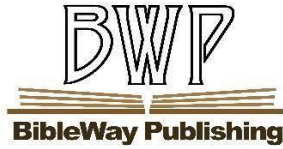


# Living The Maximum Life With Power and Purpose

**Setting Spiritually-Based Goals**

Steve Flatt



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## Spiritually-Based Goals

## Mission Statement

A good mission statement never changes. It is the constant compass point for your life, your business, your desires or whatever.

One of the best illustrations of that point goes back to the 19th century when most people traveled by horse and buggy. Henry Ford was one of scores and scores of buggy makers. As technology brought about the gasoline-powered engine and the automobile, most of those buggy makers went out of business because they thought their mission was making buggies. Henry Ford identified his company's mission as transporting people. See there will always be a need for that, taking people from point A to point B. Consequently, you know the rest of the story.

Too many people focus their life mission around temporary things. If you do, you're doomed to failure. Whatever your mission is in life, it must be permanent. Life is a journey, and whether you're 20, 30, 60 or 80 years old, your life mission should be the same. I would implore you to adopt the one that Jesus did – "Please God."

### Vision

Although one's mission of life should never change, one's vision should change. Vision is the optimum implementation of your mission at any point and time. Vision is your ideal picture of your life. It is the picture you paint of your desired state of affairs over a period of time, three to five years.

Let's go back to our example with Ford. In 1880, Henry Ford said my mission is transporting people. How will I best do that in the next five years? Well, the answer in 1880 was to build good buggies. In 1900, he asked that same question, how do I best implement my mission over the next five years? His answer was no longer the same. His vision had changed.

In my life, my mission is to please God. Now how do I best do that over the next five years? The answer I give to that question is my vision statement. The vision will vary from person to person. Your vision will vary based upon your gifts, your experiences, your background and your opportunities. Your vision will vary in your own life from time to time. How do I best please God over the next five years? Quite frankly, a 20-year-old will probably answer that question differently than a 60-year-old. But if you're going to live the maximum life you need 1) a concise mission statement, written down and memorized always reminding you of what you want to do with your life and 2) a vision statement with a written picture of how you plan to be fulfilling that mission over the next three to five years.

Now because we human beings are the most complex creations in the world, a vision is not always easy to craft. It could be pretty hard to look at a total composite picture, write out a comprehensive vision statement of how we best please God and use the gifts that He has given to us. Perhaps the best way to create a vision statement for your life is to break life down into some basic areas and craft a piece of the vision statement for each major area.

There are a number of ways to do that, but here's one way that I like that appears to work very well. I encourage people to construct their vision statement around what I call the four P's.

Passion - how you approach life.

What do you love to do? How has God made you? With what kind of attitude will you approach life? When you begin to answer those questions, you've started your vision statement.

Purpose - what do you want to accomplish in life?

What impact do you plan to make in your life? How do you want to be remembered once you're dead and gone? What contribution do you want to make to your immediate community? What is your purpose in life?

People - people whom you love and how you plan to love them.

Whom do you love? What are your deepest relationships, and how are you going to nurture those?

The irony of it is that businesses do vision statements all the time. So a lot of you are businessmen and businesswomen, but at business all they want you to do is craft a vision statement around your business. So you think about purpose, and if you love your work, you think about passion. But do you know what you tend to forget? You tend to forget the people who mean the most to you. Here you've got this picture and all these goals coming from this vision and that's why many business people end up having no family because they totally forgot about this critical element of life.

Praise - how will you worship God?

I don't mean a one-hour assembly on Sunday morning. I mean worship in the truest biblical sense of the word where biblically, our entire lives should be a worship to God, a spiritually sacrificed life. As you craft a vision statement for your life over the next three to five years, ask these questions. "How will I demonstrate my love to Him, day in and day out over the long haul? How am I going to do that?" Have you ever thought about that?

Now if you will answer those questions and paint a picture of your life, focusing on your passion, purpose, people and praise, you're a long way down the road toward the maximum life. That's your vision statement. Hear me, less than one percent of our population has a vision statement written out for their lives. But those who do are light years ahead of the ones who don't. They've got the tools for the maximum life because they really do know where they want to go. They're the ones who are not going to get distracted from their vision or life's mission.

Look at those four P's again; when you shape a vision for the passion of your life, you have excitement. If you don't shape that vision, you have boredom. If you shape a vision for the purpose of your life, you'll have satisfaction; if you don't, you'll have frustration. When you shape a vision for the people in your life, you have love; when you don't, you have loneliness. When you shape a vision for the praise in your life, you have destiny; but when you don't, you have hopelessness.

