

Be Better. Aim Higher.

John Cole / General

The Journey, Becoming a Disciple / Spiritual growth; Sanctification / Matthew 5:17-48

Jesus describes here a level of living none of us can keep, and that is what is so beautiful about it. If anyone could attain this ethic, we would be looking to them as our standard. Because no one can be this good, our aim must be higher than the height of those around us.

› INTRO

10,000 Sermon Illustrations Pursuing Our Goals

Pursuing Our Goals

In a little country community a farmer had a dog who spent part of his time sitting by the side of the highway waiting for big trucks. When the dog saw a large truck coming around the corner, he would get ready and as it passed him, he would take out after it down the road, barking and doing his best to overtake it. One day the farmer's neighbor said, "Sam, do you think that hound of yours is ever going to catch a truck?"

"Well, Bill," Sam replied, "That isn't what worries me. What worries me is what he would do if he caught one."

Many of us in life are like that hound. We give our lives to pursuing goals that would have little value if we did succeed in reaching them.

Just like that dog, we can often find ourselves chasing goals that are not worth pursuing.

It is easy to do this.

Ever find yourself chasing a goal that wasn't worth chasing?

Sometimes we do this because we do not have high enough worthy goals.

Jesus gives His disciples a goal in this passage: to be like Him.

Matthew 5:20 KJV 1900

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“...exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees...”

Matthew 5:19 KJV 1900

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“...whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Vs 22 “But I say unto you...”

Vs 28 “But I say unto you...”

Vs 32 “But I say unto you...”

Vs 34 “But I say unto you...”

Vs 39 “But I say unto you...”

Vs 44 “But I say unto you...”

› PROP

Be More. Aim Higher.

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› TRANS

I want to share with you three lessons we can follow when aiming higher to be like Jesus.

› MESSAGE

10,000 Sermon Illustrations The Goal is to Make Progress Every day

The Goal is to Make Progress Every day

When Pablo Casals reached 95, a young reporter threw him a question: "Mr. Casals, you are 95 and the greatest cellist that ever lived. Why do you still practice six hours a day?" And Mr. Casals answered, "Because I think I'm making progress."

Your goal is to make progress every day of your life.

Dr. Maxwell Maltz, quoted in *Bits & Pieces*, June 24, 1993,

LESSON ONE: WHEN THE GOAL IS ALWAYS HIGHER, IT KEEPS YOU REACHING.

10,000 Sermon Illustrations I Could't See The Goal Post

I Could't See The Goal Post

One time when Michigan State was playing UCLA in football, the score was tied at 14 with only seconds to play. Duffy Daugherty, Michigan State's coach, sent in placekicker Dave Kaiser who booted a field goal that won the game.

When the kicker returned to the bench, Daugherty said, "nice going, but you didn't watch the ball after you kicked it."

"That's right, Coach," Kaiser replied. "I was watching the referee instead to see how he'd signal it. I forgot my contact lenses, and I couldn't see the goal posts."

Bits & Pieces, September 15, 1994, pp. 7-8

LESSON TWO: WHEN THE DIRECTION OF THE GOAL CAN BE SEEN THROUGH OTHERS, IT IS WISE TO LOOK.

10,000 Sermon Illustrations Aim for the Goal

Aim for the Goal

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright once told of an incident that may have seemed insignificant at the time, but had a profound influence on the rest of his life. The winter he was 9, he went walking across a snow-covered field with his reserved, no-nonsense uncle. As the two of them reached the far end of the field, his uncle stopped him. He pointed out his own tracks in the snow, straight and true as an arrow's flight, and then young Frank's tracks meandering all over the field.

"Notice how your tracks wander aimlessly from the fence to the cattle to the woods and back again," his uncle said. "And see how my tracks aim directly to my goal. There is an important lesson in that."

Years later the world-famous architect liked to tell how this experience had greatly contributed to his philosophy in life. "I determined right then," he'd say with a twinkle in his eye, "not to miss most things in life, as my uncle had."

Focus on the Family letter, September, 1992, p. 14

LESSONS THREE: WHEN THE GOAL OF BECOMING LIKE JESUS DOESN'T APPEAR MOST PRODUCTIVE, WALK THERE ANYWAY.

› CONCLUSION

BE BETTER. AIM HIGHER.