

MY GOALS AREN'T BEING MET... WHAT DO I DO?

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Setting goals is a good thing, right? Well, I believe so—**but be careful about what you call a “goal.”** I remember when I had one of those “aha” moments when a very important goal was most definitely NOT met. It was the first time I discovered that things didn't automatically turn out the way I wanted—even when I was responsible and made good choices.

Up until that point I had thrived in the structured environment of school, assuming that all respectable people attended their classes, did all their homework, and basically did everything the professor said. Yes, I was a natural rule-following student! Just give me a list of to-do's that I can work on and I'm in heaven. I enjoyed seeing goals met—it was rewarding and enjoyable. (Can you tell I am a task-oriented person?!) This way of doing life had worked out well for me. After graduating with honors with my math degree, I felt confident that my strategy would work just as well in my future as it had in my past. But fast forward 5 years and I was in for a rude awakening. My simple formula of “do the right thing and everything will turn out well” was not going to help me navigate the complexities of mom life.

Why, oh why, must I learn my lessons the hard way (aka, the painful way)? All I know is that pruning is painful. And in John 15 we are told that if Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, we can expect to be pruned. So as we become transformed into being more Christ-like in our attitudes and behaviors, it's going to hurt.

Here comes where I learned a lesson...

We had twins. When our twins were born, I learned the first of many lessons that God needed to teach me about what I can and can't control. I had a very important goal—to keep my kids well taken care of (basically happy and healthy all the time). In the past, if I just worked hard enough, my goals got met. I was about halfway through their first year when the wheels fell off my strategy. Evidently, my approach had some major flaws. And I got frustrated. I **may** have had an old broom handle (minus the brush part) that I occasionally took out to the backyard and beat the ground with a few times. It made me feel better.

But I found the answer I needed when I learned about the difference between a goal and a desire. I learned that **a goal is something that is within your control**—it is measurable and specific. And you work hard to achieve it! But, in contrast, a **desire is something you long for but is out of your control**. A desire is something you pray for. So I made a radical change in my thinking. I began praying that my twins would be happy and healthy (desires). And the things I could control (good hygiene, healthy eating, regular sleeping habits) were the things I worked at (goals).

Goal or desire? Answering that question has helped me navigate my oftentimes crazy life.

How can we properly categorize our thoughts?

1. Make a list of the things you want in life. Then mark each one as either a goal or a desire.

Hint: Ask yourself if it is something within your control or not. Remember: **"Out of My Control = Desire; and "Within My Control = Goal."**

1. For each goal, think specifically about what actions you can take to achieve the goal. Write them down!
2. For each desire, write them in your prayer journal. Pray over those desires

throughout your day. There's an old quote that says "the grass is greener where you water it." Think of prayer as the water, and believe that it makes a difference.