

**SMART Goals**

Your short-term mission was a small, but significant point in your life’s journey.  The name of this series is *Next Steps in Your Life Changing Journey*. An important step in negotiating your “next step” on this journey is to know where you want to go. What is your plan? One way to help you stay on course is to set goals. These goals will serve a road map.

One tool for helping people set goals is the acronym SMART. Each letter represents a characteristic of the goal. When crafting your goals, be sure they are ***S****pecific*, ***M****easurable*, ***A****ttainable*, have a ***R****eturn on investment*, and a ***T****arget date*.

**Specific** – Keep your goals specific and simple.

**Measurable** – Be clear about the desired outcome. Determine in advance what it will look like when you accomplish your goals.

**Attainable** – Be realistic and practical. Avoid setting yourself up for failure.

**Return on Investment** – Make sure your goals are worthy of the effort and attention.

**Target date** – Give yourself a realistic deadline. That will help you monitor your progress and provide impetus to get started.

Goal setting is often a challenge because it involves determining what you want to do and how to get there within an established time frame.  If you have been unsuccessful setting goals in the past, it might be helpful to start with a long-term goal for something you would like to accomplish by the end of the year. Then work backwards. Establish some short-term goals with monthly targets that will help you achieve that goal.  
Pray before you begin setting your goals. Some of the earlier articles in this series have focused on the importance of reflection and your relationship with God and others. As you write your goals you might consider what you have been learning during these past weeks.

An over-arching, long-term goal you might consider is to become more Christ-like. As we abide in Christ we bear fruit, walk in the Spirit and are obedient to His will.  “…the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control…” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Aim at nothing and you’ll get there!