
WORKBOOK FOR FAN GOD'S GIFTS INTO FLAME

A Step-by-Step Path to Help Pastors Develop an Annual Growth Plan

"Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress"
(1 Timothy 4:15)

GROW IN GRACE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE #3 (JUNE 2016)

Professor Rich Gurgel, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Package #1: Ordained for a Life of Growth (May 2011)

Package #2: Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage (January 2013)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Getting ready to use this workbook	2
Scheduling and other related Preliminary logistics for using this workbook	2
Organizing the documents generated by the process	5
The four Key Steps in the workbook.....	5
Samples of All Completed Tasks	7
Consecrating the Whole Process by Word and Prayer (1 Timothy 4:5)	7
Key Step #1: Review Your Current Location	9
A. Thank God for the Blessings of the Previous Year	9
B. Consider Life Lessons learned from Last year’s events/blessings	12
Additional ideas resources related to Step #1.....	12
Key Step #2: Reflect on Your Destination	14
A. How Do Your Gifts Impact Your Callings – Positively & Negatively?	14
B. How does Your life-stage impact your perception of your Various Callings?.....	16
C. Evaluate your stewardship in all your callings.....	18
Ideas for receiving feedback from family, lay leaders, and ministry peers	23
D. Consider some possible specific destination ideas as You complete step #2	28
Task #3: Resolve to Follow a Preferred Route	29
A. Gathering of Potential Goals for This Year.....	29
B. Preparing to develop wise goals	31
C. setting your goals for this year	34
D. Finishing Off Step #3	39
Additional resources related to Step #3	39
Step #4: Revise Your Route as Necessary	41
A. Plan Your first action step for each goal	41
B. Pur Your first action steps into Your Calendar for each goal.....	42
C. Develop a regular routine for reviewing your goals	42
D. Enlist Encouragers for when the trip seems long!	43
E. Final Key reminders as you journey on the way	45
Additional resources related to Step #4	46
Closing Encouragement	47
Appendix A: Devotional Ideas (Sample Fits June 24 and/or 25).....	48

Appendix B: OPTional Activity – the 40th Anniverary Exercise 50
 Blessed to Be A Blessings as God’s Masks: Thinking Ahead to Celebrating 40 Years 50
Appendix C: Samples of completed charts/forms from this workbook..... 52
 Samples of Completed Tasks from Step #1: Review Your Current Location 52
 Samples of Completed Tasks from Step #2: Reflect on your Destination 54
 Samples of Completed Tasks from Step #3: Resolve to Follow a Preferred Route 58

INTRODUCTION

God has doubly blessed each of you using this workbook.¹ His life-giving grace in Christ called and brought you to faith, thereby putting you into his family (Galatians 3:26). Then, grace upon grace, he called you, a jar of clay (2 Corinthians 4), to be his representative, his mask, to the world. This privilege of being God's masks to his world is lived out in multiple callings both in your royal priestly callings (spouse, parent, friend, citizen of your country)² and in your calling into public ministry. In this way, in his renewing grace in Christ, God has restored to us the dual purpose of the original gift of his image. First, we are restored in Jesus both into a dearly loved fellowship with our Creator (the vertical dimension of the image). And by that we are also simultaneously restored by his grace back into purposeful service as his agents in the world (the horizontal dimension of the image)! Indeed, in all of this Christ is making all things new in preparation for the final fulfillment of the new creation in the new heavens and new earth!

In addition to pouring into each of us the gospel that gives jars of clay their restored value as redeemed creatures of our Creator, Christ also carefully measured into each of our lives (Ephesians 4:7) a unique set of traits, gifts, and strengths to enable us to live out all the specific callings in life in which he planned in advance to use us (Ephesians 2:10).

That invites a key question for each of us to ponder regularly under the shadow of his cross and in the light of his empty tomb. "How am I doing in fanning into flame (2 Timothy 1:6) those God-given traits, gifts, and strengths so that I may be the clearest glimpse of my Savior in all my God-given callings?" The answer to that question can have a significant impact on all our God-given callings as God's masks.

While "our God is in heaven [and] he does whatever pleases him" (Psalm 115:3), it is typically through his masks that God delights to carry out his good and gracious on earth. We are not theological fatalists who fail to recognize that God has so ordained that our lives matter. That means, under grace and strengthened by his grace, God has determined that how we grow in using our gifts in all our callings does matter. That brings us back to that question: "In what way am I fanning into flame my God-given gifts and strengths in the callings he has given me?"

All of us are different, with different talents, personalities, backgrounds, and characteristics. What we choose to do with our lives and the ways in which our life plays out will certainly be influenced by

¹ This workbook is the second part of a two-part package to assist called workers in planning for growth. The first part is an essay under the same name which offers a more in-depth look into the theological rationale behind why a called worker might find profit in making use of a workbook such as this. The user of this workbook is encouraged to read that essay before embarking on the use of this workbook since only briefer references will be made in this workbook to that rationale.

² This workbook will often refer to our "royal priestly callings." That is a shorthand way of trying to differentiate between our calling into the public ministry as compared to our other callings as God's representatives. While the scriptural doctrine of vocation assures us that all callings from God are high and holy, whether in public ministry or in the other venues in which we serve him, this workbook realizes that in planning for growth it can be helpful to make the distinction between growth that more directly impacts our public ministry and growth that more directly impacts our other callings. That means that when this document speaks of our "royal priestly callings," it is thinking, for example, about our other callings in our homes and families (spouse, parent, sibling,) in our church (congregational member, member of the ministerium, member of the synod, etc.), and in our community (friend, neighbor, citizen of a country). Using "callings" just a bit more broadly, this document will also include under "royal priestly callings" being wise stewards of gifts of God such as our physical health (diet, exercise, rest, etc.).

these elements which are beyond our control. However, two other elements, both within our control, also influence the trajectory of our lives. They are

1. what we choose to value and make important in our lives.
2. what we choose to do to develop the raw talents, gifts, traits, and resources that have been given to us.

Number one influences number two. But the individual who does nothing toward appropriately and proactively developing those things God has made available to him or her will not be able to fully act on opportunities – even those he or she highly values. (R. Keith Iddings, *Personal Wholeness Portfolio Manual*, Southern Wesleyan University, p. 18)

However, it is important that “developing those things God has made available” to us in all our callings (plural) is done within the context of growth in our primary Calling (singular – our call to faith as a child of God). Since it is God who works in us to will and to do according to his good and gracious will (Philippians 2:13), it is critical to remember that the strength to carry out our growth wisely and well in all our callings is his gift that flows to us from his cross and empty tomb. Setting our growth in all our calling into the gracious context of his all-embracing grace helps to keep our pursuit of growth in our other callings from feeling like some grievous burden offered to a demanding God. Instead, restored to peace with our merciful Father in his eternal Son, his Spirit teaches and reteaches us day by day to recognize growing in our callings for the joyful privilege it is. Such grace focused growth is one way we display the goodness of our God before the world! As we breathe in his grace, we are readied to consider how we are doing in putting that grace to work with every fiber of our being, with all he has given us, in each station in life where he has privileged us to be a mask of Jesus.

