



Growing As Disciples (Section Introduction)

Having taken hold of our freedom in Christ, we now need to concentrate on growing to maturity. In this section we will learn how to stand firm, how to relate to other people and how to stay on the path of becoming more like Jesus.

SESSION 12: Where Are You Heading?

Focus verse: *"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5)*

Objective: To understand how faith relates to the goals and desires we have for our lives so that we can live a life of genuine freedom in Christ and become the person God created us to be.

Focus Truth: Nothing and no-one can keep us from being the person God created us to be.

If what we have been studying is true it will affect our daily lives.

One year ahead: As you look back, how will you judge how well you've done in your Christian life? What needs to have been done to give you a sense of satisfaction & to make it a good year?

The big question: Will what we have come to believe give us a sense of satisfaction will 'deliver the goods' or are the goals we've been working towards faulty?

YOUR CHRISTIAN WALK IS THE RESULT OF WHAT YOU BELIEVE



Walking by faith is like playing golf:

A young boy, learning to play. Hits the ball & it goes off line (15 degrees) but because there isn't much power/distance it stays on the fairway.

He gets older the ball & it goes off line (15 degrees) but now there is more power/distance it goes off the fairway.

If a professional golfer is 15 degrees off, because of the greater power/distance it will mean they are even wider of the mark.



Being 'off' in our belief system, having wrong goals, as a new Christian may not cause too many problems, but if we don't mature/change it will create greater & greater problems & the less fulfilling/productive our lives will be.

God knows best how we can be fulfilled & happy & peaceful.

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HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WHAT WE BELIEVE IS TRUE

God's feedback system: **Feelings: God's red flag of warning**



* If an experience/relationship makes us feel angry/anxious/depressed it is an emotional signpost that we may be working to a faulty goal based on a wrong belief.

* If we honestly look at why we feel this way, hold it up to God's truth we can bring it back into line.

Notes _____

Anger
signals a
blocked
goal



Notes _____

Anxiety
signals an
uncertain
goal



Notes _____

Depression
signals an
impossible
goal



Notes _____

Sometimes depression reveals that we have a faulty concept of God.

David: *"How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?... How long will my enemy triumph over me?" (Psalm 13:1-2)*

Had God really forgotten him? A wrong concept of God led to an impossible goal. But he evaluated his situation & focused on what he knew about God rather than his negative feelings.

"... I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." (Psalm 13:5)

WHEN OUR GOALS ARE FRUSTRATED

We can **either** try to manipulate circumstances and control other people
or we can change our goals to bring them into line with God's goals for our lives

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Where is *your* sense of worth?

TURNING BAD GOALS INTO GOOD GOALS

* **No God-given goal for our lives can ever be impossible, uncertain, or blocked**
(God would not do that to you.)

e.g. Mary (*Luke 1:37*)

* **God's goals for you are possible, certain and achievable.**

* No God-given goal depends on people or circumstances that we have no right or ability to control.

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A "GOAL" AND A "DESIRE"

A Godly Goal: Any specific orientation that reflects God's purpose for your life and does not depend on people or circumstances beyond your right or ability to control.

The only person we have the ability & right to control is ourselves. So the only person that can block a godly goal, or make it uncertain or impossible, is ourselves.

A Godly Desire: Any specific result that does depend on the cooperation of other people, the success of events or favourable circumstances, which you have no right or ability to control.

We cannot base our success or sense of worth on our desires, no matter how godly, because we cannot control their fulfillment.

We will struggle with anger, anxiety & depression if we elevate a desire to a goal in our own minds. We may be disappointed if a desire isn't met, but it is a lot easier to deal with.

God's distinction between goal & desire:

"For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!"
(Ezekiel 18:32)

- God's desire: all repent; but not everyone will. *"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin."* (1 John 2:1)

- The integrity, sovereignty & success of God are not dependant on whether we sin or not - God's goals cannot be blocked. e.g the return of Jesus Christ

Satan will be cast into the abyss for eternity

rewards will be distributed to the saints for their faithfulness

'When you begin to align your goals with God's goals & your desires with God's desires you will get rid of a lot of anger, anxiety & depression.'

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THE GOAL IS TO BECOME THE PERSON GOD CALLED YOU TO BE

* **God Wants Us To Become Like Jesus.**

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified." (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

* **Nobody and nothing on earth can stop you getting there.**

* **What about our circumstances etc?**

Paul: *"... we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."* (Romans 5:3-5)

James: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* (James 1:2-4)

* **It's about character: what we're like rather than what we do.**

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*** Difficulties help us towards God's goal.**

- Persevering through tribulation results in proven character
- Trials reveal wrong goals and help us become mature
- If we are running from our own immaturity it will tend to follow us wherever we go.
- The difficult times of testing that bring about the maturity that makes our life meaningful.

'We do need occasional mountain-top experiences but the fertile soil where we grow is normally right down in the valleys not on the mountain-tops.'

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*"... the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith..."
(1 Timothy 1:5, New American Standard Bible)*

*"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**" (1 John 4:7-8)*

WHEN OUR GOAL IS LOVE

If we perceive our goal as:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Blocked | we feel | Angry |
| Uncertain | we feel | Anxious |
| Impossible | we feel | Depressed |

But if goal is love:

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Anger | gives way to | Patience |
| Anxiety | gives way to | Peace |
| Depression | gives way to | Joy |

* One year ahead: As you look back, how will you judge how well you've done in your Christian life? What needs to have been done to give you a sense of satisfaction & to make it a good year?

* Can you align your goals with God's goals? Growth in character shown by the fruit of the Spirit that will appear!

*** When you co-operate with God you can expect your life to bear good fruit!**

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In The Coming Week

Take the time to evaluate your faith by completing the 'What Do I Believe?' page. You will not be asked to share how you are doing with the rest of the group. Give some serious thought as to how you would complete the sentences.

Big Question (to consider before the next session)

If you discover that your goals are not the same as God's goals for your life, would you be willing to change what you believe?

What Do I Believe?

- | | Low | | | High | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|---|------|---|
| 1. How successful am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more successful if _____ | | | | | |
| 2. How significant am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more significant if _____ | | | | | |
| 3. How fulfilled am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more fulfilled if _____ | | | | | |
| 4. How satisfied am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more satisfied if _____ | | | | | |
| 5. How happy am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be happier if _____ | | | | | |
| 6. How much fun am I having? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more fun if _____ | | | | | |
| 7. How secure am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would be more secure if _____ | | | | | |
| 8. How peaceful am I? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I would have more peace if _____ | | | | | |