

BEYOND THE STATUS QUO



Getting from Desire to Discipline

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This document includes the following sections:

- Getting from Desire to Discipline
- Example of a Personal Growth Plan
- Spiritual Growth Chart
- Personal Growth Plan Template
- List of Recommended Books
- Questions for Self-Evaluation by John Wesley
- A Word of Encouragement



BEYOND THE

STATUS QUO



1. Getting from Desire to Discipline

“You and I will either live by design or default.” The tool you have downloaded is designed to help you build an action plan to get where you want to be in your life. This personal growth plan will assist you in taking those *Desires* of who you want to become to the point of *Decision* and *Discipline*. Hopefully it will jumpstart you or assist the continued organization of your life and ministry. I have personally used and developed the components of this plan for over thirty-five years.

The things I have learned and implemented in my personal life have been learned from a host of amazing people. I have purposely sought out strategic people to ask pointed questions about their field of expertise. Plus I have been privileged to serve with many gifted leaders.

I read broadly and have studied many of the popular management systems. This plan has been influenced by all of these resources. The bottom line for all of us is that our lives are a compilation of those who have invested in us.

I am offering a simple plan that will make a difference. What you will find is a template that will work...if you work it. It will take commitment and discipline. My all-time favorite definition of discipline is “**Discipline is remembering what you want.**” –David Campbell

If you want to break free from the *status quo*, the first question you need to answer is, “*What do I want?*”

- To be more organized
- To be more efficient
- To read more
- To exercise more
- To be a better leader
- To be a better spouse
- To be a better friend
- To pray more
- To be an effective parent
- To be more godly



“A successful and fruitful ministry does not just happen—it is purchased. It cannot be paid in a lump sum; we pay for it in gradually increasing installments. There is no such thing as a cheap, fruitful ministry.” –J. Oswald Sanders—*Enjoying Intimacy with God*

The same can be said about a *successful life, family, business, or personal walk with God.*

You are embarking on a life-long journey so do not expect to master this in thirty days. You are developing a lifestyle, eradicating some bad habits, and replacing them with some good ones—which takes time. Determine a couple of strategic areas you want to address and work on those first...then add more. You don't begin your first day of marathon training by trying to run the full marathon distance.

Let me suggest some steps to familiarizing yourself with the plan and for creating your own:

- Read through the entire document a couple of times.
- Determine your spiritual theme and scripture verse/passage for the year.
- List the areas to which you want to give attention (i.e. spiritual, family, physical fitness, etc.).
- Find someone you trust to be your accountability partner; this will energize the process. (If you want more information on this concept, search my blog <http://mikecalhoun.org> for the topic “accountability.”)
- Choose the first book you plan to read.
- Decide on a date to begin your plan, giving yourself time to develop it.



“Without exception, the men and women I have known who make the most rapid, consistent, and evident growth in Christlikeness have been those who develop a daily time of being alone with God. This time of outward silence is the time of daily Bible intake and prayer. In this solitude is the occasion for private worship.” –Donald S. Whitney

As you create your plan for *Getting from Desire to Discipline*, ask yourself what are the irreducible minimums of your life? What are the five, seven or ten areas that you see as non-negotiable? I am talking about the components that must be a part of your life for it to be complete. These are the concepts that become your short list of values.

Things on this list may include concepts like:

- Personal walk with God
- Family
- Physical fitness
- Financial freedom
- Personal growth (areas other than spiritual)
- Ministerial/Occupational improvement



2. Example of a Personal Growth Plan

I have given two examples within this illustrated plan, which I explain in this section. One deals with personal spiritual growth and the other with physical discipline. I refer to them as “spiritually fit” and “physically fit.”

Principle:

“Grant me (oh God) a principle within which Thou wilt own.” –The Valley of Vision

I operate on the premise that scripture is the foundation for all of life and ministry. One of my personal irreducible minimums is to live a principled life. It is vital that scripture, not opinion or the world’s philosophy, direct my life. In searching the scriptures, I personally defined seven areas I felt needed to be part of my *Beyond the Status Quo* personal growth plan.

Once I knew the irreducible minimum areas for me, such as being spiritually and physically fit, I selected key verses for each area. Notice the verses I selected for the two examples we are using in this plan.

- Spiritually Fit – Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 3:18
- Physically Fit – 1 Corinthians 6:19, 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 2:5, Colossians 2:23.



Value:

Each Value is supported by scripture. For this reason, these values do not change from year to year.

