

HOW TO PLAN THE YEAR WITH THE ONE WHO MADE THE YEAR.

**Retreat, Refresh and Reflect
with your Maker**

By D.A MANGO

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“HI MANGO...HOW DO I TAKE A RETREAT ?”

A friend of mine in the middle of a career transition shared with me the challenges he was facing in deciding whether to look for a new job in a foreign land or relocate back home to be close to his family. I advised him to take a few days off to retreat from all the hustle and bustle and seek the face of the Lord. After a few weeks I asked how the retreat went and he said he was still seeking finances to book a decent venue to do a retreat. I was taken aback as what I meant was for him to take some hours in a day or two to go to the nearest park

**Teach us to
number our days
and recognize how
few they are; help
us to spend them
as we should.**

PSALM 90:12

to unwind and declutter his thoughts in the presence of GOD. I then counselled him how this can be done anywhere as long as there are no distractions to hinder your practicing the presence of God. Since many maybe in a similar situation and are not familiar with the practice of retreats, I have written this guide on how to make life-plans in partnership with our Maker even beyond just a Retreat. It's an extract from my upcoming book titled MANIFEST GODLY SUCCESS.

IS THERE NO GOD TO GUIDE MAN ?

There was a time a king decided to consult an idol and GOD send His prophet Elijah to ask, '*...is it because there is no God in Israel that you're going to consult with Ekron's god Baal-zebub?*' 2Ki 1:3. The same can be asked in our time today where man consults Year-Planners and Websites for guidance - "*is there no God in heaven or earth, to guide man through life?*" There is such a GOD. And He longs to be consulted for He is the One who said *I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end* - Jer_29:11.

The beginning of the year or a season is a prudent time to consult the Immortal-One who calls Himself the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last , the Beginning and the End. This is He who has never been late to bring in summer, winter, spring or autumn. Those close to us may also have good thoughts towards us but they are limited in their power to help us carry them out, no

matter how rich or connected they are. But God has both great ability and good intentions to bring our best-laid-plans to pass. The question is how to consult Him and tap into His good thoughts towards us and work out the expected end He has in mind for us.

Should a consultant teach me how to set SMART goals if he does not believe in the existence of GOD? Can we really have 5 keys and 12 steps for achieving our goals without the input of our Maker? Even if AI discovers a scientific way to set and achieve our life goals it will still need the input of the PRINCE OF LIFE - Acts 3:15. If GOD is our Creator indeed, then there is a way He wants us to set godly goals and plans.

GOD IS THE ARCHITECT, YOU ARE THE BUILDER

Imagine the disaster that would happen in a construction-project where the contractors decided to build their own way, because they didn't believe the architectural blue-prints. Even if they manage to finish, the building will be tested when the "*rain pours, and floods come , the winds blow and it will then collapse into a total disaster* - Mat 7:26. That is what JESUS said happens to "*everyone who hears what I say but doesn't obey it will be like a foolish person who built a house on sand* - Mat 7:27. A life-plan without the Creator's involvement is a builder doing a planner's job. A life-plan without the Creator's involvement is a builder doing an architectural-planner's job.

This means yearly-planners should be rebranded as “yearly-builders” because man should be consulting God on how to build in the year He has finished planning. Many make new year resolutions and write out what they want GOD to do for them without taking into account **that GOD’s plans for us were already finished before we were born.** This is what Apostle Paul stated when he explained why the Jews in the wilderness were not able to enter God’s Rest in the Promised Land , although these plans were already finished by God from the foundation of the world - Heb 4:3.

Man’s job in life is to labour to plug into God’s best-laid-plans finished for him as the following five scriptures prove.

1. “Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his ..”- Eph 1:4
2. “All days of my life was recorded in your book before one of them had taken place - Psa 139:16
3. “..Those whom God had already chosen he also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers”. Rom 8:29
4. “I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you to be a prophet to the nations.” Jer 1:5
5. “.. we are God's masterpiece, created in the Messiah Jesus to perform good actions that God prepared long ago to be our way of life...” Eph 2:10

If God has finished writing the book of our life, then it means every new year resolution we make in tandem with Him, was already in His Book before the year started. It is our job to log into GOD and download the HIS BLUEPRINT plan for the year or the season we are entering. Even if we had already downloaded it before, we still have to work together with Him, for them to come to pass.

How do we access our Heavenly Book written above in Ps 139:16 ? How do we make sure that God has a hand in all our godly resolutions ? What are the hinderances standing in the way of us hearing and seeing from God ? How do we obey the Psalmist who said in Psa_37:5 that we should “..**commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.**” Let’s study the three ways we can tap into God’s finished works concerning us.

