

Setting Goals

Family Home Evening Lesson

Opening Hymn: Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel, Hymns #252

Opening Prayer: By Invitation

Lesson Purpose:

Teach the importance of setting goals and working to achieve them. Relate the importance of setting goals to gospel principles such as agency, work, accountability, and more. Each individual sets meaningful goals for the New Year.

Gospel Principles:

[Agency]

- Our personal agency allows us to either progress or not.
- We are free to choose liberty or captivity (see 2 Nephi 2:27 printable*).

[Work]

- We've been commanded to be perfect like our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see Matthew 5:48 printable*). This will require a great amount of work and effort to improve.
- Gordon B. Hinckley quote printable*
- We will be held accountable for our efforts, or lack thereof.

[Accountability]

- We've been given strengths and weaknesses. Strengths should be used for good and weaknesses improved through Christ (see Ether 12:27 printable*).
- The Parable of the Talents. Refer to this video:
<https://www.lds.org/bible-videos/videos/the-parable-of-the-talents?lang=eng>
- Refer to Elder Rasband's talk on Parable of the Talents (see talk printable*)
- Russell M. Nelson quote printable*

Lesson Overview:

- What are goals and why are they important?
- Discuss the principles of agency, work, and accountability (above) as they relate to our setting goals and our progress in the Plan of Salvation.
- In which areas of life can we set goals? (Spiritual, Financial, Family, Individual, Physical, Emotional, Professional, Educational, etc.)
- How do we set good goals? (see SMART printable.*)

Activity:

- Goal Setting (see printable worksheet*)

Closing Hymn: I Have Work Enough to Do, Hymns #224

Closing Prayer: By Invitation

2 Nephi 2:27

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man.

And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

Matthew 5:48

**Be ye therefore perfect,
even as your Father which
is in heaven is perfect.**

**None of us will become perfect in a day
or a month or a year.**

**We will not accomplish it in a lifetime,
but we can begin now,
starting with our more obvious**

WEAKNESSES

and gradually converting them into

STRENGTHS.

Gordon B. Hinckley

And if men come unto me i will show unto them their weakness. i give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will i make weak things become strong.

Ether 12:27

And if men come unto me i will show unto them their weakness. i give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will i make weak things become strong.

Ether 12:27

The Parable of the Talents

Elder Ronald A. Rasband

What parent has not looked into the eyes of a newborn infant and wondered in amazement about the child's future? What parent has not asked questions such as "What kind of life will my child have? For what purposes has this child come to earth now? What must I do as a parent to help this infant fulfill those purposes?"

Every one of us has been blessed with many marvelous capabilities, and one of the great objectives of our journey through mortality is to improve upon them. The Savior powerfully taught this lesson in His parable of the talents.

Good and Faithful Servants

A few days before His Crucifixion, Jesus took His disciples to a place on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city of Jerusalem (see Matt. 24:1, 3) and gave what is known as the Olivet discourse. The sermon is contained in Matthew 24 and 25.

The quiet and panoramic setting was wonderfully suitable for the Savior to teach His disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of His Second Coming. As He spoke, His words distressed the disciples. Jesus tried to comfort them, saying, "Be not troubled, for, when all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled" (D&C 45:35).

As a part of this sermon Jesus gave several parables. In the Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible, the Prophet made it clear that these parables refer to the last days (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matt. 25:1).

Jesus told the story of a master who gave each of his three servants a sum of money. The amounts were set according to each servant's previously demonstrated capabilities. The man then left for a long time. When he returned, he asked each of these servants to report what he had done with the money.

The first two servants revealed they had doubled his investment. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord," was the master's reply (Matt. 25:21; see also Matt. 25:23).

The Other Servant

The third servant then came trembling before his master. He had already heard what the others had reported and knew that he could not give a similar report. "I was afraid," the servant said, "and went and hid thy talent in the earth" (Matt. 25:25). The master was upset. "Thou wicked and slothful servant," he said. Then he commanded, "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents" (Matt. 25:26, 28).

The Savior then gave the interpretation of the parable: Those who obtain other talents receive more talents in abundance. But those who do not obtain other talents shall lose even the talents they had initially (see Matt. 25:28–29).

Obtaining Other Talents

Every person comes to earth as a unique individual. Similar threads may run in families, but each of us has a tapestry all our own. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote: “Each person in this life is endowed with those talents and capacities which his pre-earth life entitle him to receive. Some by obedience to law acquired one talent and some another.”