I create value statements to help clarify the implementation of my principles. The statements I have used for the examples in this plan are:

- **Value 1:** *“I will be faithful in the personal discipline the Lord has laid on my heart. I will allow for quality time with God every day.”*
- **Value 2:** *“I want to be energetic, with adequate strength to accomplish the physical and mental tasks before me each day for God’s glory.”*

Purpose:

“Armed with clarity, people are more likely to align their resources with that purpose in an efficient manner.” –The Power of Vision

Purpose is my Value explained. The statement in each Purpose section is my goal. While the value statements are a bit more inclusive, these concisely clarify my goal. I keep these brief and to the point so I can remember them easily. Examples of purpose statements I have in this plan are:

- **Purpose** – “I will be spiritually fit.”
- **Purpose** – “I will be physically fit.”



Objectives:

At this point I define strategic ways to accomplish my goals. Objectives are the vehicles for accomplishing my Principle. If my goal is to be spiritually fit, then what are some of the objectives I need to establish to accomplish this goal?

Several years ago I began selecting a yearly spiritual theme, which has proven to be a tremendous personal blessing. For example, some of my past themes have been *Prayer*, *God's Attributes*, *Practicing His Presence*, and *Worship*. It becomes a part of the normal everyday flow as I do life.

Having a theme guides my Bible study, aids in my scripture memory, and influences my reading. This theme serves like the rails of a train track for my yearly spiritual plan.

Along with the theme, I select a strategic scripture verse or passage, which communicates the intent of my theme. I suggest you use a concordance or Bible program to research the right scripture that communicates your intent. I encourage you to memorize the verse(s) as well.

As previously stated, my values are established and do not change. Some of the objectives and action steps related to “spiritually fit” will change based on the yearly theme.

Many of the other values like “physical fitness” or “family” are not necessarily influenced by the yearly theme. The objectives for these may be adjusted, but this has more to do with health and family stages than the spiritual theme.

You will see later, in the actual example, how I have used “spiritual theme” as one of my objectives. For illustration purposes I have only defined the objectives for “spiritually fit” and “physically fit” in this section.



In order to be spiritually fit, I intend to have a daily Quiet Time, read books, and do Bible study. While these three things are good, they are simply action steps to help me accomplish my Principle and Values. None of these by themselves will necessarily make me spiritually fit; they are tools to aid in the process. Spiritual growth is about a relationship and not a routine.

If you are like me, finding the time to maintain a lifestyle for being physically fit is always a challenge. The demands of life and ministry seem to always preempt my exercise plans. However, in order to function at my best, I realize this area has to be a priority. I have included being physically fit as one of my objectives and encourage you to do the same.



Action Steps:

A leader is a person who has a bias for actions.” –Dr. Howard Hendricks

Within the Objectives, I further define some of the finer points of the goal. Having a daily Quiet Time and maintaining an exercise schedule are good objectives, but what does this look like when you begin to practice them? Ask yourself the question, “Which of the following components do I want to include as my Action Steps?” (See examples below.)

Objective 1 (spiritually fit) – Have a daily Quiet Time:

- Spend time in worship.
- Read and meditate on a scripture passage.
- Spend time in prayer.
- Keep a journal.

“The first thing I did, after simply asking the Lord’s blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching into every verse to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul.” –George Mueller

Objective 2 (physically fit) – Maintain an exercise schedule:

- Walk/run (twice a week).
- Do strength training exercises (twice a week).
- Hike (twice a month).
- Train for a marathon.

Actions Steps require motivation, which might be best exemplified by legendary Dallas Cowboys’ coach, Tom Landry, when he boiled down coaching to one statement: **“Getting men to do what they don’t want to do in order to accomplish what they want to accomplish.”**



3. Spiritual Growth Chart

“You get what you *inspect* and not what you *expect*!”

I do not know the source of this quote, but I love it just the same. In my ministry it is almost institutional. It is a simple quote with a simple message advocating accountability. It may be self-accountability or a partnership, but we all need it if we want to move away from the *Status Quo*.

I began using this chart to track my spiritual growth objectives over thirty-five years ago. Truth be told, I probably don't need it now but yet...I do! You see, I believe that anything important enough to be a value in my life is worth tracking.

This is not about being rigid or controlling; it is about using tools to map out your plan for *Getting from Desire to Discipline*. If you decide to use this tool, feel free to reproduce it in any format that works for you.

List the areas (disciplines) you are working on in the left-hand column and then track your progress throughout the month. Then if you are working with an accountability partner, share the chart with them so they know how to support you.



4. Personal Growth Plan Template

As promised I have provided you with a blank template to use in developing your own plan for *Getting from Desire to Discipline*. As you complete your plan, remember to keep it simple. The more complicated you make this plan, the less likely you are to follow through. Refer back to this document and the example for assistance.

5. Recommended Books

These are just a few books I recommend on the topics of spiritual growth and personal discipline. I have personally benefited from reading and practicing many of the concepts in these books.

6. Questions for Self-Evaluation by John Wesley

Many years ago I came across these questions used by the Methodist preacher and leader John Wesley. It is said that he would ask himself these questions frequently as a tool for self-evaluation. They are practical and penetrating questions.

