



GOD-INSPIRED GOALS

6 Steps to
Take Hold of
Your Future

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Introduction

Let God paint a new picture in you.

Because January marks the beginning of the new year, it's a great time to re-evaluate where you are heading. God wants you to envision a great future. He taught Abraham to see his future, saying, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!" (Genesis 15:5, NLT). And He gave Joshua a visual image of what he would have when He said, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses" (Joshua 1:3, NKJV).

He interrupted the way they pictured their future and gave them a new vision. **God showed them who He thought they were and where He knew they could go.**

I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

Acts 2:17 (NKJV)

According to Acts 2:17, God gives us visions—but He's not talking about the weird dreams you have from eating too much before bed. He's also not referring to self-centred, unrealistic visions of grandeur where everything in life is about you. **A vision is simply a picture of where you are headed.**

Are you too busy getting things done to think about where you are heading? Do you forget to let Holy Spirit speak to you? He wants to paint you a picture of what your future can be.

As you read God's Word, ask Holy Spirit to show you a new picture. He says you are the head and not the tail (Deuteronomy 28:13), whatever you put your hand to will prosper (Deuteronomy 28:8) and you soar high on wings like eagles (Isaiah 40:31).

Let Him paint a new picture in you! Today I want to show you six steps to help you take hold of the incredible future God has for you.

Vision Come First

Your vision will move you toward what you desire.

God wants to give you a new picture of what your life can be like. He may show you a vision by dropping a picture into your spirit, but more often it is something you need to intentionally seek out.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

You can read God's Word to find out what an amazing circle of friends, a fulfilling career and a close family looks like. Ask Holy Spirit to show it to you, and then close your eyes until you can picture it in your life.

Your vision will move you toward what you desire.

Many people have this principle backwards. They think that they need to come up with the plans and strategies first. Actually, the opposite is true.

A vision attracts:

- 1. Strategies**
- 2. Goals**
- 3. Plans and**
- 4. The people to carry them out.**

It also energizes you. Think about it. If you are completely exhausted but a friend calls you up and tells you that the TV you've been dying to buy is half price tonight only, suddenly you get a burst of energy! When you have a new vision, you become motivated to carry it out.

When you discover something in the Bible that God says you can have, imagine it is already yours until the picture becomes clear.

Don't be concerned if you don't have a plan of how to get there yet. It's your faith that overcomes the world, not your strategies.

Develop strategies, but envision the end result first.

Incubate a New Picture

Make sure you create incubation time with the Word of God.

Your heart is like an incubator. What you allow into it generates the life you have. In fact, **your future is being incubated in your heart right now.**

The picture you have in your heart of what family looks like is creating your family dynamics. The relationships you have right now may not necessarily be what you want; they reflect what you have been incubating. The level of success you achieve in your career is directly related to the beliefs you hold in your heart about yourself, your potential and success in general.

Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Ephesians 4:23-24 (NLT)

If you are struggling in an area of your life, you need to ask yourself: what am I incubating?

You can decide what you incubate in your heart. When you meditate on what God's Word says you can have, you get a new God-breathed vision—which always brings fantastic results. His Word contains thousands of promises that detail what healthy relationships, great family, successful business and an exciting marriage look like.

You can transform your life by incubating a new picture. Your health, level of prosperity and everything else in your life can change by incubating the pictures you find in the Word of God.

Make sure you create incubation time with the Word of God. When you are doing devotions, stop and picture your future. Imagine it until the vision becomes clear. Your heart will go to work to make it happen.

Guard Your Heart

You need to take an active role in what you plant in your heart to create the life you want.

According to 2 Corinthians 9:6, you reap what you sow—a saying that is often used in a negative context. In reality, this is great news. It means you can plant new Biblically-aligned beliefs in your heart that will cause you to reap more of God's promises!

To plant these new beliefs in your heart, you need to know that there are **three gateways to your heart:**

- 1. Your eyes,**
- 2. Your ears and**
- 3. Your mouth.**

What you say, what you see and what you hear are planting seeds in your heart—especially the words you say. If you aren't intentional about it, you're going to plant all kinds of weeds in your heart just by being exposed to the everyday influences around you.

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.

2 Corinthians 9:6 (NLT)

So many people allow others to plant seeds in their hearts for them. That's like someone who wants to harvest vegetables out of their garden in the fall, but they don't plant a thing. Instead, they just hope that the people passing by their garden throw in the right seeds as they pass by. At harvest time they would have a garden full of weeds and litter, not vegetables!

The truth is you need to take an active role in what you plant in your heart to create the life you want. Get God's Word through all three gateways to your heart—your eyes, ears and mouth. You'll begin to grow the right beliefs in your heart—beliefs that will cause you to attract the kind of life you want.

Hang On With Positive Expectation

You cannot have a great, inspiring vision without expectation.

