

LEGACY PAPER
Purpose of God and Life Goals
by
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What an honor to be called a child of God and to have all my life's goals embodied in my Savior Jesus Christ. In order to logically and prayerfully consider how I can best glorify him in my life, it is my desire for my own faithfulness to Christ to lay out the goals of my life and how they fit into the plan and purpose of God for my life and ministry.

Personal Life Philosophy Statement

My life goal and governing value is as follows: As a born-again follower of Jesus Christ, I desire to be a faithful expositor and counselor of the Word and give a godly legacy of the living Christ to my children and to the church at large so that they may know Christ and grow in him.

My reasons for pursuing these goals are several: my specific calling, my general calling, and the providential office in the church God has placed me in.

Specific Calling and Gifting

First, I am called to exposit and counsel from God's Word (2 Tim 4:2; Rom 15:14; 2 Cor 1:3-5). Being born-again by God's grace and placed into the larger body of Christ, I have a specific calling (1 Cor 12:7, 1 Pet 4:10-11; Eph 4:11-16). I want to "fan into flame the gift of God" which has been recognized by my local church leadership, both at my sending church and the church I'm in now (2 Tim 1:6). My gifts happen to be in the area of exhortation and encouragement. In order to fulfill my calling given to me by God through my gifts, I must fulfill this life goal.

General Calling and Gifting

Second, being made in God's image and having fallen from that image and then been redeemed by the blood of Christ, I now have a general calling with the whole church to make disciples of every nation (Mt 28:18-20). A healthy disciple will make disciples (2 Tim 2:2). Whether I was a pastor or not, as a Christian I am called to be a disciple, or learner, and that I am to help others learn the Gospel and all its implications. That means the child of God is to learn "to do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). The Lord calls every believer to come along side and encourage in the sufferings of life as well as admonish whenever sin is present. I desire to be faithful to this general call that God gives to every believer.

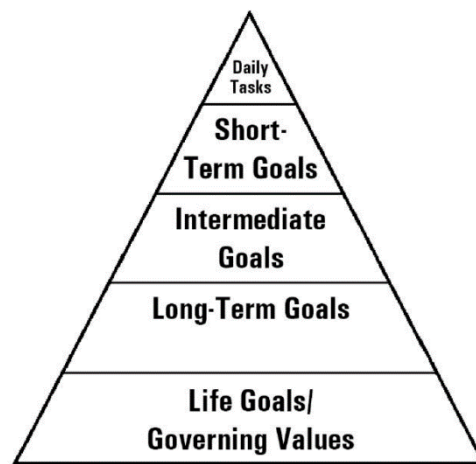
Providential Office and Service

Third, God showed me from an early age what my life's calling is: to exposit his Word to people as well as encourage them in applying the Word to their lives. As soon as I came to know Christ, at age 15, my hunger for God's Word exploded. I couldn't get enough of it (Psa 1:2-3). But then ways both big and small, it was apparent that I had a gift of explaining God's Word in plain ways. Whether it was journaling God's Word or writing letters to people, I was constantly categorizing, expositing and applying God's Word. This led to me training in theology and exposition in Bible college. From there, in God's providence, the Lord opened many doors for me and my family to serve as missionaries in Spain. There I had the opportunity and privilege to

exposit and counsel God's Word to people. Eight years after enlisting to plant churches in Spain, the Lord put me in the office of pastor where I have served for the last 14 years. Not only that, but I have five children, and as Jonathan Edwards once said, I consider my own family to be my first and primary flock. It is to my own children that I want to leave a legacy of my own faithful example as well as my faithful teaching of the Word to them and to the church at large. Ultimately, I pray my legacy will not be about me, but that my children and the world may know Christ and grow in him.

Concerning leaving a legacy to the world at large, it is my desire to make a significant impact in reaching the Muslim world for Christ. To that end I have partnered with Dr. Ahmed Joktan, the son of the Mufti of Mecca Saudi Arabia, who is now a Christian evangelist. In God's providence, the Lord has allowed this man to be a member of the church I currently pastor where we have begun an evangelism ministry to Muslims called Mecca to Christ Ministries.