Jesus is the classic example. His mission was really the same as mine, and I hope, yours. It was to please God, remember? He said, "I've come to do the will of Him who sent me." He knew exactly what His mission was, but not only that. He knew how He wanted to fulfill that mission. In other words, He had a clear vision of what He wanted to do while He was on the face of this earth. Several times, people would come to Him and say, "Lord, come, do this, do that or do something else." Jesus would say "My hour is not yet come. Don't try to tell me what I need to do. I know exactly what I need to do." After only a three-year ministry, when He was only 33 years old, He said to the Father in John 17:4, "I have finished the work you have given me to do." If we had been standing there hearing that, we would have thought, finished? Lord, you've not even got started. You're only 33 years old. You've only been at it three years. You've never traveled more than a hundred miles from

home. You've not even begun. But His mission and His vision were clear in His mind. They were not set by other people. Yours shouldn't be either.

## Craft Goals

### 1. Goals reveal your vision.

From the vision statement of your life, you begin to craft goals. Goals simply are the statement of faith to accomplish your vision. They are the steps you must take to get to where you want to go. Goals take you to your vision and in so doing they help you accomplish your life mission. I know most of you are not accustomed to setting goals and some of you may even have a theological persuasion against them.

I believe with all my heart that God wants all of us to set goals. Some of you say, "isn't that rather presumptive. Didn't Jesus teach in the Sermon on the Mount, 'take no thought for tomorrow'?" Didn't James say that we shouldn't say, "We're going to do this or that, but only if the Lord wills?" Yes, so let us examine those verses. The verse, "Take no thought about tomorrow." (KJV) Matthew 6:34 is best rendered as it is in the New King James Version and the New International Version, "Don't worry about tomorrow." Jesus isn't talking about planning. He's talking about fretting or being overly concerned. He's talking about an insecure spirit that sits around and says, "Oh no, what in the world is going to happen to me?" Frankly, if we did more planning, vision shaping and goal setting, we would worry less about tomorrow.

The teaching of James "If the Lord will," is not to tell us not to set goals. Rather, it is to remind us that any vision and goals we strive for should seek God's wisdom for its success; otherwise failure will be under His sovereign power. Scripture clearly, CLEARLY, points out the need for vision and goals. "For without vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18) "A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth." (Proverbs 17:24) Do you see what that says? That says when you fail to plan you just go off in a bunch of different directions. You've got to have a game plan in life. Otherwise, you're just going to react from one crisis to another. You're going to be blown from one problem to another. Without vision and without goals, you're not controlling your life, you're life is going to be controlling you.

Jesus commended proper planning. In Luke 14 when Jesus was trying to encourage "would be" disciples to make sure they knew what they were getting into—He said, you've got to count the cost, you've got to think ahead. In verse 28, He said, what man for example would build a tower without first counting up his money and looking at his inventory of supplies? He wouldn't try to build that tower without knowing he could finish. Or in verse 31, he said, a king won't go to war in a battle unless he knows he's got enough troops to do the job. Well-formed goals help us achieve a vision. They're good, they're necessary.

### 2. Criteria for good goals

#### a. Relevant

They're relevant to your life mission and vision. You don't just set goals on a tangent; you look at the picture of how you want your life to be three to five years from now and begin to structure the goals that will get you there.

#### b. Specific

A well-formed goal is a target that you can tell whether you've hit or not. They're not generic or broad. They're very specific.

c. Measurable

They let you know if you're making progress. Now let me give you an example of those last two, specific and measurable. A lot of people will make a New Year's type resolution and call it a goal. They'll say, "My goal is to be a better father." That's not a goal, that's a wish. How do you know if you're a better father? That's not quantifiable so it cannot be measured to any standard. That's not a goal, that's a wish. Break it down into specifics like, "I'm going to hug every child three times a day." Now there's a goal. "I'm going to tuck each of my children in bed at night." There's a goal. "I'm going to spend uninterrupted interaction with each child at least 15 minutes a day. There's a goal. "I'm going to pray with my children every day." There's a goal. Those things will make you a better father. You can know if you've done those things or not, they are measurable.

d. Stretchable

Do me a favor. Raise your right hand. Before you put it down, can you raise it higher than that? Can you go even higher than that? Do you see the point of that little illustration? You never reach as high as you possibly can.

e. Flexible

They're flexible so that if you reach a goal in your quest of your vision, you set the next one. If you fall short and you have not failed, you've moved closer to your vision. So you're constantly adjusting your goals, focusing on that picture that is three to five years out in your life.