Having a vision is only part of the equation. Hanging on to the vision is just as crucial. King Solomon knew that the picture you hold in your heart needs to be protected, which is why he said, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Proverbs 4:23, NLT).

Few people keep a vision long enough to see it come to pass. Their vision becomes dimmed by impatience, discouragement and negative people who say it can't be done. To avoid disappointment, many stop expecting good things to happen and they resort to complaining— which is only an outward expression of a negative vision.

For example, many couples grow distant when they lose the positive vision for their marriage. Without realizing it, they have stopped expecting anything to change between them. **Expectation is a vital part of faith. You cannot have a great, inspiring vision without expectation.**

Do not let go of your positive expectation. Be willing to take the risk involved with putting yourself out there. You can be the type of dreamer who never lets go of the vision. After all, it's much better to pursue a dream and fall short than to expect nothing and get nothing!

May He grant you according to your heart's desire, and fulfill all your purpose.
Psalm 20:4 (NKJV)

If you have lost your positive vision for the future, dare to dream again. God wants to give you the desires of your heart. He wants your plans to succeed, providing they fall in line with His Word! Remember that what you currently see is only temporary. **What you envision can change your future.**

Don't Settle for Second-Best

Refuse to be controlled by defeating thoughts and judgmental people.

If you do not guard and tend to the vision you are incubating in your heart, you will tend to settle for another dream—a second-best dream.

Don't aim too low. If you find yourself saying things like, "I could never see myself in a great relationship," start imagining it. If you think, "I could never dream of owning my own business," why not? You have one life to live. Are you going to let yourself be limited by what others think of you? **Refuse to be controlled by defeating thoughts and judgmental people.**

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows grace and favor and honor; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Psalm 84:11 (AMP)

God's vision for you is never second-best. Psalm 84:11 says He will not withhold any good thing from you. **Grab hold of what God has promised you.** As you spend time picturing and imagining His promises coming true, your heart will go to work to make it happen.

For example, if you read, "The Lord will give you prosperity," (Deuteronomy 28:11, NLT), close your eyes until you see yourself prospering, enjoying the fruit of your hard work and able to be a blessing to others financially. Then ensure that what you say lines up with your new vision. Don't allow yourself to say things like, "I'll never get ahead." Instead, **speak God's promises over your life!**

What do you imagine for your future? Health or sickness? Great or only average goals? **Get a true picture of the future God wants for you by reading His promises.**

Don't Give Up

Everyone gets discouraged sometimes, but don't let yourself get weary.

The beliefs you currently hold come from experiences you've had and the way you were raised. But you need to know that **God's Word is more powerful than any of these influences.** You just need to do the ongoing work of getting it into your heart.

I once had a conversation with a woman who told me she hated men. She had several bad experiences where the men she dated tried to take advantage of her. As a result, she had given up hope on finding a good one.

It's too bad because I know hundreds of amazing men and many of them are single. They're strong and capable; they love God and love kids. The truth is there are tons of good men out there.

Often the problem is we need to **change our expectations to line up with what God's Word says is possible.** In the example above, I wonder what would happen if she changed her expectation to, "God has a great man in mind for me. There are hundreds of good men out there, and I'm going to pick a husband who loves God, loves me, and we're going to live an incredible life."

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

What is your daily focus?

Are you focused on the possibilities around you? Do you choose to take God at His word and believe His promises are not only possible but a sure thing in your life?

Everyone gets discouraged sometimes, but don't let yourself get weary. Don't give up! Keep stirring up your faith and you will reap your harvest!

Conclusion

Holy Spirit helps and guides us so that our purpose, goals and plans become tools useable by God.

As you begin to stir up new dreams and goals, remember: **you have Holy Spirit within you to help you stay on track!**

Sometimes we think Holy Spirit's power works in our lives just to help us teach or preach, or lay hands on the sick for healing. While it's true that His power works through us in these ways, there's so much more!

The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon gives us a multi-layered definition of what this power includes. The first two points are common in our understanding. The first is "inherent power," referring to the fact that when we give our lives to Christ, we instantly are filled with Holy Spirit who resides on the inside of us. The second point is "power for performing miracles," which refers to Holy Spirit's power in us that we can release for health and protection.

What we often forget is the third point: "moral power and excellence of soul." **Holy Spirit's power within us helps us live with moral excellence,** meaning He empowers us with the ability to stand strong against temptation. Empowered by Holy Spirit, we can rise up in prosperity, position and influence, and represent Christ effectively in the areas to which we're called.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

Holy Spirit helps and guides us so that our purpose, goals and plans become tools useable by God to make a difference in this world now and for generations to come.

Today, begin to change your thoughts, your heart and your beliefs to line up with what God says about you—and make your way toward the miraculous change, growth and victory He sees in your future!