In order to develop these life goals, I am utilizing the life goal pyramid that Dr. Kevin Carson taught us in class.



Long Term Goals

I have three long term goals: complete a commentary on every book of the Bible, faithfully teach and counsel people in God's Word in a formal biblical counseling ministry in our church, and make a significant impact in evangelizing the world at large, specifically in a Muslim context.

Commentaries

The long-term goal of my life is to complete a commentary on the entire Bible. All the other short-term and intermediate goals lean forward to this. Since we are called to "meditate on the law of the Lord day and night" in order to be like fruit trees planted by the rivers of water (Psa 1:2-3), I believe this long-term goal is proper and fitting for my life.

This long-term goal began in 2005 when I became a co-proprietor of Puritan Publications, a printing press dedicated to rewriting Puritan writings for the modern English reader. In order to accomplish this with excellence, I was trained in the art of formatting, writing, and footnoting. Little did I know the Lord would use this when I became a pastor to format and publish my own commentaries on books of the Bible.

Biblical Counseling Ministry

I believe that a legitimate long-term goal is to set up a biblical counseling ministry in our church. Something significant happened years before that: I was invited to get training from Faith's Biblical Counseling Training Conference. This led to a dozen years of training there as well as becoming ACBC certified (in 2015) and entering in to the MABC at Faith Bible Seminary. This training has equipped and is equipping me to counsel people in God's Word with compassion, competency, and excellence. Not only is my training helping me to counsel people from God's Word, but it is also helping me to teach, preach and write in a more practical, vital way. A logical outflow of the counseling training and the writing of commentaries and training materials is to set up a more robust biblical counseling ministry in our church.

Muslim Missions

This long-term goal of Muslim missions was not at all what I was planning for, but the Lord brought the son of the Mufti of Mecca, Saudi Arabia to be a member of my church. Together we are writing a book about how he came to know to Christ and all the persecutions he endured in Saudi Arabia. It is also a book that casts a vision for churches in non-Muslim contexts to get a vision for evangelizing in the most unreached Muslim places in the world.

Intermediate Goals

My intermediate goals are to complete my education in counseling, edit one or two commentaries a year, recruit others into the biblical counseling ministry in our church in order to one day formally launch a biblical counseling ministry, and take steps to establish a mission to Muslims around the world.

Further Education

In order to continue to hone my skills for exposition of God's Word as well as lead and direct a formal counseling ministry in our church, I need to complete my formal education. I am currently enrolled in the MABC at Faith Bible Seminary. My intermediate goal is to complete that sometime in 2021. Beyond that I would like to continue my education in a PhD program which would entail five to six years of study and could be completed perhaps by 2027 when I will still be in my early 50s.

Individual Commentaries and Training Materials

In the meantime, I am on tract to edit and compile commentaries on individual books of the Bible, completing 1 or 2 per year. This has been not only enriching to me personally, but it has also provided much material I can use in biblical counseling and discipleship training materials and worksheets for homework.

Training and Recruiting Others for Biblical Counseling

We have been recruiting people over the years in our church to go to the Faith Biblical Counseling Training Conferences and get formal counseling training. Each year new people attend, and some come for a second or third track of training. The goal is to choose the most gifted and committed people to one day begin a formal counseling ministry.

Establishing Mecca to Christ Ministries

For Muslim missions, I am in the midst of establishing a spiritual and financial base for Mecca to Christ Ministries (M2C). Some intermediate goals have been to constitute a board of directors, get non-profit status (including a lawyer to see the process through), and raise funds from churches and individuals.

Short-Term Goals

My short-term goals are to finish MABC, work on weekly expositional manuscripted messages for my church, systematically compiling and editing them for use in a biblical commentary of the Bible and help our Director and President of M2C make formal connections and build trust with churches in the USA.

MABC Degree

What a joy it is to look towards completing the MABC degree from Faith Bible Seminary. This will be my fourth class, and I have six more to go. In order to complete the degree, I had to ask for sufficient funds from my church to take four classes per year. This will allow me to finish my degree sometime in 2021. This means good planning by reading books ahead of the semester and even beginning the writing process on some papers if it is possible. With the massive responsibilities I have as a pastor, meeting my short-term goals is an absolute necessity.