For those so dying and rising each day in their baptismal grace, this workbook was designed to offer each of us, gifted and empowered by God’s grace in Christ, a step by step process to plan for growth in our spiritual lives as well as in our royal priestly and public ministry callings. It is the prayer of this author that this workbook might help us, so that, just as Paul once encouraged Timothy, we give evidence day by day of growth in faith and growth in the use of the gifts God has entrusted to us. Why? Such progress brings glory to our gracious God as he uses that progress to bring blessings to eternal souls: ours and the others he privileges our lives to impact in home, church, and world (1 Timothy 4:15-16).

GETTING READY TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Some advanced planning and preparation will assist greatly in getting ready to use this workbook.

SCHEDULING AND OTHER RELATED PRELIMINARY LOGISTICS FOR USING THIS WORKBOOK



Schedule When to Do Your Planning: The workbook is designed to be used by a called worker who has set aside ***a single day*** to devote to planning for growth. Those who wish to do so, could certainly spend more time for such planning or, if desired, spread this “day’s work” out over parts of multiple days.

While the planning steps could be a blessing to a called worker at any time of the year, there are two particular times during the year that many have found useful for planning. The time after Christmas and during the first weeks of the new year is an excellent opportunity to plan. The turning of the calendar almost begs us to ponder the blessings God has given us in the past year and as well as to consider how we might make the most of opportunities for growth God may give in the new year.

There is a second time of year for annual planning that may have much to commend it. Some in public ministry have found it beneficial to set aside time during the summer months when the rhythms of the work at many calling bodies may not be quite as intense as at other times in the year. Some have even sought to use the annual anniversary of their ordination into the ministry as a special day to consider continued growth in faith, in public ministry, and in the other callings God has given. In his book *The Theology of the Cross*, Professor emeritus Daniel Deutschlander suggests using June 24 (The Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist) and/or June 25 (The Feast of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession) as times for annual prayerful reflection on our faithfulness to our calling as shepherds of souls (197). Appendix A of this workbook supplies some devotional ideas for using June 24 or June 25 as planning time.

 **Determine Where to Do Your Planning:** There may be great wisdom in not only blocking out a day on the calendar, but in finding a place away from your regular settings of home and office to work through the steps in this workbook. While true emergencies certainly could change what we have scheduled for planning, there is wisdom in getting away from settings in which we can easily be distracted by other tasks calling (or emailing or texting) for our attention. Going to a nearby coffee shop or library (or another similar place you could have an even greater chance for uninterrupted prayer and pondering) could be well worth the extra time for travel.

Since, just below, you will be encouraged to partner with others, staying close enough to home to meet with them may be important unless you decide to use digital technology to facilitate those meetings.

 **Gather the Support of the Body of Christ for Your Planning:** While much that is in this workbook could be used by a called worker to plan for growth without asking others to help and encourage him, this workbook strongly encourages called workers to seek the support of other spiritually mature members of the body of Christ. Inviting the input of a spouse, trusted lay leader(s), circuit pastor, mentor, coach, or other public ministry peers can be a great blessing.

For those seeking to do their planning on a special day set aside for that purpose, there are three key things to plan ahead of time in order to gain the most from the support of others.

1. Schedule ahead of time to meet with your encouragers either at breakfast or lunch on your planning day;
2. Provide them ahead of time with either the Public Ministry chart and wheel (and its directions) and/or the Royal Priestly chart and wheel (and its directions). That will allow them to give thought to their feedback ahead of time. You would also need to decide whether you will give them “blank” charts/wheels or if you will give them copies of what you have already filled in; and
3. If you plan to provide your partners with filled-out charts/wheels, you would need to work ahead on that element of the workbook before your planning day (Key Step #2, the third part [C]).

Working with a group of pastoral brothers: While much in the workbook needs to be individual work, yet it is possible to make this process a part of some joint work by a study group or pastoral circuit. Working through these materials in planned concert with others serving in public ministry could yield the rich blessing of stronger growth plans being developed and more growth plans being accomplished. It may even yield the additional blessing of stronger growth plans being developed for the corporate agenda of the study group or circuit.

 **Order Any Needed Resources to Assist with Your Planning:** The second step of this workbook's process suggests using at least one new tool each year to help a called worker gain a deeper grasp for how God has uniquely wired them. The initial suggestion, for those who have never used such a tool, would be to purchase **Strengths Finder 2.0** and to take the online inventory that accompanies the book.

For those who choose to use that resource, **well before the selected planning day or time arrives**, order the book, read Part I (introduction through page 31), take the inventory, and begin pondering the specifics of the results. All of that could prove very helpful to the planning process.

For those who have already used **Strengths Finder 2.0**, below are two additional tools/inventories that could also be used to grasp more clearly how God has uniquely wired you.

- **DISC Profile**

- The **DISC** provides those taking this inventory with a personality profile based on each person's unique set of preferences in four dimension:
 - **Decisive** – your preference for problem solving and getting results;
 - **Interactive** – your preference for interacting with others and showing emotion;
 - **Stability** – your preference for pacing, persistence, and steadiness; and
 - **Cautious** – your preference for procedures, standards, and protocols.
- There are multiple places online that offer this inventory for no charge. There may be wisdom in providing an email address that is not your primary email address.
- Because this is such a commonly used profile, there are many resources available online and in print to help those who take the inventory understand the results.
 - One such resource is the book **Understanding How Others Misunderstand You**. In this book authors Ken Voges and Ron Braund go into depth on how to understand one's own DISC profile as well as seeking to understand better those with different DISC profiles with whom you interact in your callings.

- **Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**

- The **MBTI** is a personality inventory that, like the DISC profile, uses four dimensions of personal preferences in an attempt to give us a picture of our personality.
- There are several places online offering this inventory at no charge.
- Each of the four dimensions used by the MBTI places us on a continuum between two opposite poles:
 - Preference for extroversion (E) or introversion (I);
 - Preference for processing information through our external senses (S) or more through internal intuition (N);
 - Preference for reaching conclusions more by objective thinking (T) or by more subjective feeling (F); and
 - Preference for seeing issues as decided and judged (J) or as continuing to need to perceive (P) possible options.
- The MBTI has been around long enough, and used by enough people, that there are many resources available online and in print to help someone evaluate their results.
 - One such print resource is the book **Gifts Differing: Understanding Your Personality Type** by Isabel Briggs Meyers and Peter B. Meyers. The authors offer

helpful background on the MBTI inventory and also seek to provide insight on the results received.

- Another print resource, perhaps even more accessible than the previous, is ***Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, and Intelligence***. This book provides an organized overview of the 16 different personality types tracked by the MBTI.

ORGANIZING THE DOCUMENTS GENERATED BY THE PROCESS

 As you walk step by step through the process this workbook outlines, there is wisdom in preparing a three ring binder or folder in which you will keep the documents you will be creating. Since some documents may be digital (for example, reports from online inventories you may take), creating a file folder on your computer could also be very helpful in making sure all your documents are easily accessible.

