



## WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS WITH PASTOR LYLE WAHL

22 December 2023

### *Goals*

“I think I made too many new year’s resolutions this year. I took me almost a full day to break them all.”

Those humorous words reflect several realities, including the practice of making new year’s resolutions and their high failure rate.

Almost two-thirds of people say they feel pressured to set a new year’s resolution, while only just over a third actually make one. 80% of people think they can reach their goal, as compared to only 6% who don’t. One study showed that only 1% of people keep their resolutions for the full year.



Should Christians make new year’s resolutions? While the Bible does not mention them, it does speak about resolving to take action, about planning and goals.

The end of a year is a good time to review and plan ahead, to set some goals. Do you have some goals as you enter 2024? If so, how did you decide on them?

Setting goals can involve two broad phases.

First, *look back*. Review and assess what progress you made in the last year across the whole spectrum of your life including, but not limited to

- your relationships with God, family and others
- service
- knowledge
- skills

Doing this can both encourage you and challenge you. Take time to do this, even several blocks of time over a few days. Write out your observations.

Second, *look ahead*. There is some truth in the well-worn phrase that most people don't plan to fail, they fail to plan. Here are two key principles for goals.

- First, they should be God-honoring goals. Remember the Bible tells us “whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). Goals for any and every area of life should be screened by this principle. Does the goal mesh with the truth of Scripture? Does it line up with God's priorities for me? Do my motives for it honor God and His call for me to do everything for His glory?
- Second, they should be thought of and pursued, be empowered by God. What was true for the apostle Paul is true for you, “I can do all things through Him [Christ] who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). Couple that with God's word to the prophet, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of armies” (Zechariah 4:6). God will empower you to accomplish what pleases Him, what is His will for you as you rely on Him.

As you plan, move forward toward your goals through calm and stormy days of the next year remember, as God told Joshua, “Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Pastor Lyle