



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL 27, 2012

THE RIGHT KIND OF GOAL

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14, NASB)

RECENTLY I ASKED ONE OF MY GOLF BUDDIES what his golf goals were for this year. He replied by saying he wanted to shoot consistently in the 80s. So I asked him about his plan. Was he willing to put in the range time and effort to make his goal a reality? Was he willing to get some needed instruction?

Sometimes our goals are like New Year's resolutions. They are not actually goals but good intentions. The difference between pursuing a goal and announcing an intention is the level of work and commitment needed to achieve the result.

For believers in Christ, we need to be clear about what our goal is and then become strategic about accomplishing it. First, we need to understand that heaven is *not* our goal. Many of us view heaven that way, but that idea is not even scriptural! A goal is something you work toward. Heaven is the result of the gift of eternal life made possible and offered by Jesus. It is his work that accomplishes this result, not ours. There is no place to go but heaven if we have come into relationship with Jesus through his forgiveness of our sins.

So what is our goal? According to the apostle Paul, it is to become mature or Christlike. And it may come as a surprise to some that even the apostle himself was still working toward this goal.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he wrote, "I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet." Do you see how Paul was still in process? He went on: "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal..."

The goal of being Christlike can be compared to our golf game. As much as we work at it, there is still more to be done. We need to get strategic. We involve teachers and friends who give us considerable amounts of instruction and hold us accountable to our commitment. God has designed it so that we cannot attain Christlikeness on our own. We need a wealth of input and dedication to the process.

Worthy goals

In addition to Philippians 3:13-14, read Psalm 27:4-6, Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 13:8-14, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12, and 1 Peter 1:13-2:3. From these passages, assemble a list of meaningful goals in a believer's journey toward Christlikeness.

Now place a star next to the goals that you want to pursue with commitment as 2012 progresses. What is your plan for accomplishing these goals, including who will assist you and the timeframe you'll use for reviewing your progress?