But there are barriers we need to get out of the way.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING GOD’S PLAN

If God has already finished our books, then it follows that the problem is not with the Creator, but with the creature. There must be hinderances which bar him from attaining the good plans that his Creator thought out for him before He made the world. There are barriers that cause plans to fail despite the time

spent in preparation through new-year resolutions, goal-setting, fasting, reflection, retreats, prayers etc.

Why is there no drive to see through many of the plans put in place? Why do January resolutions end long before Easter, like those who pay the annual fees for the gym , only to stop coming after a few months ? Or resolve to eat right, but just after the fasting , they walk down the supermarket aisle with the same food they vowed to fall out of love with. 😊 Why are these things so ?The answer is simple. **Man is always trying to make external changes without first making internal ones.**

Man is a three-in-one being – he is a spirit with a soul who lives inside a body – and all these three realms in him have a bearing on his overall performance. The internals have to be mastered for anything to manifest on the physical. **It is man's quest to work independently of His Creator that causes these internal barriers to hinder him.**

The 5 factors that affects all the plans of man

A study of our manufacturer's manual [the Bible] reveals the following internal factors have to be taken into account by man before his best laid plans prosper ;

1. The Will

a. Lack of Will Alignment between the will of man and that of His Creator

i. SOLUTION

1. *Mar_3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*
2. *Joh_4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*

2. The Original man – inherent human self-centeredness

a. Lack of crucified self

i. SOLUTION

1. - *Luk_9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

3. The Flesh and it's carnal tendencies

a. Lack of a mortified flesh

i. *SOLUTION*

1. *Rom_8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

4. Imbalance in the triune man

a. **Lack of poise and balance between spirit , soul and body.**

i. *SOLUTION*

1. *Eph 4:22-24 So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.*

5. Indiscipline

a. **No desire to perfect what is required to perform**

i. *SOLUTION*

1. *Rom 12:2 - Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.*

So, before we tap into all GOD has for us in a new year or season, we have to first plan how to manage the above [internal] barriers. **To start focussing on external hinderances , like the economy, “my enemies” , satanic resistance etc and then confronting using human efforts may lead to mixed results – because even spiritual-enemies first search-out our internal weaknesses before they return fire. We are as strong as our weakest link.** So, to make some progress in our best-laid-plans, we have to ask our Creator to help us manage the 5 factors above through the following ;

A. Removing our blockages – These are the inherent barriers within us which hinder us from attaining a higher level of spirituality. Involves a

shut-down of the physical to attune the spirit to see, hear and discern clearly – **this is best achieved through a FAST**

- B. **Escaping our distractions** - By going away from external and internal distractions to be alone with our Creator so that you can be divinely-serviced for optimum performance. This involves bringing yourself to His Workshop and being still enough for the Mechanic of Life to change all the spark plugs needed to kick-start the next phase of your journey - **this is called a RETREAT**
- C. **Planning according to His Blueprint** - This is incorporating GOD as your thinking-partner to review the past and chart the best way forward, with the expectation that your plans are the Plans He had for you. **Commonly known as GOAL-SETTING OR ANNUAL-PLANNING.**

THE THREE R'S OF DIVINE-PLANNING. TAPPING INTO GOD'S BLUEPRINT

Imagine a modern self-driving car trying to navigate itself through the city without a connection to the manufacturer's satellite-monitoring system. The accidents will be numerous if not tragic. Thankfully our Creator has not left us to drive alone through the highway of life. He has availed a LIFE-MANUAL with Guidance on how we can work in partnership to remove the barriers mentioned in A,B and C above, and tap into His divine- blueprint. For the purposes of this teaching, we shall refer to fasting as REFRESHING, and goal-setting as REFLECTING , retreating as RETREAT and call them **the THREE R's OF DIVINE-PLANNING.**

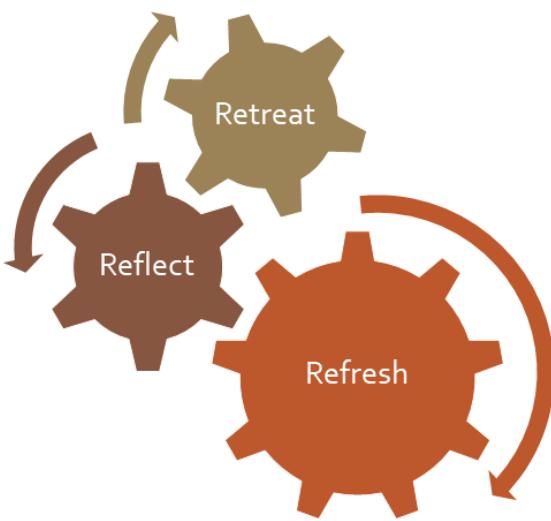
Many people have never seen the benefit or importance of planning or goal-setting because it has not been presented to them along these three R's. So, they get weary of yearly planning or writing new year resolutions. But these R's can be seen as going back to the SOURCE to be REPLENISHED

These three are not necessarily to be done in one session, even though one can do that if they have mastered them to some extent with some previous experience.