Expositional Manuscripted Messages

I am grateful that my calling as a pastor allows me to write fully manuscripted expositional sermons each week. Though there is still a major editing process to prepare the manuscript for commentary form, I have a built-in accountability system: the responsibility of weekly preaching. Several ministry activities allow me to filter and enlarge my message / commentary even more. We have small groups in which we have a number of questions concerning the sermon given that week. From my small group I am able to get further insight and application to add to the manuscript from that week.

Help Muslim Missions Director Raise Support

On a short-term basis for our Muslim missions, I am helping our President and Director for M2C raise support. To that goal, we are in the process of making a formal partnership with The Navigators ministry which will help us build initial credibility and trust with ministries and churches who have never heard of us. Another short-term goal is to create a short video for his ministry presentation and create a database of possible supporting churches. We are also securing an agent for the book Dr. Joktan is writing in order to present it to Tyndale Publishing House and perhaps others (if Tyndale declines the book). Other duties include monthly meetings with the M2C board of directors.

Daily Goals

My daily tasks are to commune with God in his word and prayer both personally and with my family, complete class assignments, counsel people effectively, prepare biblical expositions of the Word, and meet the daily responsibilities of M2C ministries.

Daily Communion

Each day I seek the Lord in prayer and sometimes fasting. I read God's Word for myself both systematically through the Bible as well as a specific book of the Bible. This is separate from my own sermon preparation work. One of the most important daily privileges I have is to pray for my wife and family and to disciple them both formally and informally (Deut 6:4-7). I also regularly evangelize the children who are yet without a public profession of faith through baptism.

Complete Class Assignments

Another daily task I have, at least during FBS semesters, is to complete daily class assignments. I try to also work ahead each day in my reading and class preparation if I can in the off months. During the semesters, I check Populi on a regular basis as well. I also try to pray for my classmates as often as possible.

Counsel People Effectively

In the midst of all my goals are my responsibilities as a pastor, one of which is to counsel and disciple people on an almost daily basis. All my study of God's Word, Spirit-filled communion with God, and all my training are poured into the lives of people to impact them for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ through formal and informal biblical counseling.

Prepare Biblical Expositions of the Word

The firm foundation of sound doctrine undergirding all my heart-felt devotion and service to God is fastened to a daily study of the Bible, preparing biblical expositions of the Word for that week's sermon. This is planned for the year so that the congregation can have a calendar of what will be taught on any given Sunday so they can prepare their hearts and get ready to interface with God in the sermon. These expositions are for the most part systematic studies of entire books of the Bible, book by book, paragraph by paragraph, word by word. All of this contributes to the congregation's firm resting on the sufficiency of the Scriptures as our sole authority for faith and practice.

M2C Ministries

My mostly daily duties for M2C include praying for forgotten Muslims and forgotten Muslim countries around the world as well as the forgotten Christians who are Muslim Background Believers (MBB). Not only do I pray daily, but also I advise the President and Director, Dr. Joktan, in any ministry, practical or logistical queries he may have. In the past this has meant getting people to write affidavits for his asylum, calling Senators and Congressmen to take up his cause, and gather evidence of persecution to present to Homeland Security in his asylum case.

Conclusion

I believe the goals laid out in this paper are reasonable and achievable because I see the entire direction of my life dedicated to not only these goals, but the Gospel values that underlie all of them. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psa 127:1). All these goals are not worth the paper they are printed on if God is not the architect. By faith I

continue in these goals with eternity in mind, trusting in the Lord completely to do his will in and through me (Pro 3:5-6). Some of these goals are lofty (such as reaching the Muslim world for Christ), but I have seen the hand of God through the faithful promises of the Word of God with direct and unmistakable providences of the Lord. He is trustworthy, able and faithful to bring all that I've written in this paper and much more to pass because his mercies are everlasting and his faithfulness is great (Lam 3:22-23).