

eWorkbook

Think To Build

A guide to setting goals
and reaching them.



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by Stephanie Anderson

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"Isn't it funny how day to day nothing changes
but when you look back everything is different."

-C.S. Lewis

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Letter From The Author

A little over three years ago, my husband and I did our first remodel project together. We have done other projects that contribute to the over all cosmetics of our first house, but this remodel was different. This was plumbing, electric, tearing down walls, expensive, messy, and exhausting. But we finished it! Now we are beginning to dream about a bigger remodel, and when I mean dream, I mean we are doing the math, talking with a financial advisor, a contractor and others who have wisdom on the subject. We aren't afraid of hard work, are confident DIY'ers, avid researchers and love to get our hands dirty. Yet, still the work load drained us the first time. It added pressure to our finances, our schedule, our work life and family life. I can look back and honestly tell you it's not about how good you are, it's about your consistency, faith in the end goal (though you can't see it), and sacrifice.

Building a life we love is the same way. It doesn't matter what skills we have or how developed they are if we don't actually do something productive with them. One of the best ways we can contribute to the communities around us is to build a life that has a solid foundation. When life get's rough we don't crumble, though there are days we may feel like we have to give into gravity and feel the cold floor. And when life is difficult for others we'll be strong enough to help them carry the burden until seasons change for them as well. The two ways my family and I have chosen to build a foundation that is solid are: 1. Drawing close to God by studying the Bible and understanding how it relates to our lives now and 2. Setting goals and reaching them. This eWorkbook is designed to assist you in setting goals and reaching them this year. If I can do it, with all of my embarrassing failures and limitations, I have confidence you can do it too!

Go after it my friend! - Steph

Chapter 1

Where To Build?



In my life there are four major areas I look at every January. When I was single, I would talk to God about these, and depending on the decisions I had to make, I'd also have a conversation with a pastor, my parents or an academic counselor, (seeing that I was a student at that time.) Now that I am married, my husband and I discuss these four areas openly. This allows our communication to stay strong, helps us know each other as we grow and change, as well as achieve goals together and develop our team work. We look at these four areas and ask ourselves "What should stay the same and what should change?" Then we consider all possibilities of change and if any of those changes will automatically create other changes on our list, (like the domino effect.) These four areas are: Projects, Lifestyle, Personal Growth and Divine Assignments.

Thinking about an area in your life that you would like to upgrade can seem intimidating, especially if you can easily name multiple areas you want to see change in. To start, answer one question: Can you handle a lot of projects at the same time? -OR- Can you handle one project at a time? Knowing the answer to this question, can help you determine how many goals to set for your new year. From the beginning we have to think to build. Every goal has layers. Every goal is connected to many areas of our life, so it is highly recommended that you choose one goal, and see how much of your life changes as you upgrade just the one thing. If you are satisfied with your results, set another goal and continue taking care of the first goal that was achieved.

DECISION MAKING

Sometimes the hardest part is deciding where to put my best efforts... but eventually I choose what is realistic, otherwise I'll discourage myself and not reach the goal.

PROJECTS

This area of goals can include things like: organizing all the closets in the house, cleaning the garage, selling gently used/never used clothes and other household items, remodeling your home, starting a side business, writing a book, etc. Taking care of what God has trusted me with.

LIFESTYLE

This area of goals includes things like: personal hygiene, eating and exercise habits, mental and emotional health habits, good health in your relationships, finances, caring for your marriage, your sex life and purity within that. These reflect the status of my relationship with God.

PERSONAL GROWTH

This area of goals includes things like: education, career, relationships, my understanding of culture and how it effects my lifestyle, developing in the area of parenthood, chasing after a dream.

My Relationship with God affects these and my trust in God is challenged.

ASSIGNMENTS FROM GOD

This area is described in the same way for everyone, but how every person accomplishes these may be really different. I think God designed it like that because he values diversity in his family. Diversity in gifts, talents, cultures, etc. God is asking all of us to live everyday aware of his presence and his leading. Once we have asked Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, it is our only assignment to respond to His calling on our lives.

