

## Goals

*"If you want to reach your potential in the future,  
if you want to become the person the Lord wants you to be,  
you better work on it today, because it is a true principle  
that we become what we do."*

(Richard J. Maynes, "A Celestial Connection to Your Teenage Years," *Ensign*, Nov 1997, 30)

### OBJECTIVE

To teach our families the importance of setting worthy and attainable goals, especially financial goals. Any worthy goal is obtainable with the help of our loving Heavenly Father.

### WHY?

Teaching our families about setting worthy and attainable goals is important because goals help us achieve the things we want most. If we do not set goals, we will not achieve the things that we want in our lives. This lesson teaches families about goals and goal setting, particularly when it comes to financial goals.

### LESSON

#### *Goals*

A goal is an objective that we try to achieve. Denis Waitley explained, "Goals are your personal statements of what you are truly willing to do to achieve what you really want to achieve." Reaching goals that we truly desire is possible if we are willing to put forth time and effort toward achieving those goals.



Concerning the importance of goals, Marvin J. Ashton explains, "A prerequisite for 'doing' is goal setting. Actions are preceded by thoughts and planning. All of us must take charge of our own lives. We must evaluate the choices that are open to us, and then we must act positively on our own decisions. An old proverb states, 'A journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step'"

(*Ensign*, May 1983, 30). If we plan to achieve the things that we really want, we must begin by setting goals.

Setting worthy and attainable goals can be challenging, but if we remember to ask our Heavenly Father for assistance, He will help us know what goals we should work

towards. Psalms 37:5 reads, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” If we learn to trust in the Lord and commit ourselves to Him, He will help us in achieving our worthy goals.

Elder M. Russell Ballard offers the following advice in setting goals:

“First, think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar, often ‘withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed’ (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did. Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.

“Second, set short-term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well balanced—not too many nor too few, and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in your goal setting” (*Ensign*, May 1987, 13).

When setting goals, it is important to include both short-term and long-term goals. Some of our short-term goals may help us achieve our long-term goals. Other goals may not be related to each other at all. The most important thing when setting both short-term and long-term goals is not to aim too low; with the Lord’s help, we have the capacity to obtain any worthy goal that we desire.

After setting our worthy and attainable goals, we need to continually evaluate how well we are working toward those goals. We will never achieve our goals if we write them down and then store them away in a drawer. We need to remind ourselves constantly of the things that we want to achieve so that we will always be working towards them. If we ever feel discouraged when working toward our goals, remember these words from President Abraham Lincoln: “A goal properly set is halfway reached.” Just by setting our goals, we’re halfway there!

### *Financial Goals*

An important aspect of goal setting is setting financial goals. Setting financial goals and sticking to those goals will allow us to enjoy financial freedom rather than financial burden. The May 1986 issue of the *Ensign* offers great examples of financial goals our families can work towards and how we can achieve those goals:

“Some financial and resource management goals you and your family may wish to discuss are: paying tithes and offerings; properly budgeting your money; living within your income; planning major purchases and avoiding credit purchases



when possible; working toward home ownership; getting out of debt; having a savings plan; providing financial security for times of disability and advanced age; and taking good care of your possessions.

“‘Life is made up of small daily acts,’ said Sister Barbara B. Smith, former Relief Society general president. ‘Savings in food budgets come by pennies, not only by dollars. Clothing budgets are cut by mending stitch by stitch, seam by seam. Houses are kept in good repair nail by nail. Provident homes come not by decree or by broad brushstroke. Provident homes come from small acts performed well day after day. *When we see in our minds the great vision, then we discipline ourselves by steady, small steps that can make it happen*’” (Barbara B. Smith, “Follow Joyously,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 85 , emphasis added).

When we set wise financial goals and work towards those goals, we allow happiness to take the place of worry in our lives. Elder Franklin D. Richards said, “We must recognize that financial problems are the reason for much unhappiness. . . . The Lord has told us that if we are prepared, we shall not fear (D&C 38:30). What a blessing it is to be free from financial fear” (*Ensign*, May 1979, 38). Elder Richards then offers three suggestions for helping us to attain and maintain financial preparedness:

1. Pay your tithes and offerings.
2. Get out of debt and stay out of debt.
3. Use your surplus funds wisely.

Each of these is a very worthwhile financial goal for us to work towards. By working towards financial goals such as these, we are ensuring happiness in our lives.

### STORY

The following story is an experience that Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin had on his mission:

“On Christmas Eve [my companion and I] walked to the village and sat quietly for a while in a small, humble church, listening to the beautiful organ music. A crisp, clear winter night enveloped us as we began our return trip. We walked under a canopy of stars and across the smooth stillness of new-fallen snow. Perhaps it was a night not unlike the one that inspired an assistant priest to write the lyrics to one of the most beloved hymns in all of Christendom more than a hundred years earlier.

As we walked, my companion and I talked of our hopes and dreams. We talked of our goals and what we wanted to have happen in our lives. The more we talked, the more serious we became about achieving the things we talked about. As we walked under the light of a full moon, we both made serious resolutions.

