the year with our goals incomplete. Let me give a few tips for how we, as Christians, can accomplish the goals we set for ourselves in 2020.

#1: Be Specific

Sometimes we fail to accomplish our goals because we are not sure what we are seeking to achieve. While desiring to pray more is a good idea, that is too vague of a plan to be a measurable goal that can be accomplished. If you want to read the Bible more, that's great, but merely saying you want to read the Bible more is hard to gauge from day to day and year to year. Jesus came to the earth to accomplish the will of His Father, and He was often very specific in how this would be done (Matt. 16:21; Luke 19:10). What if you said I want to pray a minimum of three times a day and read three chapters of the Bible each day (Psa. 55:17)? That is something you could keep track of and hold yourself accountable to accomplish. This does not mean our relationship to God can be boiled down to a checklist or that we cannot be flexible as we try and better ourselves. However, if we are not specific in our goal setting, we will probably not be able to know how to track our progress.

#2: Don't Try and Do it Alone

Too many of our plans and desires lack any mention of God and His help. Paul often would tell Christians to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might (Eph. 6:10; Col. 1:11). When we fail to mention the Lord's Will in our plans and goals—and it is all about what we plan to accomplish through our scheming, grit, and wisdom—we are likely to fail (Jas. 4:13-17). True success is found in those things which we accomplish through our God. Read Psalm 124 and notice how the psalmist is entirely dependent on the Lord and credits him for any success enjoyed. The world teaches that if you work hard enough and are smart enough, you can do anything, but should Christians know better. Christians realize that anything we accomplish that is worth anything is because God has worked in and through us. This does not mean that we have no responsibility or that we can sit back and let God do all of the work. It does mean though that whatever our plans are for 2020 (whether it involves being more evangelistic, improving our prayer life, strengthening our families, taking better care of our bodies, or attending service more faithfully, etc.)_we will only go as far as we go with God (Phil. 4:13).

#3: Beware of Overcommitting

Sometimes we fail because we are trying to juggle and balance too many things at once. It may be the case that we are not as good at multitasking as we think. Paul said he was going to strive to do **one thing** (Phil. 3:13). David likewise had **one thing** that he desired (Psa. 27:4). Jesus told His disciples to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness **first**, and all the things they worried about would be taken care of by God (Matt. 6:33). We only have

so many hours in the day and, though the Bible condemns laziness, it also condemns the person who vows to do more than he or she can actually perform (Eccl. 5:4-5). What if, in 2020, you focused on the few things you want to improve regarding the ministry God has assigned to you and tried to do your best at that (Col. 4:17)? Sometimes we are overcommitted, exhausted, and stretched too thin. I'm not suggesting laziness or apathy, but that you *streamline* our lives for the Lord. As you have goals and aspirations for 2020, remember that quality is often better than quantity. It will be better to have accomplished 3 or 4 meaningful things rather than having only partially accomplished 25 things (Luke 14:28-30).

#4: Start Immediately

Every track sprinter knows that it is crucial to get out of the starting blocks as quickly as possible. It is hard to make up ground when you begin from behind. Start on the right track and try to maintain it throughout the year. Do not start sluggish, or you may never get around to doing what you have planned (Rom. 12:11). The Bible frequently mentions how short our time is and how this should cause us to live skillfully and wisely (Psa. 39:4, 90:12). I realize that the admonitions in scripture are not about keeping New Year's resolutions, but the principles can still be applied for our benefit. Sometimes we fail because we never get started. Make the most of the time. Start on January 1st the things that you can as you seek to grow in godliness in 2020.

#5: Keep Going, Even When You Don't See Results

We all like to see results, and sometimes we allow our eyes to play tricks on us. The things that truly matter and the eternal differences that are made in the world are rarely accomplished overnight. When making goals remember to keep going even when all of your efforts seem to be met with minimal or no results. Maybe you are still not seeing any real difference made in life, though you are reading the Bible more, praying regularly, and inviting people to worship. Perhaps you are dieting and exercising, but the scale won't budge. Christians are people of long-distance vision. We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). We cannot despair or give up simply because do not see things change immediately. Jesus worked with His disciples for three years, and throughout the gospel accounts it seems like very little growth is taking place among them. However, Jesus was persistent, and we must be too. Do not let disappointing results keep you from enduring. Living by faith means that sometimes we do not live to see all of the results of our labors in this lifetime, and that is perfectly fine because we know this life is not all that there is (Heb.

11:13-16).

#6: Avoid Comparison

Too many people measure their lives by the wrong standard. Comparing ourselves among ourselves is not wise and often leads to either unhealthy self-loathing or arrogance (2 Cor. 10:12). You might want your congregation to grow in evangelism or attendance. You might desire to be more consistent with spending time with your spouse or doing daily devotional as a family. One of the easiest ways to get discouraged is to keep looking over your shoulder at how someone else does it and allowing them to become the standard for how well or poorly you are performing. Each one of us looks at our “competition” in the face in the mirror every day. We need to try and become more like Jesus and measure ourselves by his life and not the lives of others striving to do the same. Someone has said, “If the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, then spend more time watering your own. Besides, you never know how high their water bill is.” Social media often deceives us into thinking our lives are worse than others as we judge our daily lives by the highlight reels of others, be careful.

There is nothing wrong with being encouraged by the diligence and effectiveness seen in others. Paul used the Macedonians as an example to encourage the Corinthians to follow through with their resolution to give (see 2 Cor. 8). However, remember that while others can inspire us, we must live our own lives and do the best that we can (Rom. 14:12). Furthermore, Christians must remember that we are comrades and not competitors. Do not lose sight of what you are striving to do by comparing yourself to what others are doing (John 21:18-22).

#7: Keep the Big Picture in View

The goal of the Christian life is to glorify God and then to go to be with him forever when this life is over (Isa. 43:7; Phil. 1:21-23). The goals that are the most worthwhile are those that help us to do those things. Remember that souls are the most important as we attempt to reconcile our friends and neighbors to God (2 Cor. 5:20). Many of our goals are self-oriented, but Christianity is a religion of service. Make sure that you have others in mind in 2020. Jesus is the greatest human being ever to live. Jesus did not live the longest life, have the most money, enjoy the best education, or live in the most advanced society. What made Jesus great? Jesus was a servant (Mark 10:44-45). We will be great to the degree that we

follow in his footsteps. The world is about self-promotion. Jesus emphasized self-denial. Remember, the main goal of Christianity is to lose ourselves in God and in glorifying him. Crucify yourself in 2020 and keep the main thing at the forefront of your mind.

I hope you made goals for 2020. Goals can be accomplished as we lean on the Lord and give Him all the glory for everything that is done (1 Cor. 15:10). I hope 2020 is a great year for you as you to live it for Him!