

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, January 02, 2011
How to Achieve your Goals for 2011

As we look back on 2010, no doubt there is much to be thankful for and yet there may be things we'd like to forget or at least ensure that they don't continue into 2011. We want good things. We want success. We want health and happiness. We want our dreams to be fulfilled. Well, the good news is that God wants those things for us as well. One of our favorite verses around here is Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* (NIV) He also declares in Isaiah 55:8-13 *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."* (NIV) God says what he means and means what he says. If that is the case then achieving our goals for 2011 must begin with aligning ourselves with his word.

He also tells us in Psalm 37: 4 *"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."* (NIV) That's a good place to start. However, you need to know your goals if you're going to achieve them. We can get so busy doing just what is thrown our way that we don't take time to meditate on who we are, why we exist, and what is most important to us. Many times as we open ourselves up to dream big, we get discouraged by rehearsing the failures of the past and before the idea has a chance to germinate we are tossing it aside with negative thinking. *"That will never happen to me."* In Psalm 42 the psalmist likens his thirst for God as a deer that pants for streams of water. As he pondered the difficulties of life his meditation was on the fact that he did not have to be downcast because he could put his hope in God. We must believe what it says in Romans 8:31b *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* And we've already seen, he is for us!

The key here is our need to believe. Mark 11:22-24 *"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."* (NIV) This is what Abraham did regarding the promise God had made concerning his becoming the father of many nations. He had to wait 25 years for that promise to come to fruition. Although he and his wife were apparently beyond the natural ability to have children, he did not waiver in his faith that God had the ability to keep his word. Paul describes God as *"the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were."* God called Abraham a father before he was and that's just what he became. However, it didn't happen until Abraham had no choice but to trust in God. Natural means were not going to get the job done. He had tried a couple of things that he thought could fulfill the promise, but God said no. The son he was to have would be a child of promise, the fulfillment of God's word.

That's what we need to do. Believe God to perform his will, his word, and his plan over our lives. We were created by him and for him and he has great things in store for us; plans that include our will, our desires, our God-given talents, and our resolve to participate in our destiny by using faith as the "currency of heaven" to part the waters and multiply the loaves and fishes. We are told, *"You have not because you ask not."* Let's ask with an eye of faith that God is longing to release his gifts in our lives to accomplish great things for his name's sake. Ephesians 1 tells us that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 2 Peter 1 tells us that God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness and that we have promises that enable us to participate in the divine nature. Wow! 2011 get ready for a mighty move of God in us and through us.