Unless you plan to do everything digitally (all planning materials for this package are also available online through the **Grow in Grace** web site - <http://www.wls.wels.net/grow-in-grace/>), be sure to bring along some extra copies of the provided worksheets. That will help to ensure that you don't get stuck running back to your home or office if you are doing your planning at another location.

THE FOUR KEY STEPS IN THE WORKBOOK

The four key steps in the workbook are built around the metaphor of using apps such as Google Maps or Apple Maps or MapQuest to determine a route (and revise that route as needed) to help us complete our journey from our current location to our desired destination. Here are the four steps this workbook will lead us through:

Step #1: **Review** Your Current Location

Just as navigation apps use our current location so as to provide accurate directions to where we want to go, so Step #1 begins with noting our current location. In this planning process accessing our "current location" means pausing to remember how God has blessed us with growth by his grace in the previous year. These blessings come our way in two forms. Some blessings are more easily identifiable as such. Other blessings come more "well disguised" as particular elements of the cross God has asked us to bear as his child and his representatives in each of our various callings.

To help us consider carefully our current situation, Step #1 will ask us to:

- List specific blessings/growth in the past year in each of the areas/callings of our life; and
- Ponder life-lessons God may have been teaching us through all those experiences whether they brought a smile to our face or tears to our eyes.

Step #2: **Reflect** on Your Destination

One cannot make use of navigation apps without also giving the app an intended destination. Step #2 of this process seeks to ponder that destination as we consider growth in our lives. Greater faithfulness to God's purpose for each of us in our callings is that destination. But the specifics of what that looks like will be different for each of us. Even though we all share the most important

calling to faith in Jesus and the common goal of a gracious inheritance in heaven, yet for this life no two of us have the same exact set of other God-given callings. And in preparing us in advance for those unique callings, Christ has measured into our lives unique gifts and strengths.

All of that means that our varied public ministry settings, the gifts/strengths we have been given, the uniqueness of our household situations, as well the particular life-stage in which we find ourselves, all greatly impact the destination (“What will it look like for me to be faithful in all my callings?”). The uniqueness of that destination is one reason no one else can simply hand us a one-size-fits-all set of ready-made goals for growth.

In order to help us think about what our unique destination of faithfulness in our callings might look like, Step #2 will lead us to:

- Analyze our unique individual gifts;
- Consider the help in directing our growth that can come from considering the current life-stage or life situation into which God has placed us;
- Consult with others who can help us look at our faithfulness to our callings with a more objective eye; and
- Ponder what growth in faithfully using those gifts might look like in each of our callings.



Step #3: **Resolve** to Follow a Preferred Route

In navigation apps, once we’ve entered our location and our destination, the next step is to select the preferred route from our current location to our destination. In Step #3, this workbook seeks to help us select wise routes to move from where we are to the greater faithfulness we seek in each of our callings. Part of that means designing specific turn by turn routes we will pursue under God’s blessing that we pray will move us toward the destination of greater faithfulness in each of our callings. While the exact eventual fruit from our actions rests with God, he still calls us to act in a way that takes seriously that his gifts have been given to us for the purpose of fanning them into flame. All this pursuit of growth is done for the benefit of those God has called us to serve as well as the benefit of our own souls.

In order to help us design such growth goals, Step #3 will lead us to:

- Assemble a list of potential goals for our Calling as a child of God, for our calling to public ministry, and for our royal priestly callings;
- Select from that list specific, concrete goals that we pray God will bless for his purposes in our callings;
- Anticipate steps to meet challenges that will inevitably arise to derail us from those goals; and
- Stay connected to how each specific goal we craft contributes to the overarching goal of honoring God as his masks in all our callings.



Step #4: **Revise** Your Route as Necessary

Finally, when using navigation apps, the whole process would be useless unless we actually head out in our vehicles and follow the directions – which includes wisely pondering mid-

course revisions dictated by traffic or road conditions. As the app monitors our progress along our route, ignoring mid-course revisions risks significant delay or even failure in reaching the desired destination.

So too in Step #4 we will consider what it may look like to actively navigate by taking our goals and plugging them into the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual routines and decisions of life. This prepares us regularly to remember our goals, assess progress toward those goals, and choose mid-course corrections as needed (with trusted partners all along the way helping us to see our way clearly). Since God has wisely chosen to hide from us the details of our future, such changes will almost always be needed as we receive from him our daily bread and new strength for each day.

In order to prepare us to assess progress regularly and revise our path accordingly, Step #4 will help us to:

- Build routines into our daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual patterns that will assist us in regularly monitoring how God is blessing our progress toward our goals;
- Enlist the regular support of others in the body of Christ who can encourage us and assist us with making wise mid-course revisions; and
- Celebrate God’s blessings along the path – even when those blessings make their appearance in far different forms than we may have anticipated.

SAMPLES OF ALL COMPLETED TASKS

In Appendix B of this workbook, called workers will find samples of what it might look like when a called worker finishes each chart/table/goal sheet found in the workbook. The samples are not meant in any way to dictate how someone should be answering a question or filling out a table. They are simply meant to give someone working through the steps an idea of what it might look like to complete the specific element of the workbook before him.

CONSECRATING THE WHOLE PROCESS BY WORD AND PRAYER (1 TIMOTHY 4:5)

Behind all our planning there remains the conviction that God’s own gracious plans for us are more important than our plans (Jeremiah 29:11). Behind this planning there is trust that God’s grace will bless our planning even if that is in ways we never anticipated (Proverbs 16:9). All of this reflects the silent, and at times not so silent, prayerful “God willing” (James 4:13-17) that underlies the Christocentric assumptions on which this entire planning process is laid out.

In order to help keep this whole process consecrated by Word and prayer (1 Timothy 4:5), users are encouraged to spend devotional time in Word and prayer as the process begins and to remember to pause throughout whenever they lack wisdom (which “God gives generously to all without finding fault” James 1:5). Even when we are dealing with steps in this process that might typically (as in the earlier quotation in the introduction) be considered in our “control,” we know that it is in God that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). We also know that only God’s grace can enable us “to will and to do according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13). While we are indeed responsible as God’s masks to fan into flame the gifts he gives us for the sake of the gospel, yet

through it all it is still the grace of God in which we boast when progress is evident (1 Corinthians 1:31; Galatians 6:14)! Bathing this whole process in Word and prayer can help us keep our eyes on Christ and the glory of our already secure identity as his redeemed, forgiven, and holy children. Our Savior's activity for us and in us is always far more important than our activity for him.

May God bless your use of these materials! May all the tools of this workbook, as they seek to help us grow in faith and in living out all our callings, prove a blessing to your own soul and the souls God intends your life to impact both for now and eternity!

KEY STEP #1: **REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION**³

 Just as navigation apps use our current location so as to provide accurate directions to where we want to go, so Step #1 begins with noting our current location. In this planning process accessing our “current location” means pausing to remember how God has blessed us with growth by his grace in the previous year. These blessings come in two forms. Some blessings are more easily identifiable as such. Other blessings come more “well disguised” as particular elements of the cross God has asked us to bear as his child and his representatives in our various callings.

