

MONDAY MANNA

17 August 2020

MINUTE FOR A MID-YEAR GOAL REVIEW?

By Jim Mathis

Each year my wife and I have an annual meeting, just the two of us, on New Year's Day. That is what we did on January 1 of this year. Admittedly, that seems like a long, long time ago, given what the current year has already served us! Nonetheless, this annual meeting is the time we set aside to review our finances, coordinate our goals, and plan our vacations. We look at the previous year's goals to decide if we accomplished what we intended to get done, as well as to assess whether those goals might have been too big – or too small.

Some years ago, there was a buzz word circulating in the business world, identified by the acronym, BHAG – Big Hairy Audacious Goal. It was a clever way of saying, “Shoot for something so big, so great, you can't possibly see how it will ever happen.” Or as someone said, “Shoot for the stars and you might hit the moon.” If you conceive a big, hairy, audacious goal, you could achieve beyond anything you could have ever dreamed.

Not everyone is eager to set goals, especially ones that seem far beyond reach. Failing to reach goals can be discouraging. For that reason – if they set goals at all – some people prefer reasonable goals that can be checked off. This builds momentum to keep us motivated. It avoids disappointment. But it also kills any chance we might have for accomplishing something memorable, so rewarding that it could even be life-changing.

I just finished reading Jon Acuff's newest book, *Finish*. He concludes with the statement, “Goals that you refuse to chase don't disappear, they become ghosts that haunt you. Do you know why strangers rage at you online and are so easily offended? It is because their passion has no other outlet. Many a troll was born from the heartbreak of a goal he didn't finish. A troll is just someone who gave up on his goals so many times, he decided to just tear down everyone else's.”

If you have lost your joy, and find yourself criticising everyone and everything, it might be a good idea to check your goals. They may be so big they discourage you, or so small that they don't inspire passion or motivate you.

Or worse, you discover you have accomplished the wrong goals. Maybe you have a great job, or are making lots of money, but still feel unhappy. Ask yourself if you are pursuing the right goals. It is never too late to re-evaluate or rewrite your goals. It is only too late when you make the determination not to pursue goals that might have proved more rewarding and fulfilling than you could ever have imagined.

The Scriptures address this very well. I like Ephesians 5:16 in the *Amplified Version* of the Bible: “*making the most of your time [on earth, recognising and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil.*” In other words, if we don't take advantage of an opportunity when it presents itself, it might be lost forever.

We also find wisdom on how to know whether we are pursuing the right goals. As Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” If our primary goal is the please and honour God, we can feel confident He will guide us in the goal-setting process.

As I said, my wife and I have found January to be an ideal time for doing a goal check. But why wait an entire year to make changes if your current goals are not working, or not bringing you joy. Today might be the best time to create new goals, even ones that seem impossible. What are you waiting for?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

Do you set annual goals? If so, what is the process you use – and what do your goals look like? How do you know when you have accomplished them?

Have you ever established any of the “big, hairy, audacious goals” Mr. Mathis describes? How do you feel about that idea – does it challenge you, or does it intimidate you?

The quote from the book says, "Goals that you refuse to chase don't disappear, they become ghosts that haunt you." What do you think about that?

For setting goals, it is suggested to make God a central part of the process. Do you agree? If so, how do you think that should be done? How can we make God part of our decision-making and goal-setting?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 10:4-5, 12:11, 14:23, 21:5, 29:18

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Romans 13:11-12