In order to bring out the value of each R, I will approach the three as separate exercises.

For those who do not like analogies, like the one I have used above of a vehicle ; I will give a formal definition of each R as follows..

THREE WAYS TO INCLUDE THE DIVINE PLANNER IN YOUR YEAR



• For the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel has said; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:
• Isaiah 30:15

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- *RETREAT - To retire from any position or place ; To withdraw to a private abode or to any secluded situation.. To retire to a place of safety or security;; To move back to a place before occupied; To retire from an enemy or from any advanced position*
- *REFLECT - To throw or turn back the thoughts upon the past operations of the mind or upon past events. “We reflect with pleasure on a generous or heroic action; we reflect with pain on our follies and vices; we reflect on our former thoughts, meditations and opinions.”*
- *REFRESH – give new strength or energy to; reinvigorate.*
 - **WEBSTER DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH-1828.**

We will review all the three R above by dividing this teaching into three sections.

1. Part 1 – RETREAT - How to Profit from your Retreat

2. Part 2 – REFLECT - How to Review the way forward

3. Part 3 – REFRESH - How to profit from your Fast

PART 1

RETREATING

I wait for the
LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for
the LORD more than
watchmen for the
morning, more
than watchmen for
the morning.

PSALM 130:5-6

Guideposts

HOW TO PROFIT FROM YOUR RETREAT

The Lord GOD complained about his children to Prophet Isaiah saying I called you to come to me promising “*...this is a place for comfort. This is a place of rest for those who are tired. But they weren't willing to listen... In returning and rest you shall be saved; and in quietness and hope shall be your strength. And you were not willing.* ”. Isa_28:12 , 30:15.

The same call has never stopped as in the New Testament JESUS continued the same clarion call saying “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Mat 11:28-30.

The Promised Land of Canaan was prepared as a rest for the Israelites after 430 years of slavery but unbelief and rebellion hindered them from entering that Rest even though it was made ready and finished before the foundation of the world – Heb 4:3,10. This means that **earthly retreats are a prophetic picture of the Eternal Rest that GOD will eventually give to all His saints when we reach Heaven and rest from all our labours.** This is why Apostle Paul wrote that “*...the opportunity is still there for some to enter and enjoy God's rest. But those who first heard the good news about it did not enter, because they did not obey. So, God planned another special day. It is called "today."* Heb 4:6-7

So, to go on a Retreat is to seek the bliss of Heavenly vitalities while still on Earth and through that Communion download virtues that you need for life and godliness – 2 Pet 1:3. God desires to bring heaven on earth as He offered in Deu_11:21 that “*...your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.*”

Before the retreat

Before you embark on a retreat , prepare yourself days ahead as follows

- i. Preparatory Prayers
 - a. Pray for guidance on the duration and the venue
 - b. Pray for an Open ❤️ heart and a broken and a contrite spirit
 - c. Pray for a Hearing ear 🎧 and a seeing eye
 - d. Pray for a divine encounter and visitation
- ii. A journal to capture what you download

- iii. Bible Concordance with references to Presence, Meditation, Nature etc
- iv. Holy communion elements – juice and bread – especially if not whole .

You will notice I did not make any mention of your plans or Goals because in a Retreat you expect to be guided by GOD completely without any input from yourself. This applies when one is doing a Retreat on its own without any goal-setting or fasting which could already have been done earlier or is planned for later.

The three conditions a retreat location should fulfil

Ask your local Pastor or faith group to share a natural environment brimming with God's creation which fulfils these criteria of 3A

1. Away
2. Alone
3. Apart

Ideally, it should be a non-commercial venue location away from the hustle and bustle of modern-life . Such is what JESUS always sort as we see in Mat_14:23 that when *he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.*

The 5 spiritual goals of your retreat

1. Recharge – the fastest way to a fully-charged smartphone is to switch it off
2. Reflection – see the section on REFLECTION on “what would JESUS do”
3. Reconnect – getting the creature plugged in and “paired” to the Creator
4. Remove old – shedding the old [files] to make way [space] for the new [apps]
5. Relearn new – download the latest updates from the Creator

The central truth to hold in a retreat

“God is everywhere - He is within me and without . By my spirit, I can connect with Him through His Holy-spirit present within and through His Creation without”.

During a retreat

One should have an expectation during a Retreat as promised in Isa_40:31 that “*...those who wait on Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not*

faint.” Did not the Psalmist say “...return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee - Psa 116:7.