I believe God has called us all to do these two things:

1. Love God- (Show God you love him by studying the bible and living your life based on what you have learned in your study time.

Spend time with other's who are doing the same thing! Also, pray and worship.)

2. Love people- (Tell the people in your life about Jesus your Lord and Savior. Love them as Christ loved you. Do what you can to support and help people live better lives.)

Think To Build: Does anything stand out to you?

Chapter 2

What is required to build?



Every building project requires tools to get the job done. Some tools that may assist you in reaching your goals include:

Yearly Calendar (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Schedule (The hours you work, volunteer, appointments, required activities and hobbies.)

Pen and journal (or some kind of process to jot down notes and ideas)

Calculator

A bible

An attitude of determination

A mind ready to face obstacles

Basic knowledge about yourself, i.e. personality, personal disciplines, health habits, relationships status, stress management, this list could go on and on...

Chapter 3

Why build?



After taking an in-depth look at which area of your life that you would like to build, answer the following questions:

1. What is the one thing I want to change this year?

2. What is affected by this thing, if I leave it unchanged?

3. What is affected by this thing, if it does change?

4. Why change?

Chapter 4

How to start building?



Every choice we make can make us stronger or weaker. Choices create a foundation for our lives. Reaching goals helps us live strong through the ups and downs of life. Consider this verse from Luke 6:47-49, "I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words and acts on them. He is a like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed against that house and couldn't shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately it collapsed. And the destruction of that house was great." Jesus is speaking here about our lives. He says that the way we build them is by two things 1. Coming to Him and 2. Hearing his words and acting on them.

Let's start here! (*With the foundation*)

As we set a goal, it's important that the first thing we do is ask God what his plans are for us in that area of our lives. Has God already spoken to you about that area of your life? If so, what is that?

Do you need to take some time to reflect and ask God to show you what he thinks about you and what he thinks about this goal for the new year? If so, read one chapter of Proverbs every day (for 31 days) and write in your journal something you think is important about that chapter as you go.

Chapter 5

Building Timeline



The next most effective step to take after recognizing what will help you reach your goal (and what will hinder you) is to *make a plan and write it down in your schedule*.

If there is something you have to learn before working on a project or if there is a health evaluation you'd like to have taken to help you assess, do those things next.

Once you have made a list of "things to do" *create a timeline*. Using the twelve months of the year as your guide. Try to accomplish these small steps in a realistic order and in a realistic time frame. For example: To change your eating habits you have to look at your grocery list, your budget, what store you shop at and the quality of foods they provide, etc. This change may take more than a few months to settle in.

If you have created a list of things to do, that you can do in one afternoon, do them all! *Reach your goal as soon as you can*. If this goal is a bigger project such as remodeling your home, consider hiring a professional or someone who will guide you in the process. If you happen to lose track of time, or fall behind, that's okay, *just keep going!*

Continuing where you left off is the best place to start when wanting to reach a goal. Working to reach a goal when you don't feel like it, will cause your mind to be stronger than your emotions and you to reach your goal sooner.

I personally don't reach a lot of goals every year, but I do reach at least one or two. Usually I will set a big goal to reach with someone else like working out with a friend or working on a remodel with my husband. Is there someone in your life that you can partner with, that you know would meet with you and be willing to reach for their own goals at the same time? Be creative but also, be brave! You might get a new friend out of this -

When you think of a name, find them through social media or text them, ask them if they would like to join you when you go grocery shopping or if they would be willing to help you pack and unpack your storage space or whatever your goal may be...

Setting a goal and reaching it are two different things and the difference between them is patience.

If you find yourself stuck "mentally" - that is okay!

Do some research, dream, and find someone who has reached the same goal you are going after, have a conversation, stay inspired.

If you find yourself stuck "emotionally" - that is okay!

Take some time to breathe, consider breaking down your "to-do" list into smaller steps, and ask for help.

If you find yourself stuck "spiritually" - that is okay!