To help us consider carefully our current situation, Step #1 will ask us to:

- List specific blessings/growth in the past year in each of the areas/callings of our life; and
- Ponder life-lessons God may have been teaching us through all those experiences whether they brought a smile to our face or tears to our eyes.

A. THANK GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR

It is so easy to get caught up in discouragement, frustration, or anger with what didn’t turn out as planned (or imagined) in the previous year. But as Paul reminds us in Philippians, those who live under the umbrella of God’s grace in Jesus really never have a shortage of things to think about that are “true...noble...right...pure...lovely...admirable...excellent...or praiseworthy” (Philippians 4:8). Even though tears streaming down our cheeks can often make it hard to see this clearly – and it is critical to honestly acknowledge the reality of where sin (ours and others) was evident! – in the final analysis our current location in Jesus always remains one of grace and blessing. Our identity as a loved and redeemed child of God ever since our baptism remains the heart of “the secret of being content in any and every situation” (Philippians 4:12).

Under each heading listed below in the two charts (one for our “royal priestly callings” and the other for “our public ministry calling”) make a list of blessings from the past year – **with an emphasis on growth realized** - for which to give thanks.

Note: As mentioned above, do include among your blessings those that came well-disguised under the cross. Seek to list the blessing you believe God may be seeking to bring to you even in the midst of what otherwise may have brought tears to your eyes and frustration to your heart. While God often chooses to wait until heaven to reveal the “why’s” of particular elements of the cross we carry, it is not wrong to ponder what his always gracious “why’s” may be. Sometimes, of course, the “why” is already obvious as we view God’s activity from behind (Exodus 33).

³ There are two preliminary tasks that would be wise before taking the steps outlined in this workbook.

1. The essay that is the first part of the two-part **Fan God’s Grace into Flame** package provides a theological rationale for planning for growth. The essay seeks to help us avoid some of the pitfalls that accompany planning for growth (as well as the very real pitfalls of **not** planning!).
2. There is even greater wisdom in beginning and sanctifying this whole process with the Word of God and prayer (1 Timothy 4:5). A sample suggestion for how one might organize the devotions around the planning tasks can be found in Appendix A.

STEP #1: REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

Areas Related to Our Royal Priestly Callings	Blessings Received in that Area This Past Year
Spiritual life	
Fitness/health	
Relaxation/recreation	
Finances	
Family relationships	
Close friendships	
Physical environment (home, workplace setting)	

STEP #1: REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

Areas Related to Our Public Ministry Calling	Blessings Received in that Area This Past Year
People skills	
Time management	
Preaching & worship	
Teaching adults & children	
Pastoral care	
Outreach & evangelism	
Equipping the saints /stewardship	
Leadership	

From all the things you listed above, write below the three blessings or areas of growth for which you are most thankful.

List below the three challenges or disappointments from last year in any of your callings for which you are having the most trouble grasping a blessing.

Don't move on until you have spoken a prayer of thanks for the things for which you are most thankful and a prayer for wisdom and patience for where you still struggle to find the blessing.

STEP #1: REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

B. CONSIDER LIFE LESSONS LEARNED FROM LAST YEAR’S EVENTS/BLESSINGS

The questions below are adapted from Michael Hyatt’s course *Five Days to Your Best Year Ever*.

List in this column the two or three major recurring themes from your life this past year.	For each theme listed, note what you believe is the life lesson learned from that theme.

While it is far too early in this process to formulate specific goals for next year, write down here any budding ideas for growth goals suggested by what you have pondered in step #1. (Don’t worry about making these into carefully crafted goals. That time will come later in this process!)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES RELATED TO STEP #1

For three of the steps in this workbook, there will be a listing of additional resources, readings, or ideas that could prove a blessing to those who wish to make use of them.

AN ADDED BONUS OF COMPLETING THIS STEP?

This step of the planning process could help prepare a called worker to fill out a portion of the annual information form requested by the Conference of Presidents. While the form previously only asked for a listing of more “formal” growth activities (such as courses taken for credit or structured workshops attended), that form is in the process of being updated to reflect the many different ways called workers grow. Below are the categories that the new form may list:

Spiritual and Professional Growth Opportunities/Activities

Circuit meetings offered by your pastoral circuit:

Number attended:

Pastoral conferences offered in your conference:

Number attended:

Did you develop a written plan for spiritual and professional growth for last year: Yes No

STEP #1: REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

Did you make and carry out specific plans to use of the support of any of the following as you pursued spiritual and professional growth in the past year (circle all that apply)?

Spouse or other family member
Other ministry peer

Lay leader(s)
Coach/mentor

Circuit pastor
Other (list):

Additional degree completed:

Formal courses completed for credit:

Formal courses audited:

Workshops/seminars attended beyond regular conferences:

Books read for spiritual/professional growth:

Ministry growth projects completed personally or in partnership with ministry peers and/or lay leaders:

Other spiritual/professional growth goals completed this past year:

ANOTHER POTENTIALLY USEFUL RESOURCE RELATED TO STEP #1 (AND STEP #2)

Your Life in Rhythm by Bruce Miller

This book encourages us to move past the usual concept of “balance” in fulfilling our various callings in life and asks us to ponder the beauty of the twin biblical concepts for time: *kairos* (the specific opportunities to seize the current moment that God gives each of us as we pass through specific life stages) and *chronos* (the natural rhythms of life we all experience in the way God has ordered life in days, weeks, months, calendar seasons, and years).

The author does at times create a bit of a straw man by painting a caricature of what people mean by balance. Some of his suggestions may sound a bit too simplistic. However, he does offer significant practical help when it comes to observing what is unique to each stage of our lives as well as helping us to see the beauty of the natural rhythms of life when it comes to carrying out our important God-given responsibilities in a more planned and less hurried manner. We ignore such rhythms – such as the natural daily rhythm of light and darkness – often to our own harm and to the harm of those we serve! We will especially use insights from his book in Step #2.

KEY STEP #2: **REFLECT** ON YOUR DESTINATION



One cannot make use of navigation apps without also giving the app an intended destination.

Step #2 of this process seeks to ponder that destination as we consider growth in our lives.

Greater faithfulness to God's purpose for each of us in our callings is that destination. But the specifics of what that looks like will be different for each of us. Even though we all share the most important calling to faith in Jesus and the common goal of a gracious inheritance in heaven, yet for this life no two of us has the same exact set of other God-given callings. And in preparing us in advance for those unique callings, Christ has measured into our lives unique gifts and strengths.

All of that means that our varied public ministry settings, the gifts/strengths we have been given, the uniqueness of our household situations, as well the particular life-stage in which we find ourselves, all greatly impact the destination ("What will it look like for me to be faithful in all my callings?"). The uniqueness of that destination is one reason no one else can simply hand us a one-size-fits-all set of ready-made goals for growth.

In order to help us think about what our unique destination of faithfulness in our callings might look like, Step #2 will lead us to:

- Analyze our unique individual gifts;
- Consider the help in directing our growth that can come from considering the current life-stage or life situation into which God has placed us;
- Consult with others who can help us look at our faithfulness to our callings with a more objective eye; and
- Ponder what growth in faithfully using those gifts might look like in each of our callings.