The seven major activities in a retreat

1. Silence
2. Listen
3. Journaling
4. Praying in the Spirit
5. Communication with God – especially after taking Holy Communion
6. Reading set portions of scripture which lend to goodly mediation like Isaiah 53, Psalm 23 , Isaiah 58 or the Colossians 1 & 2 , Hebrews 9 & 10
7. Pray for help to overcome the 5 factors that affects all the plans of man – as earlier listed

After the retreat

As mentioned earlier, there should be EXPECTATION – it could be a VISITATION, a RENEWAL or any form of ENOUNTER which your spirit will pick and feel that indeed you have contacted another realm. I use the word encounter/visitation lightly , as I do not want to raise the expectation to be a physical encounter with spiritual beings visible to the natural eyes , but any heightened level of spiritual awareness or knowing of what you ought to do ,think or change. It may also not be anything actionable in human terms but just a feeling of relief, as stated in Isa 32:17 that “*the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever*”. In this one verse both the short-term and long-term benefits are covered.

The immediate short-term effect is PEACE while the long-term effect is RIGHTEOUSNESS, QUIETNESS and ASSURANCE. Both of these effects carry a lot of meaning which would take another article to thrash- out but for our purposes I shall list them briefly as follows :

Short-term outcomes/benefits of a retreat

1. ALL the 5 R listed above as “goals of a retreat” achieved
2. Harmony - Poise and balance between our body Soul and spirit
3. Endued with godly zest for life and purpose
4. Connection into The Secret Place of the Most High
5. An openness for a closer-walk and fellowship with Holy spirit

Long-term outcomes/benefits of a retreat

1. A life filled with godly Beauty, Power and Grace

2. Clarity in direction or decision making
3. Assurance of God's will for your life, ministry, career, family etc
4. The five factors listed earlier - A Crucified self, A Mortified flesh etc
5. An ordered life – “perfect order” in the affairs of life
6. Wholeness – complete soundness in physical and spiritual health

This is not a complete list but a general-guide as your Maker works on us individually

Why a retreat never ends

As mentioned already, God's desire is to recreate the days of heaven on earth for the pilgrim-man journeying through life -Duet 11:21 . As far as GOD is concerned, **a getaway Retreat is an opportunity to extend the loss of Garden of Eden experience, where He used to come in the cool of the day to hang-out with His children. To achieve this desire GOD ordained one day of the week to catch-up with man regularly - and that is the Sabbath-Day.**

God taught how this Sabbath-Rest should be done when he taught the Israelites that while fasting "*... if you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honor it by not traveling, working, or talking idly on that day, then you will find the joy that comes from serving me. I will make you honored all over the world, and you will enjoy the land I gave to your ancestor, Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken.*" Isa 58:14

The above true meaning of the Sabbath is still not understood nor practiced, that is why JESUS admonished the Pharisees who legalised and weaponised the Sabbath that "*...the Sabbath was made for the good of human beings; they were not made for the Sabbath*" Mar 2:27.

God foresaw that man would always be on the run and never arriving so He created the Sabbath for the pilgrim-man to recharge the BATTERIES OF LIFE. This thought extends even to His Creation when He commanded the Jews to let the Land rest from planting once after every SEVEN years.

He extended it further to be after SEVEN times SEVEN years called THE YEAR OF JUBILEE where man got rest with the cancellation of debts and contracts, so as to restore ALL creation back to the ORIGINAL HEAVENLY FACTORY SETTINGS. JESUS made this JUBILEE -REST part of His Mission Statement

when he declared that He had come to *proclaim the year of Adonai's favor* - *Luk 4:19* . For more on the JUBILEE , click [here for a detailed teaching](#).

EVERY Sunday-Sabbath is man's opportunity to catch a glimpse of Heaven to fuel his pilgrimage on earth. What a great promise to those who Retreat every week on Sunday after church-service.

Your God looks forward to the Sabbath more than you do 😊

PART 2

REFLECTION



PLANNING FOR GOAL-SETTING

Many when planning goals, focus on what they don't have as of today, without reflecting on the bigger picture of where they need to go. Even those with the bigger picture do not review how far they have come, compared to how much more ground they need to cover. **The thinking is that since it's a new year let us make "new year resolutions".** So most goal-setting tends to be materially driven but divided into financial, career , family. health goals etc with little or no thought of spiritual ambitions.

These other goals usually take precedence over Spiritual goals , which should not be the case because the LIFE-MANUAL, the Bible, says that it is GOD who *by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of* - Eph 3:20. How come we do not leverage *the unlimited greatness of his power as it works with might and strength for us, the believers.* Eph 1:19 ??

The answer is that Christians have been side-tracked by worldly definitions of success and have lost sight of the unfair advantage the Spirit of God gives them.