Continue to be faithful at obeying the last instruction that God gave you. Be faithful to the people around you, stay consistent, and keep your commitments!

Overall, be patient with the journey ahead, each step may cause you to feel like you are starting over, but in reality you are. You are creating a new you! God is developing inside of you an endurance to be strong for a long life ahead.

Chapter 6

What if I still don't know what to build?



In the Bible, Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of it's own." This bible verse tells us to seek after God and the things we are concerned about will come together. How? Because as we seek him, (remembering Luke 6) will learn about him and then we can begin to know what he expects from us and focus on doing those things. We can seek him, hear him, and then obey him.

How to seek God

1. In your schedule write down when you can have a meeting with God. You can meet him anywhere and at any time. He is always available to you.
2. Make a plan to read your bible and write it down so you can keep track.
3. Make a list of things to pray about, remember to include saying "Thank you" to God for all of the things he has given you, and for your life.
4. Go to church every Sunday and spend time with others who are seeking God during the week!
5. Follow others on social media who are posting bible verses and living a life that inspires you to obey God too!

Which of the four area's do I want to focus on building this year?
Projects, Lifestyle, Personal Growth, or Divine Assignments

Why do I want to focus on this area of my life?

What will happen if I don't build in this area of my life?

How can I get closer to God this year?

Why do I want to get closer to God?

What will happen if I don't get closer to God?

Who can I talk to about this goal?

How can they help me reach it?

Who will support me as I reach this goal?

Who will not support me and may even slow down my progress?

What can I do when I don't feel like reaching this goal anymore? What adjustments can I make?

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Now that I know what my goal is, what steps do I want to take to reach it?

Other steps to take include:

1. Add those steps to my calendar.

2. Contact those who are apart of the building process.

(i.e. personal trainers, support groups, counselors, teachers, coach, trade specialist, mentor, etc)

3. Research the average cost of this project.

-Look at your own skills, what work can you do to save money.

-Find areas of your budget you can cut to save funds faster.

-Look for extra work.

4. Be honest with yourself and others around you in the process.

-If you are learning, tell them.

-It's not a race, you don't have to reach this goal by tomorrow.

-Don't be embarrassed that you have to start at the beginning or by your limitations, you're growing!

5. Find a Bible reading plan or join a bible study group. Add this to your calendar. Go to every meeting!

6. Pray

-Thank the Lord for his provision, his blessings, his peace and protection as you build.

-Ask the Lord to forgive you when you mess up.

-Ask for help to start again, where you left off.

-Thank God for his faithfulness and his involvement in your life, even when you can't see or feel it.

7. Set up notifications on your phone or desktop for your bible reading reminders as well as for your calendar as you begin to take small steps to reach your goal.

#ThinkToBuild

MEASURES & BALANCE

Isaiah 28:16 tells us, "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed."

As we build our lives there is one choice we all have to make and that is to measure and balance everything we do against this cornerstone that Isaiah is telling us about. What (or who?) is the cornerstone? We find in Ephesians 2:20-22 that Jesus Christ is our cornerstone. It is him that we should compare ourselves to, that we should look to as a guide in building a life worth living. Let us make sure we don't reject Jesus, by neglecting to read his word and letting it change our thoughts, attitudes and actions, just like the builders in the New Testament who knew the scripture, but didn't live it.

This is the key to the original verse shared from Luke 6, those who are building on a solid foundation are actually building their lives based on words and actions of Jesus Christ instead of media, feelings, experiences, etc. Those who are building their lives are those who are reading the bible and thinking about what it means so they can do what it says, thus fulfilling Jesus' words "He who comes to me and hears my words and does them, he is like a man building a house, that dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built."

Let's choose again to not reject Jesus, but to come to him, hear his words and do them. If you have found yourself wondering if you have ever "come to Jesus" let me encourage you to say this prayer out loud:

Dear Jesus,

Please come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

Please forgive me of my wrong choices and trying to do life without you.

Show me what I can do that would honor you.

Show me how I can center my life around you and help me understand the bible when I read it.