### Biblical Model

We will close this lesson by showing you a model that really capsulates every one of these and even more. Abraham wants to find a wife for his son, Isaac. He sends his servant Eleazar out to do that. (Genesis 24)

- a. Abraham had a mission. He was in a strange country traveling as a nomad for one reason. Do you remember that reason? God had come to Him and said, "Abraham, I'm going to make of you and your descendants a great nation; but first, I want you to pack up everything you have and move." Abraham did, didn't he? Do you know what Abraham's mission was in life? The same thing mine is—to please God. God said, "I'm going to do something with you, I don't want to do it here. Pick up and move." Abraham said, "God, whatever you say because I live to please you." That's his mission—never changes.
- b. Abraham had a vision. The vision complemented his mission. "Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." (Genesis 24:1-4)

Do you see the vision? Abraham knew God's purpose for him. He was going to be the patriarch of a great nation. But now for that to happen, he had one son, Isaac, and that boy needed to get married, so that he could have children and eventually that great nation could come about.

So here's Abraham, in tune with his mission, and he has a vision. He can shape a plan to get Isaac a wife that will go along with God's plan.

- c. Abraham established a series of goals. He sent his servant to go find a girl from his home country. He said, I want that girl to be one of my relatives. I want her to be of my faith not one of these pagan Canaanite women. She must be willing and a virgin. Do you see all these series of goals that Abraham had for Isaac's wife? Now here is a classic illustration of what not to do when you're shaping your vision and goals. "The servant (Eleazar) asked him, 'What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?'" Do you know what Eleazar did? He's understood Abraham's vision and the goal, but he immediately jumped to the potential problems. He doesn't even get started before he says, "Wait a minute, what happens if she doesn't come back?"

Never confuse the goal-setting stage with the problem-solving stage. Don't ever mix those two. Many people don't write down a vision because while they're writing it down they begin thinking about all the problems that may come up. They think of all the hurdles. I don't have enough money. I don't have enough time. I'm not smart enough. They talk themselves out of it. If you do that, you're going to fail with your life.

- d. Pray constantly. As soon as he gets to the place where he wants to find that wife, Eleazar bows down and he prays. (Genesis 24:12) While he is praying, Rebekah, the wife to be, walks up to him. (vs. 15) He then prays in front of the family. (vs. 52)

When you pray about your goals it does two things. a) it reveals your desire and b) it tests your dependence. If I'm not praying about goals in my life, I'm saying to God, "God, I don't need your help with this." I don't know if you've ever thought about it, but anything you don't pray about, you're telling God, I don't need you for this. Your prayers indicate your dependence upon God. Much of your prayer list should be on the goals that lead you to your vision that fulfill your mission. That's not all of it. You should pray for other things, but a big chunk of your daily prayer should be about the goals that you have written down for your life to be what it can be.

"Then he (Eleazar) prayed, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today.'" There was a time in my life when I thought you couldn't pray for success because that would just be selfish. But, if your mission is right and on target, you have every need to pray for success.

- e. Develop a step-by-step plan. We won't read it, but in verses 10 through 14, Eleazar developed a great plan. See once you have your goals, you've got to take a little while and figure out now how are we going to get those goals done? One by one, it all worked out.
- f. Discipline yourself to reach the goals. Nothing is ever accomplished without discipline. Do you know what discipline is? Discipline is not pain. Discipline is just delayed gratification. You give up something good now to get something better down the road. An athlete who goes through the discipline of training is giving up the comfort that he would have during those practice sessions because he believes the joy of competing and the joy of possibly winning down the road is worth what he's giving up now.

Eleazar disciplined

a) His decision.

He watched closely that woman whose name was Rebekah. He watched closely before he decided if she was the one.

b) His appetite

When he came before her brother and her brother wanted to eat first. Laban said, "Here sit down and eat, and then we'll talk." Eleazar said, "Nope, I'm not going to eat a thing. I want to talk because I'm here for a mission.

c) His words

He carefully chose the words that he addressed to Laban, the man who would make the decision

d) His time.

"Don't detain me, my master waits for me, let me go back home." If you're going to reach any goals in your life, it is essential that you learn to discipline your time. Your time is your life. If you waste your time, you're committing suicide.

Write out how you see your life three to five years from today. That's your vision. Use the four P's — Passion, Purpose, People, and Praise. Then craft the goals that it will take you to reach that vision.

Some of you are going to want to jump to those problems that you know are already facing you. Don't do that. Stay with your mission, shape your vision and craft your goals. While you work on those goals for your life, God is working on you. He is changing you for the better.

Where is your life going? Is your life even headed in the right direction? Is it going toward heaven? Is it on a road that's paved by the blood of Jesus Christ? There is no other way to the Father except by Him. Have you been distracted and need to turn to get back on the road? If you're not in Christ, a Christian, you really are not headed where you want to go. Today is the day to put your faith and trust in Jesus, confess the name of Jesus, die to sin and be buried in His blood through Immersion in water calling on Him to forgive you of your sins. Lesson # 1300 February 16, 1997

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