A. HOW DO YOUR GIFTS IMPACT YOUR CALLINGS – POSITIVELY & NEGATIVELY?

How Can You Grow in Understanding How God Has Uniquely Gifted and Wired You?

γνώθι σεαυτόν said the ancient Greeks. While an *optional* step in this planning process, it is right here that there could be considerable benefit in utilizing a gift/strength inventory or a personality profile tool to seek a fuller, more objective picture on how God wired/gifted you.

Not one of these tools is, of course, infallible. Not one of them is complex enough to capture all the facets of the unique creation that God in his wisdom designed each of us to be. But these tools can be helpful in providing a potentially useful snapshot of how God has uniquely wired each of us.

As already noted in the introduction to this workbook, for those who may not have tried any such tools in the past, ***Strengths Finder 2.0*** could be a helpful place to start.

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Remember that it is **not** humility to deny that God has gifted you. As Ephesians 4:7 reminds us, Christ is the one who meticulously measured out to each of us just the gifts he intended for us. Humility simply remembers, as we talk about gifts, that they are in fact **gifts** of grace (1 Corinthians 4:7) freely received.

In the chart below, list specific gifts you believe God has given you. For each gift, consider how that particular gift is a blessing for your various callings in life. Then, because our sinful nature can distort any gift into an unfortunate “shadow” of itself, consider also how we might turn that strength into a weakness.

A gift that Christ has graciously given me is...	This gift provides a blessing in carrying out my callings by...	I am tempted to turn that gift into a weakness by...

While it will be Step #3 in this workbook before we actually begin to design goals for the new year in our various callings, list any budding ideas here that have occurred to you for where you could better put God-given strengths to work in those callings. (Don't worry about making these into carefully crafted goals. That time will come later in this process!)

B. HOW DOES YOUR LIFE-STAGE IMPACT YOUR PERCEPTION OF YOUR VARIOUS CALLINGS?

In his book *Your Life in Rhythm* (if you missed it – a brief description of this book was at the end of Step #1), author and pastor Bruce Miller notes how hard it is for us all to live in contentment as we move through the different life-stages that impact all our callings or as we go through the shorter “personal seasons” we may experience (recovery from illness, grieving the loss of a loved one, etc.). Impatience for the current stage or season to be over can plague our hearts. The 12-year-old middle schooler can’t wait to get to high school. The high schooler can’t wait for college. The college student can’t wait to get out to begin a career. It can work in reverse as well as we long for previous life-stages or personal seasons that have passed. The college student remembers the simpler time with fewer life-impacting decisions (and debts!) when they were in high school. With eyes focused behind or ahead, what is missed is the destination of honoring God *in the present* by using current blessings and opportunities!

Such longing in either direction can impact us in our public ministry callings also. The younger pastor may be tempted to covet the practical wisdom of the more experienced pastor. The more experienced pastor feels the frustration of no longer having the energy evidenced by the younger pastor.

It is very hard to live in the present and be content with God’s daily-bread grace in the midst of each unique life stage or personal season.

What does this have to do with planning for growth? When we get stuck in longing for the past or impatience for the future, we can easily blind ourselves to the unique opportunities for growth God is giving us right now in the midst of our present life-stage or personal season.

Miller suggests three strategies to help us embrace with contentment where God has us right now.

- **Release expectations:** In each life stage or shorter personal season, we may have unrealistic expectations for our lives. Those expectations fail to deal with the reality either of what is no longer true (we’re stuck in the past) or what is not yet true (we’re impatient for the future). “Be at peace with the stage God has you in right now. Release your expectations of other times, and stop envying others who are older or younger” (76).
- **Seize opportunities:** In each life stage in our various God-given callings, there are unique opportunities God’s grace is giving us to make the most of that particular stage. “Seize the opportunities that are unique to each stage, and enjoy their distinct blessings” (98).
- **Anticipate what’s next:** When we are struggling with issues that are particularly challenging in our current life-stage or briefer personal season, it can be helpful to remember that God does not intend for us to remain in that life stage or personal season forever. While we need to live in the present, we can deal with greater hope in that present when we remember that what may be very difficult now will not last forever. In this God still remains the master of giving us “hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). “Anticipation breeds hope. When you feel stuck in your current stage, know that it will not last forever; the next stage is on the horizon. Nothing stays the same” (105).

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Use the box below to ponder where we may be fighting against the realities of our current life-stage or personal season and simultaneously missing current God-given opportunities for growth in our current callings and situations of life.

As you ponder what to list. Consider struggles you may be experiencing with the realities of your current life-stage or personal season.

- Such struggles may be impacting most of all a single God-given calling (for example: a parent learning to deal with becoming an empty-nester, for example); or
- Such struggles may be more broadly impacting you in all your God-given callings (for example: significantly decreasing energy levels as more decades are under our belts).

For each life-stage or personal season challenge that you list, jot down:

- 1) Any unrealistic expectations that need to be released as you struggle to live in the present rather than the past or future;
- 2) Any unique-to-that-season opportunities for growth God is giving you to realize and seize;
- 3) Where you can find God’s gift of hope that what may be especially challenging in this current season will not last.

What unique life-stage or personal season issues are you facing in one calling or across all your callings?	What unrealistic expectations focused on past or future might you be wise to let go of for the present?	What opportunities for growth may God be giving you unique to your current life-stage or season?	What hope for the future can help you live in the present with greater patience and confidence?

Before moving on to the next task in step #2, jot down any ideas for growth goals that may have begun to spring from this discussion. (Again, don’t worry about forming these ideas into concrete, well-worded goals. That time will come!)

C. EVALUATE YOUR STEWARDSHIP IN ALL YOUR CALLINGS

The mind God has given us thrives on tackling the challenge presented to us in what some have called the “is/ought gap.” Pondering the difference between our current faithfulness in any particular calling or specific task of life, compared to where under God’s grace we long to be, helps us focus on reaching that destination.

Note: an optional activity (“The 40th Anniversary Exercise”) can be found in Appendix B. This might help us think more long-term and big-picture.

Of course, that is something our legalistic sinful nature distinctly hates to ponder. He wants to convince himself that all is well since his confidence is staked on his own performance, and he doesn’t want to be bothered with any unpleasant realities that trouble that formula.

However, as those whom the Spirit has taught to know that our status is not based on our performance but on Christ’s life and death perfect-performance for us, we do not need to fear honest evaluation of how we are doing in our stewardship of our various callings. God’s forgiving grace covers all our failings. What is more, God’s empowering grace equips and enables us to grow to bring greater honor to God in any and all our callings. In Christ, our past never needs to dictate our future. Since we count ourselves “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:11), the future is always filled with new possibilities of his grace. In the comfort and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ we have a source of confidence most motivational speakers know nothing about! So, while this step may be painful to our sinful nature (that’s good – he needs to die every day anyway!), our new self can walk through it with his hand in the hand of another (a hand marked by nails)!

