

Let Thine Eyes Look Right On
(Proverbs 4:25)

- I. Disorganized and ineffective people have a problem getting focused or staying focused.
 - A. They have a problem concentrating their energies and resources on one thing and seeing it through to completion.
 - B. They are easily distracted.

- II. **PRO 4:25-27** exhorts us to be focused and warns us against being sidetracked:
 - A. To *ponder our path* means to consider our direction carefully.
 - B. *Established* ways are settled or fixed.
 - C. Looking right on, straight before us, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left suggests steady pursuance of a goal.
 - D. This text teaches to carefully consider where we want to go, settle on it, and go for it! *Oculum in metam* --- The eye upon the goal.
 - E. By contrast, the fool's eyes are all over the place. **PRO 17:24.**

- III. The Lord Jesus taught the need to get focused when He taught us to have a single eye. **MAT 6:22-24.**
 - A. By means of the eye things are perceived, goals are set, and direction is given.
 - B. If the vision is single, there will be proper direction and goals will be reached; if the vision is double, there will be stumbling.
 - C. If the eye is not single, it is evil.
 - D. The goal and direction of our life should be singularly aimed at pleasing God. **PSA 86:11; EPH 6:5-7.**
 - E. The person with a single eye will have only ONE Master.
 - F. Jesus Christ will allow no rival allegiance in those who follow Him. **LUK 14:26-27.**

- IV. Recall that the double minded man is unstable in ALL his ways. **JAM 1:8.**
 - A. double-minded: Having two minds; undecided or wavering in mind.
 - B. Such a man has trouble making up his mind as to what he wants to believe or do.

- V. In order to get organized, we need to establish goals.
 - A. goal: The object to which effort or ambition is directed.
 - B. Activities are means whereby we achieve goals.
 - C. A goal will determine what activities we devote our time, energy, and resources to.
 - D. Setting goals will help us determine what activities to add, what to maintain, and what to eliminate.

- VI. Pursuing goals is clearly taught in the Scriptures.
 - A. Christ is our chief example of One Who would not be deterred from His goal. **JOH 4:31-34; 12:27; MAT 26:52-54; MAR 10:32.**
 - B. Paul illustrates the pursuit of a Christian goal with the pursuit of athletes toward a prize or goal. **1CO 9:19-27; PHIL 3:8, 13-14; HEB 12:1-2.**
 - 1. These principles are universally applicable.
 - 2. Activities are adjusted in order to achieve a goal.
 - 3. Pursuit of a goal mandates that some things be done and others eliminated.
 - C. Scripture speaks of persons *purposing to do things* or of *having a purpose*.

1KI 5:5-6; ACT 11:23; 19:21; 2CO 9:7.

1. purpose: v. To set before oneself for accomplishment.
2. purpose: sb. That which one sets before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; the object which one has in view.
3. Our purposes should be well-informed rather than lightly resolved upon.
PRO 20:18; 15:22; 2CO 1:15-17.

VII. Having established goals and activities to pursue these goals, we then need to arrange them in a priority.

- A. Setting priorities helps you decide what you must leave off when two things are competing for your time at the same time.
- B. Setting priorities means that you learn to say “NO” to certain things that would encroach upon your priorities.
- C. Setting priorities means that you will not always be available for everybody and everything that would demand your time.
 1. God teaches us to be considerate of another's time.
PRO 25:17; 1CO 16:12; 1PE 3:8.
 2. While there is sufficient time to do all that God expects, there is not sufficient time to do all that men expect.
 3. God does not require us to enslave ourselves to inconsiderate and selfish people who would be overly possessive of our time.
- D. Note the following Biblical examples of setting priorities and following through on them.
 1. Christ did not let men keep Him from fulfilling His priorities. **LUK 4:42-43.**
 2. Jesus sent people away because He had other responsibilities. **MAT 14:22-23.**
 3. The apostles prioritized the ministry of the word and prayer above serving tables.
ACT 6:2-4.
 4. Due to his priorities, Paul did not tarry longer at Ephesus. **ACT 18:20-21.**
- E. Examples of setting priorities would be to set:
 1. prayer and Bible reading above reading novels.
 2. getting out of debt above taking a vacation.
 3. being to church on time above entertaining oneself very late Saturday night.
 4. exercise above watching sporting events.
 5. having a good marriage above buying a new car and working a lot of overtime to pay for it.
 6. being a good father above a big social life.
- F. Be flexible since things can arise that will cause a shift in priorities.
JAM 4:13-15; ROM 1:13.
- G. Remember that life is characterized by seasons (**ECC 3:1-8**) and therefore priorities may have to shift accordingly.

VIII. The principle of setting goals, of being focused is fundamental to effective warfare.

- A. Note these quotations from *Warfighting*, a book of strategy for the U.S. Marine Corps.
 1. “The single most important thought to understand about our theory is that war must serve policy. As the policy aims of war may vary from resistance against aggression to complete annihilation of the enemy, so must the application of violence vary in accordance with those aims. Of course, we may also have to adjust our policy objectives to accommodate our means; we must not establish goals outside our capabilities.”