Which goals should I set first ?

Man has many goals and a quick web search will reveal at least 7 different goals that people set annually as follows

1. Spiritual Goals. ...
2. Financial Goals. ...
3. Career Goals. ...
4. Intellectual Goals. ...
5. Fitness Goals. ...
6. Family Goals. ...
7. Social Goals.

Many believe that it does not matter which goals we set first or last because we have different aspects of our lives. Others say we only need to focus on the 3 most important goals of life and then the rest will fall in place. Many bookshops are now selling 2023 YEARLY-PLANNERS which encourage monthly, weekly, and daily goal-setting. Then there are other 5-year goal-setting templates, which I am not sure whether to call a short or long-term. Bear in mind that these are personal-goal plans, we have not even touched on setting goals for the business or organization. All the above sounds very logical until we see what the Bible

says about this kind of segmented goal-setting. GOD has a different plan from all the methods above, and that is the reason for this

This is God's method of Goal-setting

GOD'S WAY OF SETTING AND ACHIEVING LIFE GOALS IS IN ONE SENTENCE - not more than 18 words. This short verse which captures God's goal-setting formulae simply states that “.... *I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth....*” 3 Jn 1:2. That's it. It means goals should be wholistically driven from within us – leveraged from a soul/spiritual point-of-reference in order to impact other areas.

Man looks up to his external [environment for reference on how] to change/improve his lot, while GOD waits for the internals to change before the environment can change. Man has not understood that “he is a god” made in the image of GOD and that if he aligns himself to the CREATOR-GOD then CREATION will naturally change because he was given dominion over it.

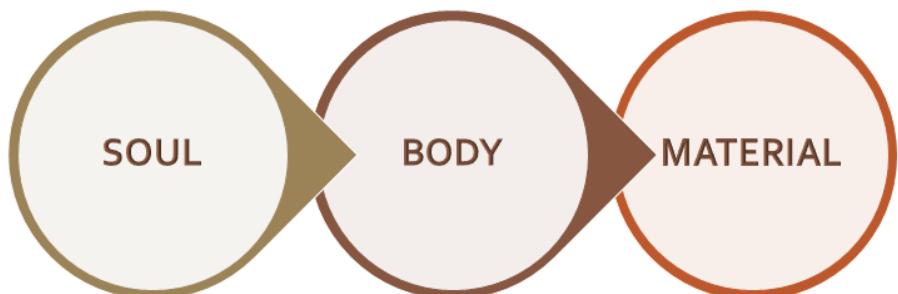
This is why it is written that “...*the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God*” Rom 8:19. Creation is waiting to obey the sons of GOD yet they are busy looking externally at created-things to set LIFE-GOALS. Man was warned of this danger when JESUS reminded us that “*I have said, You are gods; and all of you sons of the Most High. But you shall die like men*” Psa 82:7. **If man recognises that he is one whole complete creature made in the image of GOD from within, then he will focus first on internal goals.** This means the sons of GOD have to get their will aligned to the WILL OF GOD before he can prosper within and without.

This is why Apostle John in 3Jn 1:2 started by addressing his dear friend that “**I know that you are doing well spiritually. So, I pray that everything else is going well with you and that you are enjoying good health.**”. The assumption was that he was already spiritually-well, and that the inner success in his SPIRITUAL GOALS would be the springboard to launch into PHYSICAL and MATERIAL wealth. They understood that it is the spiritual prosperity that fuels all other prosperity.

THE DIVINE ORDER OF PROSPERITY

3Jn 1:2

Dear friend, I know that you are spiritually well. I pray that you're doing well in every other way and that you're healthy.



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GIGO – Is it GOD-in.. GOD-out ? Or Garbage in ..Garbage out

What we put in, usually finds its way out. And man is peculiar because GOD was the first to put something in him from the onset , as we see written that “... *there is in humans a Spirit, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding.* Job 32:8.

The internal-first concept is understood in farming and manufacturing , where great care is given to “inputs” so that the “outputs” can be good. The quality of raw materials and ingredients determine the quality of the final product. Jesus actually touched on this when he said "...*to have good fruit you must have a healthy tree; if you have a poor tree, you will have bad fruit. A tree is known by the kind of fruit it bears. You snakes—how can you say good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good person brings good things out of a treasure of good things; a bad person brings bad things out of a treasure of bad things.* Mat 12:33-35

If GOD was the first “input” in our lives then we should seek to leverage the GOD-NESS in us to make external changes. That’s the principle of

GIGO – God in...GOD out. This means that **GOD changes you internally before answering you eternally**

No wonder when Apostle Paul prayed for someone he started with internals like when he wrote, “*... I pray that GOD would give you, according to his glorious riches, strength in your inner being and power through his Spirit...*” - Eph 3:16

