

# TRAINING YOUTH TO SET AND REACH GOALS

J.J. Turner, Ph.D.

July 20, 1969 was a historical day for the USA and the world. On this date Apollo 11 landed on the moon and Commander Neal Armstrong stepped his foot on the surface of the moon. What were the contributing factors that make this “impossible dream” possible? Yes, it was the amazing work of NASA, but the beginning point was the setting of a specific goal. Back on May 21, 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced to a joint session of congress that before the end of the decade America would put a man on the moon. The goal was achieved!

When he was 15 years old, John Goddard in 1940 made a list of 127 goals for his life. When he died at the age of 88, the man who was the original “Indiana Jones”, had reached 120 of his goals. Many of his exploits are documented in his book *The Survivor*. Goals make you go for the Gold.

It is said that the average American, whoever he or she is, doesn’t have a set of clearly defined goals they are working on. It has been said that ninety percent of people resent and resist setting specific goals. Companies spend millions of dollars annually on goal setting training with little or no results.

Teaching and modeling goal setting to youth is giving them a foundation for achievements in life. It contributes to the “*I can do all things through Christ*” attitude.

Goal setting is biblical. God set a goal before the foundation of the world to save mankind in His Son (Matthew 1:21; Ephesians 1:3-7). He set a goal to make Abraham the father of a great nation (Genesis 12). God set a goal of establishing His Kingdom in the last days (Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 2:2-4; Hebrews 1:1). Jesus had a goal of going from town to town preaching (Mark 1:13).

## **The Dynamics of Goal Setting**

I think one of the reasons so many people resists setting goals is because they don’t understand the nature of goals. They confuse goals setting with (1) wishful thinking, (2) resolutions, (3) pipe dreams, (4) gimmick, and other false views.

There are numerous definitions of goal setting. Napoleon Hill said, *A goal is a dream with a deadline.* C.S. Lewis said, *“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”*

What is your attitude toward goal setting? [ ] positive [ ] negative [ ] questions [ ] not sure.

**Goal setting involves several actions:**

1. Identifying a specific target you want to hit. Write it down in clear and simple words.
2. Fill yourself with a burning zeal to reach the goal. Keep it on the front burner.
3. Make specific decisions needed to reach the goal. This is your plan.
4. Make yourself a promise you will keep. See the results in your mind.
5. Develop the skills you need in order to reach your goal.
6. Make adjustments that need to be made.
7. Take action. All previous points are impotent without specific actions.

**Goal setting produces many benefits:**

1. A goal gives you a clear focus toward a specific target.
2. A goal helps you organize and optimize your resources.
3. A goal helps you become a better manager and user of your time.
4. A goal motivates you to a continual and consistent prayer life.
5. A goal helps you hone your skills for success.
6. A goal helps you document and measure your progress.
7. A goal will help you encourage and instill desire in others to imitate you.
8. A goal gives you a dynamic and meaningful sense of purpose.
9. A goal keeps the future from being a surprise—you’ll have more control.
10. A goal helps you stay in a positive and spiritual state of mind.
11. A goal helps you communicate and clarify to others what you are doing.
12. A goal will set you apart from those who “run in circles.”

**12 Goals for Youth**

As leaders, parents, teachers, and mentors of youth, we need to encourage them, as Christian youth, to set the following goals. Take a few minutes and share the popular SMART model for goals setting. The SMART model is an acronym—a goal need to be:

**Specific**  
**Measurable**

**Attainable  
Relevant  
Time line**

This is a dynamic model. Here's how it works. For example, ask a young person to set a specific goal *"to memorize three verses of Scripture each week for 12-weeks."* The goal may be created like this:

1. Write down the three specific Scriptures to be memorized each week. Choose short Scriptures first.
2. Have the student identify how he will measure his goal: *"Each Sunday I will quote the three Scriptures to my teacher, parent, etc."*
3. Each week the student's attainment will be noted in a log book or discussed.
4. The student will share how the verses have blessed him or been used, thus showing the relevancy.
5. The memory exercise has been practiced at a specific time each day, etc.

**12 GOALS FOR YOUTH:**

Take some time and discuss these goals and choose the one or ones you will start working on as soon as possible:

1. To pray a minimum of two times every day for the next 90 days.
2. To read a portion of Scripture every day for the next 90 days.
3. To memorize a Bible verse every week for the next 13 weeks.
4. To invite someone to Bible classes and church services.
5. To keep a journal for recording ideas, events, thoughts, etc.
6. To volunteer for work in some area of church ministry.
7. To encourage someone who needs to be encouraged.
8. To take notes in Bible classes and during preaching services.
9. To welcome visitor and new members.
10. To think up Bible questions and search for answers.
11. To engage in physical exercise at least three times each week.
12. To explore a new subject to learn something about and usable in life.

As a teacher, mentor, or parent spend time seriously promoting goal setting. In addition to the above, spend some time in creating goals you feel more relevant for your youth or child. *“Be an example of a believer.”*

How will you intentionally use the material in this lesson? What is your goal for this lesson? A year from now you may wish you had set and worked on some personal goals, or wished you had helped youth set and reach goals. Remember, if you don't know where you are going it doesn't matter which road you are on.