Thank you for showing me the way to live.

Amen.

If you said this prayer for the first time, can I encourage you to find a church too? You can look online for a Christian church in your area and see when and where they meet. When you do so, let me encourage you to look for a few things:

1. Worship Music (that inspires you and helps you sense God).
2. Message (When the preacher is sharing do they use the bible as the main source? They should!)
3. Families (Even if you don't have a family, still look for this dynamic. In my personal opinion the best churches have the best children's ministries, because they care about all ages and seasons of life.)

The last thing I would recommend is spend time with other people who are also building their relationship with Jesus. Because the way you and your friends think is the way you'll build your life.



Once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, it is important that in Him we build our lives, because of what we find in Ephesians 2:19-22.

"For you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God."

Building ourselves in Him is the only way we can guarantee a strong foundation and a suitable life worth sharing, and welcoming others into.

RESOURCES

Guides in the building process.

The Bible: *NLT is my favorite version, audio for driving & showering times.*

Prayer: *This doesn't have to be fancy, just talk. Tell God what you are thankful for and where you could use his help.*

Worship Music: *Hillsong, Young & Free, Bethel, Elevation Church, Highlands Church.*

Schedule Templates: *Find a Daily, Weekly or Monthly Planner (Pinterest or Target)*

Podcasts: *Craig Groeschel, Judah Smith, Havilah Cunningham, Journey Womens Podcast, Sun City Church.*

Youtube: *Search your questions and start weaving through and watching different clips.*

Interviews/Success Stories: *Who inspires you in a key area? Ask co-workers, other students or friends their experience.*

Google: *Search your questions, and read multiple articles. Compare them to the bible to know which ones are balanced and agree with the word.*

Social Media: *Craig Groeschel, Propel Women, Andy Stanley, Priscilla Shirer, Lysa Terkeurst, T.D. Jakes, Sarah Roberts Jakes, Leaders In Heels, Joy Of It, Bob Goff.*

Financial Planner: *Mortgage Broker, Financial Peace University, Level Money, Mint App, Remember to Tithe and study what the bible says about giving.*

Articles: *IHOPkc blog, Hillsong Collective, Online Journals & Magazines*

eBooks: *Thinking To Build, Boundaries.Me by Dr. Henry Cloud*

Actual Books: *Everybody Always, Why Gender Matters, Stronger Than The Struggle, Addiction & Grace, Gay Girl Good God, Without Rival, Hope In The Dark, It's Not Supposed To Be This Way, Boys Adrift, Girls On Edge, The Bible.*

Time & Patience (*Fruits of the Spirit, choose your attitude ahead of time... make a plan b in case something goes wrong and in that plan, choose to stay calm*).

Groups or Memberships: *Gym, Dietary, Social Memberships, Book Clubs, Educational Groups, FB Groups, etc.*

Education: *Webinars, Community College Courses, Online Training, etc.*

Specialists: *Perform an online search for a specialist for your area of need.*

Teachers: *Who is instructing or mentoring in the area you are interested in developing?*

Meal Plans: *Pinterest and Allrecipes.com*

Your personal capacity: *Do you say yes to too many things? Start finishing one thing and move on to the next. Once you are done with all of those commitments, take on one project at a time from then on. Keep your word regardless of feelings!*

Workout Guides: *Coaches & Personal Trainers, Barre Method, Online or App Memberships, BBG, Orange Theory, Crossfit.*

Your personal stress level: *Online quiz, what can you remove from your schedule? What must to endure with heart until a season ends? What can you learn from this? What can you do differently next time?*

Bible Verses To Memorize: *Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 10:17*

Pinterest/Google/Forums: *Perform a search with your questions.*

Ask Friends & Family: *to help you brainstorm ideas and make a poster for your wall to remind you of all your goals and the reasons why you want to reach them. It's called a vision board.*



Sources & Acknowledgements

The Bible

Luke 6:46-49 NRSV

Matthew 6:33 NKJV

Isaiah 28:16 NASV

Ephesians 2:19-22 NRSV

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