Wholistic goal-setting versus Segmented Goal-setting

The above divine order of 3 John 2 is wholistic in its approach and leverages goals from the inside-out and not externally which tends to be comparative and/or self-driven. It is based on the truth that the internal condition of the Spirit and Soul determines the external state of material and physical prosperity. And it is true to the fact that man in his constitution is **one being - with one-spirit , one-soul and lives in one- body. He is already wholistic by design and should be able to have one solution that caters for all his financial goals, career goals, physical goals etc**

The Segmented goal-setting approach causes us to set “catch-up” goals according to what the world presents to us as “success” . This then breeds a materialistic ambition of always “*comparing ourselves with the John’s*” and then writing-up prayer points of “*give me ,give me, give me, my name is Jimmy*”.

This cycle continues annually as the person ends up complaining and commanding God to fulfill them without true-knowledge. **God desires his creature to be whole and complete within first so that any external reward does not change or draw him away. The same way a parent waits for his child to mature first before buying them some quality-gifts.**

The danger of external materialistic goal-setting

Imagine someone preparing for a long drive to his rural home but instead of servicing his car to ensure that the oil, shock-absorbers, brakes etc are okay , he spends most of his time checking the best route with the best view.

What will the best route with the greatest scenery profit him if his car cannot even make the whole journey ? **But this is exactly what people do when they set goals based on externals; they ignore the internals required to make the whole journey.**

We should focus on the ENGINE OF OUR SPIRIT - this is the reason why JESUS said “..what gives life is God's Spirit; human power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you bring God's life-giving Spirit ..” - Joh 6:63. **This is contrary to the belief that PHYSICAL FITNESS births health and long-life.**

**For all who
are led by the
Spirit of God
are sons of God.**

ROMANS 8:14

Guideposts

In fact, this was echoed by Apostle Paul when he wrote “...physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for the present and for the future. This is a true saying, to be completely accepted and believed. 1Ti 4:8-9.

For those who goals are driven only by FINANCIAL PROSPERITY , Apostle Paul cautions against THE LOVE OF MONEY when he says “..*devotion to God is, in fact, a way for people to be very rich, but only if it makes them satisfied with what they have. When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. People who want to be rich bring temptations to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them. These things ruin and destroy people. The love of money causes all kinds of evil. Some people have turned away from what we believe because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves a lot of pain and sorrow..*” . 1Ti 6:6-10

Most goal-setting is based on self-preservation to “live a decent life” or to have the “finer things of life”, but this again was addressed by JESUS the day after he had fed thousands. He warned the people who tracked Him down that you are following me because of the food you ate yesterday but “ *earthly food spoils and ruins. So don't work to get that kind of food. But work to get the food that stays good and gives you eternal life. The Son of Man will give you that food. He is the only one qualified by God the Father to give it to you.*”

This was echoed centuries earlier when GOD said, "*Come, everyone who is thirsty—here is water! Come, you that have no money—buy grain and eat! Come! Buy wine and milk—it will cost you nothing! Why spend money on what does not satisfy? Why spend your wages and still be hungry? Listen to me and do what I say, and you will enjoy the best food of all.* Isa 55:1-2

Start by reviewing your current fruit - Spiritual Character

The world's ways are outside-in , but God's ways are inside-out. JESUS taught this to the Pharisees when He said "...the [physical]washing you Pharisees do is like cleaning only the outside of a cup or a dish. But what is inside you? You want only to cheat and hurt people. You are foolish! The same one who made what is outside also made what is inside. So, pay attention to what is inside. Give to the people who need help. Then you will be fully clean. Luke 11:39-41.

In short, JESUS was saying their quest for outer cleanliness is misguided as the inner cleansing done by LOVING and GIVING cleanses much better and makes one WHOLE within and without King David while repenting taught us that GOD is "... pleased with truth in the inner person, and He will teach me wisdom in my innermost parts" - Psa 51:6

To correct the fruit, we first have a look at the root. So, to start on our path to soul prosperity we check on our current "character". We have heard preachers say "talent can take you up but it is only character that will keep you up ". **To perform a CHARACTER REVIEW OF OUR LIFE we need a perfect character to benchmark with as a point of reference.** The Person of great character, whom we should all be striving to emulate, is none other than JESUS CHRIST Himself. Apostle Paul taught of this in Heb 3:1 when he said "...brothers and sisters, you are holy partners in a heavenly calling. So, look carefully at Jesus, the apostle and chief priest about whom we make our declaration of faith.

