



## *Goal #2: Be Weird*

A G U I D E T O G O A L S

In elementary school, before entering a new grade, I'd make a list of goals of things I wanted to do for the upcoming school year. They were simple things like make good grades, be a good friend, and one year, in complete confidence in my own skin, I said I wanted to be "weird." I WANTED TO BE WEIRD. This still cracks me up to think about. Grown-up and sometimes insecure Valerie is super impressed that I was willing to be different and even made it a goal of mine. Looking back on pictures and reading the crazy poems and songs I wrote as a kid, it is safe to say I accomplished my goal better than I ever could have imagined. Just overachieving as usual.

It is twenty years later, and I still get all giddy inside to start a new sheet of paper and write out goals for the year. But nowadays, I'm looking to include God in this process. It sounds simple enough. God is a part of every area of my life. Why would I not include Him in shaping my dreams for life?

It can be more complicated than I think. I have trouble reconciling goals here on earth with God's plan for my life. I don't want to become legalistic in my relationship with Him or take control, but I also don't want to kick my shoes off and get lazy

waiting for God to drop a purposeful life at my door.

It comes 1 Kings 5–6, which is all about Solomon building the temple. What struck me about this passage was how overwhelming of a project this seemed to be and how wisely and swiftly Solomon seemed to handle things. He simply made a plan and made it happen. He was the project manager for the temple, something with a legacy that has lasted far beyond his lifetime. Here are four lessons I learned from Solomon: 1. Seek wisdom. 2. Make a plan. 3. Act on it. 4. Complete it. These are pretty basic, right? But what if Solomon hadn't asked for wisdom? Would he have known how to negotiate with the Hiram, King of Tyre, for cedar? Or known the right amount of men to put on the task? Or what if he didn't make a plan? Would the king of Tyre have even listened to him at all? Or what if he didn't act on it? What good would the perfect plan be that isn't actually put in motion? What good would a half-complete temple have been? And how would that have changed the generations to come?

Let's look at those 4 lessons closer.

**1. Seek wisdom.** This is huge. Without it, we could end up in the completely wrong place. Indulge me as I use the classic plane analogy. A plane that is even one degree off course will continue moving that direction and be taken farther and farther off the path—not one mile but hundreds of miles. Our starting point is very important, but the direction we head is even more so. Ask God what His plan for you is and seek it out. How do you seek it out? Soak your mind in His Word, seek wise counsel from trusted believers, and devote yourself to lots of prayer. I have also fasted during periods of decision and experienced God's truth in a unique way. Be quiet enough to hear God's nudging. I remember when this idea really hit me. I prayed and prayed God

would speak to me and felt like He was ignoring my request, but the truth was my communication with Him was limited to me talking. That's it. No actual listening on my part. Very rarely will you hear a horn blow announcing God's plan or see it written in the sky, so quiet your mind enough to be able to hear Him. For me recently, this meant shutting off the phone and computer for a short period of time to reduce the noise of the world around me.

**2. Make a plan.** I have used Lara Casey's Powersheets for two years and can easily say my life has been much more intentional than ever before, and I have accomplished so many of my goals. I highly recommend using them and will include a link to them at the end of the chapter. Writing out our goals makes them real. It might sound overly simple, but it's true. Until we know what we are going after, it's just an idea. And until we have a plan in action, it's just a dream. I have done this with tons of things. I'll think, "Oh I'd like to fast today from \_\_\_\_\_" and two hours later when I'm frustrated and need \_\_\_\_\_, I blow off my original plan because it wasn't *technically* a plan. It was just a thought that popped in that I never really committed to. Even better, share it with someone so you have the accountability. On my blog, I share my goals each month. It has been the best accountability and helps me sidestep the whole "not technically a plan" excuse.

**3. Act on it.** So you've made your plan. Now it's time to step out in obedience. You have heard from the Lord and are in line with His will. Sometimes the first step is hardest. I break down each of my goals into action steps. Each week, I try to add some of these steps to my week. If they are not on my calendar, the urgent but less important things will crowd out my goals. If we aren't spending our days working on our big goals, we can't make them happen. Part of acting involves self-control and creating good

habits and routines, all of which we will talk about soon!