I committed that night that I would not waste my time. I would renew my efforts to serve the Lord. I made up my mind that I would magnify any callings I received in the Lord’s kingdom.

That was also the evening I made up my mind about whom I would marry. I didn't know her name, but I had in my mind the type of person she would be—one who lived the gospel and who was strong spiritually. I even described her to my companion—that she would be five foot five, that she would have blue eyes, and that she would have blonde hair. Sister Wirthlin fits all of the description that I made of her at that time without knowing her. And so that night was important to me.

Two and one-half years passed, and before I knew it, I was home again. I remember hearing someone mention a name: Elisa Rogers, a young woman who was in charge of a university dance at the Hotel Utah. There was something special about that name. I decided I ought to meet her.

I remember the first time I saw her. As a favor for a friend of mine, I had gone to her home to pick up her sister. Elisa opened the door, and I stared. There she was, beautiful, five foot five, blue eyes, blonde hair.

She must have had a feeling also, because she said to me, "I know who you was."

She quickly realized she had made a grammatical error. To fully appreciate that, you have to remember that she was an English major.

Even after all of these years, she has remembered the embarrassment of that moment. Of course, my retelling this story doesn't make matters better, but I trust she will forgive me.

Six decades have intervened since that Christmas Eve in Oberndorf when I made those resolutions. Much has happened in the intervening years. My premonitions about playing football were right; I never played again. But I did graduate from the university. Even so, I've never regretted serving a mission and committing myself to serving the Lord. By doing so, my life has been filled with adventure, spiritual experiences, and joy that surpasses understanding."

### DISCUSSION

After reading the above story, discuss the following questions with your family:

What can we do now to start on the path of accomplishing our goals?  
What things can we sacrifice to accomplish our more important goals?

Also consider the following quotes in your discussion:

"Once you have established righteous goals, work with all your might to accomplish them. In the words of Elder David O. McKay (1873–1970), when he was in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: 'Let us . . . realize that the *privilege to work* is a gift, that *power to work* is a blessing, that *love to work* is success'" (David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1909, 94; emphasis in original).

“Work is therapy for the soul. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of work. I believe that much idleness we experience comes from misunderstanding the Atonement of the Lord. We cannot simply sit around and do nothing and expect to be successful in spiritual or temporal things. We need to do all that is in our power to accomplish our goals, and the Lord will make up the difference.

“Remember the words of President Gordon B. Hinckley: ‘The major work of the world is not done by geniuses. It is done by ordinary people, with balance in their lives, who have learned to work in an extraordinary manner’” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Our Fading Civility,” BYU commencement address, 25 Apr. 1996, 15).

### ACTIVITY

First, have each family member set individual goals—one in each of four areas: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. With each of these four goals, include the finances necessary to achieve the goal. Once goals are written, encourage family members to keep them in safe place, such as their journal, where they can access their goals quickly and easily for review and modification.



For example:

1. Physical: I want to be fit. I will run three times a week.
  - a. Financial: Free
2. Mental: I want to go to college. I will maintain a 3.7 GPA.
  - a. Financial: Save \$50/month; work toward scholarships
3. Social: I want to be more social. I will spend time with my friends.
  - a. Financial: \$20/weekend
4. Spiritual: I want to go on a mission. I will keep myself worthy.
  - a. Financial: Save \$50/month

Now have the family set two goals: one open goal and one recreational goal. The goals must be measurable, attainable, and finite.

For example:

1. Open: We will perform at least one act of service daily.
2. Recreational: We will go to Disneyland as a family in June.
  - a. Financial: We will give up Friday night pizza and a movie for five months.

### ASSIGNMENT

Have each family member choose one of their four goals and tell them to work diligently on it over the next week. Then, at next week’s family home evening, ask them to report how they did during that week. Ask them to share their thoughts, feelings, successes, and

struggles involved in working towards their goal. Encourage them to write these thoughts, feelings, successes, and struggles in their journals for later referencing.

### SUGGESTED SONGS

Lord, I Would Follow Thee (#220)  
Count Your Blessings (#241)  
Because I Have Been Given Much (#219)  
Have I Done Any Good? (#223)  
How Gentle God's Commands (#125)  
Choose the Right (#239)  
Improve the Shining Moments (#226)  
True to the Faith (#254)

### OTHER RESOURCES

#### *General Conference Talks*

“Some Personal and Family Welfare Goals: What Can I Do Now?” *Ensign*, May 1986, 85  
Ben B. Banks, “This Road We Call Life,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 42  
Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 96  
Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Life’s Lessons Learned,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 45-47  
Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Running Your Marathon,” *Ensign*, Nov 1989, 73  
Quentin L. Cook, “Rejoice!,” *Ensign*, Nov 1996, 28  
Rex D. Pinegar, “Decide to Decide,” *Ensign*, Nov 1980, 71  
Robert D. Hales, “Ten Axioms to Guide Your Life,” *Ensign*, Feb 2007, 26-31  
Thomas S. Monson, “Your Celestial Journey,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 96

### AUTHORS

This lesson was prepared by Chris Lanshe, Myungah Lee, Chris Marquis, and Christine Weidmer.