The Lord says He will "...keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is trustfully stayed on Him" Isa 26:3. This verse already sets apart the way a Christian prepares for his goal-setting compared to the way a non-Christian does – his reflection is "stayed on Him". The Christian is driven to improve his lot by benchmarking with the Heavenly Standards role-modelled by The Christ. He strives to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesusby considering the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Php_3:14, Heb_3:1

What would Jesus do ? What would he have done in 2022 ...?

Prophet Haggai in 1:5 brought a message from GOD saying “..now therefore thus saith the *LORD* of hosts; Consider your ways...” You perform your character review by asking yourself , if Jesus was in the same relation and circumstances that I was in today/last week/quarter/month/year, what would he have done with regard to

- 1. Life in general**
- 2. Family and loved ones**
- 3. Friends and relatives**
- 4. Colleagues and Acquaintances**
- 5. Spiritual work or ministry**
- 6. Sharing and caring – giving, helpfulness etc**
- 7. Personal Holiness /sanctification**
- 8. This Nation, its leaders, peoples and laws**

An honest appraisal of the above will give a window into the STATE OF YOUR SOUL and provide a good picture of whether your spirit/soul is prospering , as far as your Creator is concerned. **This is contrary to the world's ways of expecting external change without any internal change; and setting external goals while ignoring the internal fundamentals which actually drive them.**

There are only three factors that drive internal success

The internal-success-fundamentals that drive success in CREATION and in the CREATURE are only three namely – LOVE, FAITH and HOPE. These three are eternal values which will never end as it is written “...so these three things remain: faith, hope, and love. But the best one of these is love. 1Co 13:13

The best of these is love because GOD IS LOVE , it is the LOVE life of God in you which fuels prosperity for us. To ignore the internals-first approach is to allow weeds and rocks to grow into our soul and choke the LOVE-LIFE OF GOD that is in you. A shortfall in this will cause a GOD-LOVE-DEFECIT in our life, relationships, goals and ambitions. A correction of this deficit will ensure the soul-prosperity required to succeed. In fact , it is the correction of this deficit which caused GOD to send JESUS-CHRIST to us in the first place. If we use this approach the Bible says GOD will remember *your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope*

in our Lord Jesus Christ -1Th_1:3. So we "...must put on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet." - 1Th_5:8



This is why the Bible sets a high premium on us to “ walk in Love”, “ forgive all” , “love our enemies” , “judge-not” , “share and give” and all other “difficult to obey” commandments. Even for those who insist that ONLY their faith will see them through, the same bible states that **“faith works through love” – Gal 5:6**

All our LOVE acts above are actually the “seeds of life” that water our physical , mental and financial prosperity and brings to life God’s wish that you mayest

prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth - 3Jn 1:2. With this knowledge I would request that you peruse again the CHARACTER-REVIEW LIST above and score yourself. Feel free to contact me for guidance.

How JESUS does a CHARACTER REVIEW

JESUS did a Character review of 7 pastors and their congregations in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Book of Revelation. He started by first giving them an appraisal of the STATE OF THE SOUL before giving them the areas to improve upon. There are 7 pastor-appraisals in total but for our purposes I will use these two ;

1. *Rev 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience,... Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*
2. *Rev 2:19 I know your works and love and service and faith and your patience, and your works;*

JESUS asked the two churches above to improve as follows

1. *Rev 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works*
2. *Rev 2:25-26 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:*

Jesus did a character-review and gave guidance on improvements based on internal soul-prosperity first

The Holy-Spirit is the secret of goal-setting and achievement

At this stage many ask how do I get LOVE, if LOVE is the principle of godly-success. The answer is in asking LOVE to give you LOVE – remember GOD is LOVE. JESUS asked in Luk 11:13 “...if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? LOVE is the good thing GOD gives you of Himself by giving you His Holy-Spirit.

Rather than give you things, GOD would rather give you His Spirit. It is through that Spirit that you will be able to get things. You will notice that some of the characteristics listed by JESUS above in His Appraisal are part of the 9 FRUITS OF THE HOLY-SPIRIT namely *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control* - Gal 5:22-23

LOVE is the first fruit-gift mentioned above because all divine-planning is leveraged from it. Since the main deficit of ALL prosperity is lack of LOVE, JESUS helps us to acquire it by giving us the GIFT OF THE HOLY-SPIRIT . This Holy spirit breeds in us the nine FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT and these EMPOWER us to get all other “things” that we may require physically or materially after being spiritually-awakened.