I share these questions with you to use as a source of self-evaluation as you begin this process. They will help you identify strategic areas in your life to potentially include in your plan. Over the years they have prompted several areas of growth in my own personal life.



7. A Word of Encouragement

I want to help you get from *desire* to *discipline*. Maybe you are looking at this plan with a little concern, but let me encourage you to JUST BEGIN! Begin by taking one *desire* to the point of *decision* and start making it a *discipline*.

You are up for the challenge. Let this be the day you decide to leave the *Status Quo* in the rearview mirror forever.

“Visions are born in the soul of man or woman who is consumed with the tension between what is and what could be.” –Andy Stanley



Example of a Personal Growth Plan

Principle: Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 3:18

Value 1: I will be faithful in the personal disciplines the Lord has laid on my heart. I will allow for quality time with God every day.

Purpose: I will be spiritually fit.

- **Objective 1:** Spiritual Theme – Prayer

Action Step 1: Memorize theme verse(s) – Philippians 4:6.

Action Step 2: Do a thematic Bible study on the topic.

Action Step 3: Read two books on the topic.

Action Step 4: Communicate transparently with my accountability partner about this area of my life.



Example of a Personal Growth Plan (continued)

- **Objective 2:** Daily Quiet Time

Action Step 1: Spend time in worship.

Action Step 2: Read and meditate on a scripture passage.

Action Step 3: Spend time in prayer.

- **Objective 3:** Reading

Action Step 1: Read a minimum of seven pages daily.

Action Step 2: Read on a variety of topics.

Action Step 3: Read three articles each week (articles about your field of interest, leadership, current events, etc.).



Example of a Personal Growth Plan (continued)

Principle: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 2:5; Colossians 2:23

Value 2: I will be energetic with adequate strength to accomplish the physical and mental tasks before me each day for God's glory.

Purpose: I will be physically fit.

- **Objective 1:** Maintain exercise schedule.

Action Step 1: Walk/run (twice a week).

Action Step 2: Do strength training exercises (twice a week).

Action Step 3: Hike (twice a month).



Example of a Personal Growth Plan (continued)

- **Objective 2:** Maintain proper diet.

Action Step 1: Limit intake of fried foods.

Action Step 2: Drink more juices and less soda.

Action Step 3: Track calorie intake.



Personal Growth Plan -

Principle:

Value:

Purpose:

- Objective 1:

Action Step 1:

Action Step 2:

Action Step 3:



Personal Growth Plan -

- Objective 2:

Action Step 1:

Action Step 2:

Action Step 3:

- Objective 3:

Action Step 1:

Action Step 2:

Action Step 3:



Personal Growth Plan -

- Objective 4:

Action Step 1:

Action Step 2:

Action Step 3:

- Objective 5:

Action Step 1:

Action Step 2:

Action Step 3:



Recommended Books

1. *Abide Above*, Miles J. Stanford
2. *Enjoying Intimacy With God*, J. Oswald Sanders
3. *Fan the Flame*, Joseph M. Stowell
4. *Fire In Your Heart*, Sammy Tippit
5. *God Tells the Man Who Cares*, A. W. Tozer
6. *How on Earth Can I Be Spiritual?*, C. Sumner Wemp
7. *Journey With David Brainerd*, Richard A. Hasler
8. *Kept for the Master's Use*, Frances Ridley Havergal
9. *Keys to the Deeper Life*, A. W. Tozer
10. *Living With Your Passions*, Erwin Lutzer
11. *One Holy Passion*, R. C. Sproul
12. *Prayer and Praying Men*, E. M. Bounds
13. *Principles of Spiritual Growth*, Miles J. Stanford
14. *Revival Praying*, Leonard Ravenhill
15. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald S. Whitney
16. *Spiritual Maturity*, J. Oswald Sanders
17. *Teaching to Change Lives*, Howard Hendricks
18. *The God You Can Know*, Dan DeHaan
19. *The Holiest Of All*, Andrew Murray
20. *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas a' Kempis
21. *The Integrity Crisis*, Warren Wiersbe
22. *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer
23. *The Practice of Godliness*, Jerry Bridges
24. *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer
25. *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges
26. *The Quest for Character*, Charles Swindoll
27. *The True Vine*, Andrew Murray
28. *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges



Questions for Self-evaluation by John Wesley

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am a better man than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts or words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live to me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to somebody else with the object of trying to win that person for Christ?
11. Am I making contacts with other people and using them for Christ's glory?
12. Do I pray about the money I spend?
13. Do I get to bed in time and get up in time?
14. Do I disobey God in anything?
15. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
16. Am I defeated in any part of my life: jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anybody whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?



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