On the next four pages you will find two charts and corresponding “wheels” that can help us get both a more cognitive and a more visual picture of how we perceive we are doing in our royal priestly callings and our public ministry callings. Please don’t waste time getting bogged down in whether some area of your stewardship is a “4” or a “5.” The different numbers simply reflect general impressions and comparisons between various areas of your stewardship in the many different God-given callings in which you seek to be a wise steward of God’s grace and gifts. Higher numbers simply reflect where you give thanks that you have been growing by his grace while lower numbers reflect areas in your callings where you perceive that you are struggling a bit more. You will also note that “callings” is being used broadly enough to include things such as stewardship of our health.

The five pages after your forms provide you with a) with some ideas for how to seek partners to help you with this evaluation; and b) charts/wheels that can be handed to those you are asking to help you more objectively evaluate your stewardship in each of these areas. **Be sure to make sufficient copies of the appropriate charts and wheels for each of your encouragers.**

As mentioned in the workbook’s introduction, the goal is to arrange a meal together during your planning day with those you have asked to provide this feedback to you. If you are meeting with someone at breakfast, there would be wisdom in having completed this part of step #2 **before you meet with them.** If you are meeting with them at lunch or dinner, then you would not need to complete this part of step #2 ahead of time. You will, of course, have provided them with their pages ahead of time as well.

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Royal Priestly Callings – Chart & Wheel

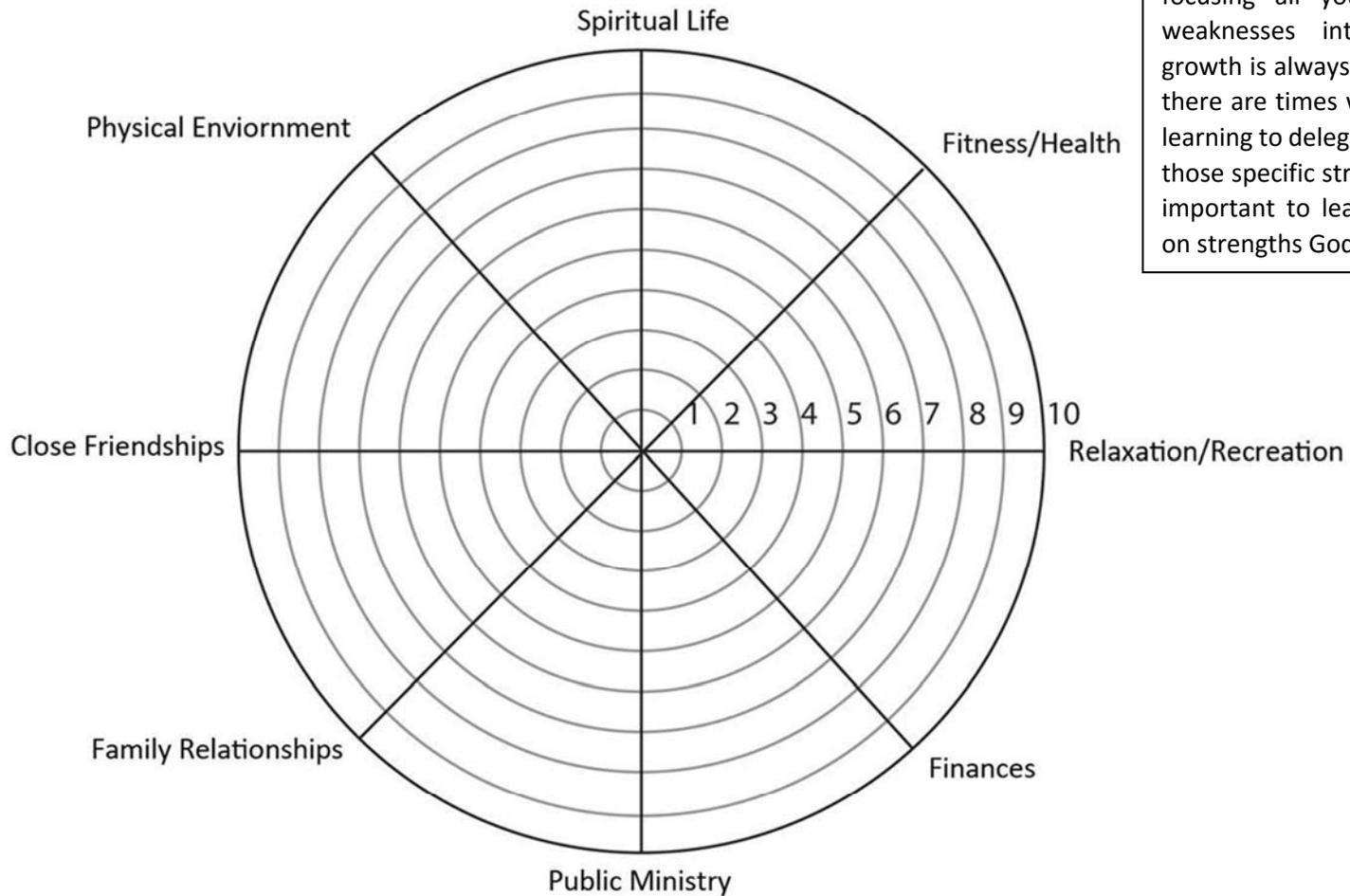
Use the chart below to do two things:

1. Rate from 1 (low) to 10 (high) your current satisfaction in each of the areas listed in this chart.
2. In each area, list what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your life/callings.

Once you have completed the chart, transfer your **current rating** to the appropriate spoke on the royal priestly wheel on the next page. Draw a line connecting the marks you have made on each of the eight spokes. Once that is done, you will have a visual glimpse of your completed wheel. This visual can prove helpful in determining where in these callings growth might prove most beneficial for you and those you serve.

Category	Here’s what you are evaluating in this category	Current 1 (low) -10 (high) rating	List what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your life/callings
Spiritual life	Your growth in faith as a child of God – in particular as viewed through your personal devotional life of Word and prayer		
Fitness/Health	Your current diet, control of your weight, regular check-ups with health professionals and getting sufficient exercise and sleep		
Relaxation/Recreation	Taking sufficient time off from work, doing things for fun and enjoyment with family and friends		
Finances	Living within your budget, maintaining a manageable debt load, saving for education and/or retirement, having an emergency fund		
Public ministry	Give this a general rating here – this will be treated much more fully in the public ministry wheel		
Family relationships	Your relationship with parents, siblings, spouse, children according to the family situation into which God has called you		
Close friendships	Building, maintaining, and strengthening your relationship with close friends		
Physical environment	This is the physical set-up of your home and work space so that you are able to live/work in a setting that is comfortable and productive		

Royal Priestly Wheel



Caution: don't let weak areas the wheel may reveal lead you to consider focusing all your goals on turning weaknesses into strengths. While growth is always possible under grace, there are times where growth may be learning to delegate to those who have those specific strengths. It is especially important to leave room for building on strengths God has given you.