2. "The key to any plan is a clearly defined objective."
 3. "Of all the consistent patterns we can discern in war, there are two concepts of such significance and universality that we can advance them as principles: concentration and speed. Concentration is the convergence of effort in time and space....To devote means to unnecessary efforts violates the principle of concentration and is counterproductive to the true objective."
 4. "Of all the efforts going on within our command, we recognize the focus of effort as the most critical to success. All other efforts must support it. In effect, we have decided: This is how I will achieve a decision; everything else is secondary."
- B. Those expert in war are not of *double heart*. **1CH 12:33.**
- C. "It is sufficient to estimate the enemy situation correctly and to concentrate your strength to capture him. There is no more to it than this." (*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu)
- D. "When the enemy disperses and attempts to defend everywhere he is weak everywhere." (Ibid)
1. In this case, the enemy is not concentrating his resources and is thus ineffective.
 2. Keep this principle in mind when defending the gospel against a myriad of objections. Samson knew the value of concentrating on key supports.
 3. You may well face more challenges to godly living in this crooked and perverse generation than you can effectively fight. Concentrate on the most important and commit your cause to God.

IX. Establish goals according to God's requirements.

- A. **(DEU 10:12-13)** And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?
- B. God does not expect us to measure up to the standards of men. **2CO 10:12; GAL 1:10.**
- C. Neither does God require us to bear responsibility for things that are not our responsibility **GAL 6:5; 1TH 4:11; 1PE 4:15.**
- D. Neither does God require us to do more than we are able to do. **2CO 8:12; 1PE 4:11; ROM 12:3.**
1. Goals should be set according to our resources and abilities. **LUK 14:28-32.**
 2. It is self-deception to aspire to be something that you are not. **GAL 6:3-4.**
- E. Beware that your goals are not motivated by covetousness, which is the desire for what one may not have. **HEB 13:5; 1TI 6:6-10.**
1. Be content with what you are/have and reasonably can be/have rather than clamoring to be/have the best/most at any cost.
 2. Discontent will express itself in envy and emulation.
 3. Contentment is a learned condition. **PHIL 4:11.**

X. Following are some pointers for achieving goals.

- A. If you are having difficulty getting organized, find an organized man and ask him how he does it. If his methods are godly, then go and do thou likewise!
- B. Make use of the marvellous God-given ability of writing by writing out goals and what you need to do in order to achieve them.
1. Writing is an effective means of focusing your attention.
 2. Writing is a great crutch for the memory.
 3. Writing down the activities you intend to accomplish on a given day will assist you

- in not overcommitting yourself.
4. **WARNING:** Written plans that are not referred to do no good!
- C. Consider the 80/20 rule which states: "If all items are arranged in order of value, 80 percent of the value would come from only 20 percent of the items, while the remaining 20 percent of the value would come from 80 percent of the items."
1. This rule would suggest that in a list of ten activities, doing two of them will yield 80 percent of the value.
 2. Concentrate most of your time and energy on doing the most valuable items.
- D. If you are feeling spread too thinly, reassess your goals and priorities.
1. If you try to tackle too much you will wear out. **EXO 18:13-18.**
 2. Beware the man who pretends to be what Moses could not be. **2SAM 15:4.**
 3. Remember, Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light. **MAT 11:28-30.**
- E. Consider these questions when deciding whether to take on an additional activity or not.
1. What goal does it aim at? Will it actually further that goal? And where does that goal fit in my list of priorities?
 2. Is it worth the time?
 3. What will it eliminate?
 4. What will be the impact on my spiritual life? my family life?
 5. How important will it be a year from now?
 6. Must it be done now or can it wait?
 7. Is this something I must do or can it be delegated?
 8. What will be the consequences of leaving it off altogether?
- F. Relative to a particular goal, ask yourself: "What is the best use of my time now?"
- G. If a certain project seems overwhelming, just work on it for five minutes.
1. You can endure most anything for five minutes.
 2. Starting a project concentrates your energy and gives you a sense of direction.
 3. In so doing one is beginning to implement the principle of **2CO 8:11**, which teaches us to perform that which we purpose.
 4. Once you have bitten a lot of little holes into your project, you may realize that there isn't that much left to it.
- H. Bridle the tongue since idle chatter wastes time. **MAT 12:36.**
1. Idle words are words that are void of any real worth, usefulness, or significance; they WASTE time.
 2. Mere talk is unproductive and a bad substitute for action. **PRO 14:23.**
 3. A multitude of words contains divers vanities, things of no value. **ECC 5:7.**
- I. Avoid unnecessary entanglements and battles. They rob time, direction and peace. **2TI 2:4; PRO 20:3; 26:17.**
- J. Allow time for rest and recreation as this better fits you for work.
1. God Himself set aside time to rest. **EXO 31:17.**
 2. Jesus called His disciples to come apart and rest a while. **MAR 6:31.**
 3. Sleep is a gift of God; it is futile to try to do without it. **PSA 127:1-2.**
- K. Do not let fear prevent action towards a reasonable goal. **MAT 25:24-26.**
- L. Do not use failure as an excuse for not trying again.
1. God is merciful. **PSA 103:8-14.**
 2. **(PRO 24:16)** For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.
 3. **(GAL 6:9)** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.