

# How Goals Can Change You

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Maybe you started the new year saying, “This year is going to be different!” But if you’re like most people, those good intentions last about two weeks before everything goes back to the way it was.

So what does it take to make permanent change—in your health, finances, relationships, career, and more? To change, you first need to have faith that you can change. Next, you put that faith into action by setting goals. Then, as you work toward your godly goals, *God changes you*.

Here are five truths you need to know about goals:

## 1. Goal setting is a spiritual discipline.

Spiritual disciplines are habits that bring you closer to God. Goal setting becomes a spiritual discipline when you offer yourself to God to accomplish his purposes. And God sets goals too! The Bible says, “*He planned to bring all of history to its goal in Christ. Then Christ would be the head of everything in heaven and on earth*” (Ephesians 1:10 GW). When you set godly goals, you become more like Jesus.

## 2. Goals focus your energy.

You don’t have time for everything—and God doesn’t expect you to. The Living Bible paraphrase says, “*Make the most of every opportunity you have for doing good*” (Ephesians 5:16). Goals help you focus your energy by distinguishing between what’s urgent and what’s truly important.

## 3. Goals stretch your faith.

Godly goals are statements of faith. When you say, “I believe God wants me to accomplish *this* thing by *this* date,” you’re trusting him—and “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Hebrews 11:6 NIV). The goals that stretch your faith the most are the ones you can’t reach alone because they force you to rely on God.

## 4. Goals build your character.

Life is a course in character development, in becoming more like Christ. Paul says, “*Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:12 CSB). As you pursue a goal—especially through challenges—God shapes your character, because while you’re working on the goal, God is working on you.

## 5. Goals give you hope.

You can live without food and water for a short time, and you can even live without air for a few minutes. But you *must* have hope to survive. God knows this. He said, “*For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV). Goals give you the hope to keep moving forward—even when life is hard.