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Public Ministry Chart & Wheel

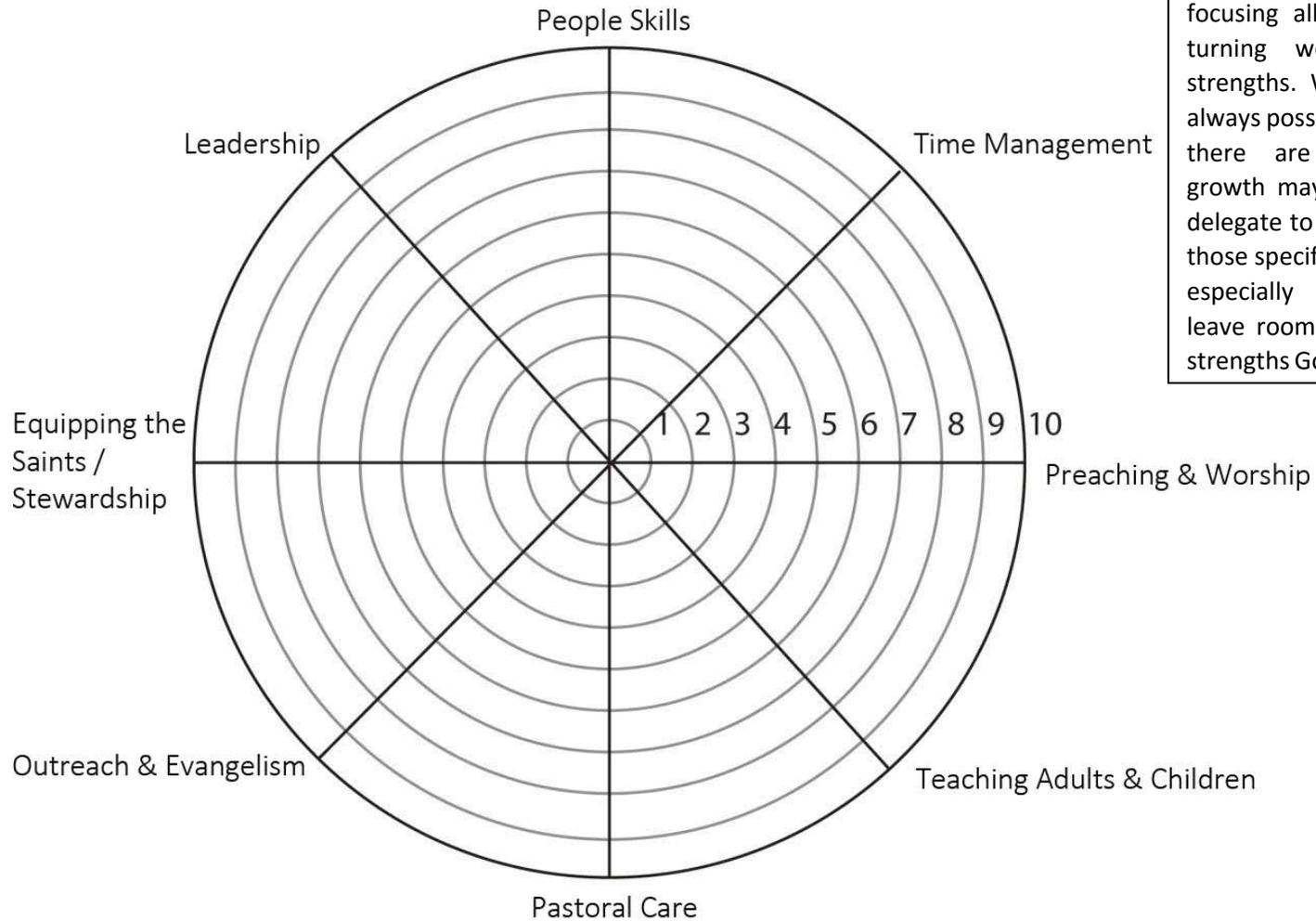
Use the chart below to do two things:

1. Rate from 1 (low) to 10 (high) your current satisfaction in each of the areas listed in this chart.
2. In each area, list what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your life/callings.

Once you have completed the chart, transfer your **current rating** to the appropriate spoke on the public ministry wheel on the next page. Draw a line connecting the marks you have made on each of the eight spokes. Once that is done, you will have a visual glimpse of your completed wheel. This visual can prove helpful in determining where in these callings growth might prove most beneficial for you and those you serve.

Category	Here's the understanding and opportunities for growth being evaluated in each category	Current 1 (low) - 10 (high) rating	List what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your public ministry calling.
Time management	Managing yourself in God's gift of time including planning, prioritizing, scheduling and seeking a healthy balance between time spent in various callings		
Preaching & worship	Planning for and leading gospel-focused worship as well as proclaiming with all the variety of Scripture each text's unique specific witness to law & gospel		
Teaching adults & children	Planning a congregation's comprehensive educational ministry and teaching in a way that reflects how to most wisely communicate God's truth to each unique age group		
Pastoral care	Providing visitation and counseling for those who because of illness, grief, or other special needs are in need of individual, focused pastoral care		
Outreach & evangelism	Helping a congregation to grow in an outreach mindset and planning and overseeing an outreach strategy that is matched to a congregation's unique ministry setting		
Equipping the saints/ stewardship	Assisting God's people to see all of life under the Savior's gracious ownership and preparing them to put their gifts to work in the congregation and in their vocations		
Leadership	Leading with a clear understanding of one's own leadership gifts and partnering with lay leaders to assist the congregation in developing a focused ministry plan		
People skills	Relating to members and prospects in a way that displays servant love like Christ's even when loving confrontation is needed		

Public Ministry Wheel



Caution: don't let weak areas the wheel may reveal lead you to consider focusing all your goals on turning weaknesses into strengths. While growth is always possible under grace, there are times where growth may be learning to delegate to those who have those specific strengths. It is especially important to leave room for building on strengths God has given you.

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

IDEAS FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK FROM FAMILY, LAY LEADERS, AND MINISTRY PEERS

Prayerfully choose your partners: Make a list of those whose feedback could be most valuable to you. Don't shy away from those who have the gift for being lovingly critical where needed.

- Some (family members, close friends) might be asked only to help you assess blessings and challenges in your royal priestly callings in life.
- Some (spiritually mature lay leaders, circuit pastor, other ministry peers) might be asked only to help you assess blessings and challenges in your calling in the public ministry.
- Still others on your list (spouse, close ministry associates, mentor, coach) might be able to offer helpful insights on both your royal priestly and your public ministry callings.