Outlining your new year/season resolutions

Once you have done your CHARACTER-REVIEW conduct an honest appraisal of your life by listing how the issues highlighted can be improved, faults eradicated, lost opportunities reclaimed, sins and omissions avoided. Once this is done , you can then present them to GOD in prayer to help your Character improve and start the journey of your soul prospering

This approach is partnering with GOD or in Bible language “co-labouring” with GOD”. In so doing, we should not hold back any known weakness , sickness or infirmities hindering our growth – whether it is our Age, lack of love faith, hope, etc. **Hand ALL positives and negatives over to the One who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, so that he can exchange them with his Resurrected Life of Youth , Love , Beauty , Grace and Power.**

All Christians should take advantage of the truth that JESUS came in the flesh and is now a triumphant personal Friend willing to carry away our load. In the

place of prayer, SHARE ALL your Review and Action-points with Him because He carries the whole year in His Hands. Remember to ask Him for help to overcome the 5 factors that affect all the plans of man, listed earlier

PART 3

REFRESH

Set a guard
over my mouth,
O LORD; keep
watch over the
door of my lips.

PSALM 141:3

Guideposts

PLANNING YOUR FAST

JESUS complained about his generation saying “*...these people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them...*”

Mat_13:15

JESUS above is listing the hinderances and blockages which prevent conversion and healing , a grave situation which prevents man from helping himself to receive from His Maker. How can this be solved ?

Welcome to the mystery of Fasting.

Fasting restores us back to Heavenly-Factory-settings

The CREATOR-GOD is Spirit and those who want to worship Him must do so in spirit and truth. Man is flesh and those who relate to man must do so through the five senses. For this reason, man tends to be carnal and breeds inherent barriers within that hinder him from attaining a higher level of spirituality because he lives by the senses.

The triune-man needs to be reconfigured and then REFRESHED so that he is spirit-led and the flesh brought under. This involves a shut-down of the physical to attune the spirit to see, hear and discern.

If God is spirit and man is flesh, and the two do not share any common language, how will man hear from God ? Their BLUETOOTH SETTINGS need to be paired and this alignment is brought about through Fasting. Fasting deletes all files in man that block his optimum performance. Think about an analogue device being converted to smartphone , or a computer changing its Operating System from WINDOWS 10 to WINDOWS 11. When this is done the device gets a new life and the performance is improved.

Fasting gives the triune-man a new lease of life , such that even the face looks refreshed.

Of all the three R's we have studied, FASTING is the most effective in overcoming the 5 factors that affects all the plans of man – see the 5 listed in earlier pages.

10 of the most frequently asked questions on Fasting

My research on Biblical fasting reveals that these ten are the most asked questions regarding fasting.

- 1. What is the meaning of Fasting ?**
- 2. How do you pray when fasting?**
- 3. What are the spiritual benefits of fasting**
- 4. Is prayer and fasting powerful enough to bring breakthrough**
- 5. Does the number of days or hours matter in a fast**
- 6. Why does it matter if I do Daniels, water or dry fasting ?**
- 7. What should I do before and during a fast**
- 8. What things should I avoid when praying and fasting**
- 9. Which Bible scriptures and verses are specific to Fasting**
- 10.What results should I expect after fasting**

Get you free eBook on Fasting

In order not to make a long article even longer, I would rather the details of Fasting be downloaded separately by those interested in more details.

In this E-Book titled WHICH FAST SHOULD I FAST , I will be covering all the above questions to some degree under the following headlines



- i. Fasting is not a stand-alone exercise
- ii.Why is Fasting necessary?
- iii. Does fasting move God?
- iv. God's Chosen Fast
- v.The purpose of God's Chosen Fast
- vi.Prayer from God's Chosen Fast
- vii. Results of the Chosen Fast
- viii. Jesus' teaching on fasting
- ix.Who practiced God's Chosen Fast
- x. Side-benefits of Fasting
- xi.Spiritual exercises during the Fast
- xii.Using the Power Circle in a Fast
- xiii. Holy Communion and Fasting

Click [here](#) to download the booklet and let me know your feedback.

HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

The wisest man who lived before JESUS concluded his life teaching with the words “...hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecc 12: 13-14

I would like to conclude this teaching by saying whatever method you are using to plan your life , remember the FIVE factors which impact all of man's plans and ask your Friend JESUS for help. We have discussed the factors below already, so the best action to take to conclude the whole matter is to turn the SOLUTION listed below into prayer points.

1. The Will

a. Lack of Will Alignment between the will of man and that of His Creator

i. SOLUTION

1. *Mar_3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*
2. *Joh_4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*

2. The Original man – inherent human self-centeredness

a. Lack of crucified self

i. SOLUTION

1. - *Luk_9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

3. The Flesh

a. Lack of a mortified flesh

i. SOLUTION

1. *Rom_8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

4. Imbalance in the triune man

a. Lack of poise and balance between spirit , soul and body.

i. SOLUTION

1. *Eph 4:22-24 So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.*

5. Indiscipline

a. No desire to perfect the will required to excel

i. SOLUTION

1. *Rom 12:2 - Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.*

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