What if you don't feel like you have heard Him clearly? Keep asking Him to speak and give Him plenty of space to talk. Then take the first step of where you feel like God is leading you. If it's wrong and you are tuned in to Him, you will feel an uneasiness or lack of peace. 1 Corinthians 14:33a (ESV) says, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." And remember that God's plan will not contradict His Word, so keep soaking up the truth from the Bible so you can determine if it does.

**4. Complete it.** Isn't this basically like act on it? Here's the difference. We can be really good at starting something but really bad at completing it. We get bored, or something shiny and new comes along that captures our attention. Solomon was a great example of completing something. He built a temple, y'all! Can you imagine that thing half finished? It would be pretty useless. Completing is a test of our patience and endurance and a true faith builder. God is all over this goal thing and will transform us through this process. One thing that I do to keep focused on my goals so that I see it through to completion is to pair verses with each goal. Once the goals are made, I choose several verses from the Bible to pair with each one. I use a concordance and search for words on the topic or search other resources or books that talk about the topic. I write each verse out on notecards so I can remind myself of God's truth in my plans for the year. I have a reminder on my phone to read Scripture each night before bed and read these often. It helps me to not lose sight of my goals and keeps them a priority so that I can finish strong.

I do have one *kind of* big caveat to this whole goal thing. Leave room for God to work and for the right opportunities. How many of your favorite memories of the last year were not even part of your goal list? Probably a decent amount. Here is where "trying

to control my future” and “sitting back and waiting for God to do all the work” balance each other. Set a plan, but keep your hands open instead of clenching your fist and being unwilling to part with a goal. Proverbs 16:9 (ESV) tells us, “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” Part of me is more excited for what is not on my goals list knowing God will bring things my way as I open my heart to his plan.

The practical way I “keep my heart open” is I pray about each of my goals. Each month, I include my goals in my personal section of my prayer journal. Each day, I am bringing my plan to the Lord and giving it up to Him to do His will. A perfect example. This book was NOT a part of my goals, but God is already bringing new dreams my way.

What are your lifelong dreams? And what are you doing this very day to make those happen? One of my very favorite quotes by John C. Maxwell is, “We overexaggerate yesterday, we overestimate tomorrow and we underestimate today.” Let that truth sink in. So much of why we stay stuck boils down to our ideas about our days. Whether it’s successes or failures from yesterday, we let them distract us from the present. Our failures distract us for obvious reasons, but even our successes can stall us if we focus on them so much that we miss the potential for today. All I can picture is Uncle Rico from *Napoleon Dynamite* reveling in the glory days of a high school championship. He’s got to be in his forties with nothing left to show but an achievement from high school. I don’t know about y’all, but that sounds like a fruit that has shriveled up.

On the other hand, we build up the potential of tomorrow envisioning the willpower we will suddenly possess and the fantasy that tomorrow it will be easier to tackle. Aren’t we all starting our diet on Monday? Seriously, a Monday? Aren’t Mondays already kind of a challenge? The fact that we even think we will attempt a diet starting on a Monday shows what a fantasy we have built

around tomorrow and beyond. After marinating on these truths the last few weeks, I have started to notice how often this thinking, even subconsciously, affects me.

Lastly, we don't value today. We see it as small and meaningless in the grand scheme of things, but all we have is a series of todays, and we have to act now. The past will always be the past, the future will always be the future, and today will always be the day we have to work with and make our God-sized dreams come true. The Lord has great plans for your life, and today is the perfect day to say yes to them.



# H O M E W O R K

## WORK IT OUT

Grab your *Lessons from The Finishing School* workbook or your worksheet, **A GUIDE TO GOALS**, from the website and let the refining begin!

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### *TODAY MATTERS*

*book by john c. maxwell*

### *MAKE IT HAPPEN*

*book by lara casey*

### *POWERSHEETS*

*goal-setting worksheets - laracaseyshop.com*

Find links to the worksheet and extra resources at  
**VALMARIEPAPER.COM/HOMEWORK**  
*password: fairlady*