

Start Strong: Must-have goals for your best year yet

Opening scripture: Colossians 1:1-12

V. 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

God wants you to start this new year strong. In this series, we are going to share several must-have goals for your best year yet. Today it is just an introduction but throughout this series, we will be talking about the kinds of goals you need to have, in order to experience God's best for you in 2017.

This was a letter written to a young church. They had just started out as a result of the evangelistic efforts of Epaphras. Paul's prayer was that they would be strong, right from the start.

From verse 9, Paul details the kind of prayer he prayed over the Colossians. However, more than prayer points, these were **prayer goals** for this young church.

1. To be filled with the knowledge of God's will

V.9: "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;"

In order to start strong and enjoy your best year yet, it is very important to know the will of God for your life.

This was also the prayer goal of Epaphras in **chapter 4:12**:

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

It is so important to make plans in line with God's will and not the flesh.

2 Corinthians 1:17a - *Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh"...?*

Ephesians 5:17 - *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Isaiah 28:29 - *This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.*

Psalms 138:8 NLT - *The Lord will work out his plans for my life - for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me.*

2. To walk worthy of the Lord

This is the second goal you need to embrace to your best year yet.

V. 10 - that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Ephesians 5:15 AMPC - *Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people),*

In order to walk worthy of the Lord we need to be “*fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work*”.

a) Fully pleasing Him

This needs to be your goal for 2017.

2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV - *So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*

1 Thessalonians 4:1 - *Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;*

b) Being fruitful in every good work

This is how we walk worthy of the Lord: pleasing Him and living lives of fruitfulness.

Luke 13:6-9 - *He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ 8 But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.”*

In this parable, the owner of an orchard came looking for fruit in a fig tree. When He didn't find any, He decided to cut it down. However, the caretaker of the vineyard asked for one more year.

May this be a year of fruitfulness. May Jesus find fruit in all of us. May this be our goal!

Still in Colossians, we find Paul encouraging someone in that church to serve and bear fruit:

Colossians 4:17 - *And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”*

Stir up the gifts of God in your life! Reject bareness and embrace fruitfulness.

3. To know Him more

V. 10 - *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

That is such a powerful goal for your best year yet!

Hosea 6:3 - *Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.*

Make it your goal to know Him more, to pursue His presence this year like never before, to know Him and to know His ways, to get acquainted with God as your Father.

Job 22:21 - *“Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.*

4. To grow stronger in God and His power

V. 11 *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*

The world may not get better in 2017 but you can get stronger. You can increase in the strength of God – “*strengthened with all might according to His glorious power*”.

Colossians 1:29 AMPC - *For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me.*

May we have a revelation of all the power and strength that God makes available for us in 2017! Make it your goal to see the manifestation of that power in your life, to walk in the tangible reality of what means, to possess it - experientially.

Ephesians 3:14-16: 14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*