The Lord made it clear that it is not good enough for us simply to return to Him the talents He has given us. We are to improve upon and add to our talents. He has promised that if we multiply our talents we will receive eternal joy.

In modern revelation the Lord affirmed the principles in this parable: “But with some I am not well pleased, for ... they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. ... Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” (D&C 60:2, 13).

Three Principles

Applying the teachings of the parable of the talents has been a challenge and a blessing in my life. The following principles have been a great help to me in my efforts with this process.

1. Seek earnestly to discover the talents the Lord has given you. The talents God has given us first become apparent in the interests we pursue. If you are wondering about your talents, make a list of the things you like to do. Include all the activities you enjoy from different dimensions of your life—spiritual, musical, dramatic, academic, athletic, and so on. Study and ponder your patriarchal blessing for insights and inspiration. Consult family members, trusted friends, teachers, and leaders; others often can see in us what we find difficult to see in ourselves.

I remember a wonderful Primary teacher who frequently invited me to read the scriptures in front of the class. She told me what a nice reading voice I had and how well I read. What she said and the way she encouraged me helped me gain confidence and realize a talent from the Lord at an early age.

As a 19-year-old missionary, I yearned to know if I had been blessed with any helpful missionary-related talents. I felt a great desire to know how I could magnify whatever gifts I had so that I could be a more effective servant of the Lord. As I studied the scriptures and my patriarchal blessing, prayed fervently, and had various missionary experiences, several of my talents were made known to me.

2. Use your talents to build up the kingdom of God. Our first priority in helping others is our family. Parents are in a unique and powerful position to encourage and support their children in developing their talents. We also have many opportunities to help others identify their talents. I am grateful for the many people who have helped me add to my talents. The successes in life of those we

assist, sponsor, mentor, and lift as they pursue their own talents can bring us great joy and satisfaction.

Focusing on serving the Savior can guide us toward making proper decisions in our daily lives. This perspective prepares us to do whatever the Lord may ask of us at any time. President Gordon B. Hinckley exemplifies this important attitude: “My talents may not be great, but I can use them to bless the lives of others. I can be one who does his work with pride in that which comes from his hand and mind.”

3. Acknowledge God’s hand in your success. We must never forget or stop acknowledging that all talents and abilities come from God. Some were given to us before our birth, while others have been acquired as we have developed. But in both cases, they are gifts from a benevolent Heavenly Father, whose gracious blessings are also the means for improving our talents and obtaining others. The Lord has said, “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things” (D&C 59:21).

I am thankful for the knowledge He has given us—that we are His children and that we are to magnify and multiply our talents to our fullest potential. I know that if we will work hard and do our best, using our talents to bless others and build the kingdom of God, we will be brought back into His presence and hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21).

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Let’s Talk about It

1. Show a picture of yourself when you were much younger, and ask family members to do the same. Read together the first two paragraphs of this article, and tell about some capabilities you have developed. Invite others to do the same.

2. Take turns reading paragraphs from the second, third, and fourth sections of this article. Tell of a time when you were afraid to share a talent, and invite others also to tell of such times. Discuss ways we can overcome these fears.

3. Have family members underline the three principles taught by Elder Rasband in the last section of this article. Discuss ideas from this article that could help them discover and improve upon their God-given gifts and use them to build up God’s kingdom. Express gratitude for the talents God has given you.

We should not be discouraged or depressed by our shortcomings. No one is without weakness. As part of the divine plan, we are tested to see whether we master weakness or let weakness master us.

Proper diagnosis is essential to proper treatment. The Lord gave us this remarkable assurance: ‘Because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong’. But wishing for strength won’t make us strong. It takes faith and work.

Russell M. Nelson

-BE SMART ABOUT SETTING GOALS-

S

SPECIFIC: NOT TOO VAGUE

STRETCHING: CHALLENGE YOURSELF

M

MEASURABLE: CREATE STEPS AND SMALL SUCCESSES IN ADDITION TO A FINAL MEASURABLE METRIC

A

ACHIEVABLE: MUST BE REALISTIC

AGREED UPON: JOINT GOALS

R

REWARDING: GOALS SHOULD BE PERSONALLY REWARDING

RELEVANT: MATTERS TO YOU

T

TIME-BASED: GIVE YOUR GOAL A DEADLINE

GOALS FOR: _____

Statistics vary by study, but studies have consistently shown that people who write down their goals are more likely (40-80%) to accomplish them.

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physical

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professional

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financial

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family

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educational

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individual

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