Determine what you will provide to them: The next four pages offer an almost identical set of the charts/wheels to those you just used, but worded in "third person" terms as others give feedback about your service in your various callings. Consider whether you wish to:

- **Provide them only their blank copies without seeing your work ahead of time:** The advantage of having them work without seeing your forms ahead of time is that your work doesn't have any influence that might modify (up or down) how they might assess that specific area of your callings.
- **Provide them with a copy of your filled out chart(s)/wheel(s):** While seeing your evaluation before they provide their own may impact their answers, it may be more comfortable for some partners to know they aren't in "left field" because they've evaluated areas of your callings in a vastly different way than you have. **You would need to have worked ahead on this step to provide this.**

Encourage them to be ready to speak the truth in love: As you ask others to partner with you, encourage them to be unafraid to speak honestly to you as they give you feedback. (Each of the tools below have such encouragements printed on them.) Even though you have asked for feedback, some may feel that it would be sinful to say anything difficult or potentially troubling to you. That may be especially true of some lay leaders. Let them know that you chose them because "wounds from a friend can be trusted" (Proverbs 27:6). At the same time, help them to know that it is also important for them to help you to see God's grace at work in your life and through your life. That is especially true in places where it may be difficult for you to see that in yourself.

Meet face to face to receive their feedback: Much of the blessing of getting feedback with others comes from the discussion that takes place. Helpful discussion can take place both when your evaluation of areas differs and where those evaluations are relatively the same. Often, what they mean by their "rating" only becomes clearly evident in the give and take of conversation. Where geographical distance between you and a chosen partner is a factor, tools such as Skype, FaceTime, or a Google Hangout can allow for face to face discussion across many miles.

KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Royal Priestly Chart & Wheel

Encouragement for those providing feedback:

- You have been chosen to provide feedback because “wounds from a friend can be trusted” (Proverbs 27:6).
- Speak honestly about areas where growth would be a blessing.
- Do also acknowledge where God’s grace has already brought blessing.

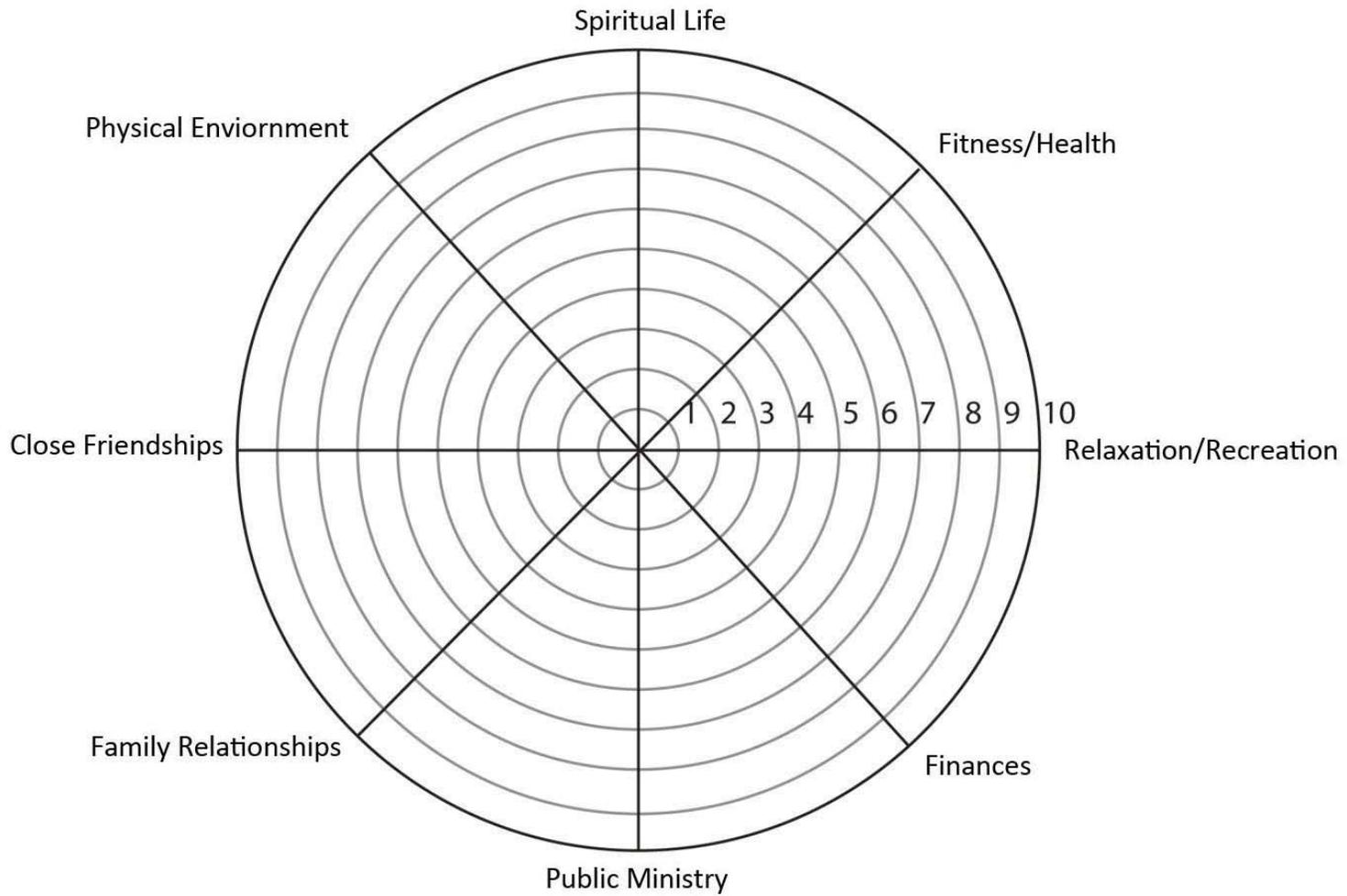
Use the chart to do two things:

1. Rate from 1 (low) to 10 (high) how the one asking for feedback is doing in each area of his royal priestly callings listed in this chart.
2. Provide a brief explanation for the rating you gave and note the top two categories where growth could bring the greatest blessing.

Once you have completed the chart, transfer your ratings to the royal priestly wheel on the next page, then “connect the dots.” This visual can prove helpful in determining where in these callings growth might be beneficial for the one to whom you are giving feedback.

Category	Here’s what you are evaluating in this category	Rating from 1 (low) -10 (high)	Provide a brief rating explanation <i>including marking 2 categories where you believe growth/change could bring the greatest blessings</i>
Spiritual life	His growth in faith as a child of God – in particular as viewed through his personal devotional life of Word and prayer		
Fitness/Health	His diet, control of weight, regular health check-ups and getting sufficient exercise and sleep		
Relaxation/Recreation	His taking sufficient time off from work, doing things for fun and enjoyment with family and friends		
Finances	Living within his budget, maintaining a manageable debt load, saving for education and/or retirement, having an emergency fund		
Public ministry	Give this a general rating here – you or others may be providing detailed feedback on this in another chart		
Family relationships	His relationship with parents, siblings, spouse, children according to his family situation		
Close friendships	Building, maintaining, and strengthening his relationship with close friends		
Physical environment	This is the physical set-up of his home and work space so that he is able to live/work in a setting that is comfortable and productive		

Royal Priestly Wheel



KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

Public Ministry Chart & Wheel

Encouragement for those providing feedback:

- You have been chosen to provide feedback because “wounds from a friend can be trusted” (Proverbs 27:6).
- Speak honestly about areas where growth would be a blessing.
- Do also acknowledge where God’s grace has already brought blessing.

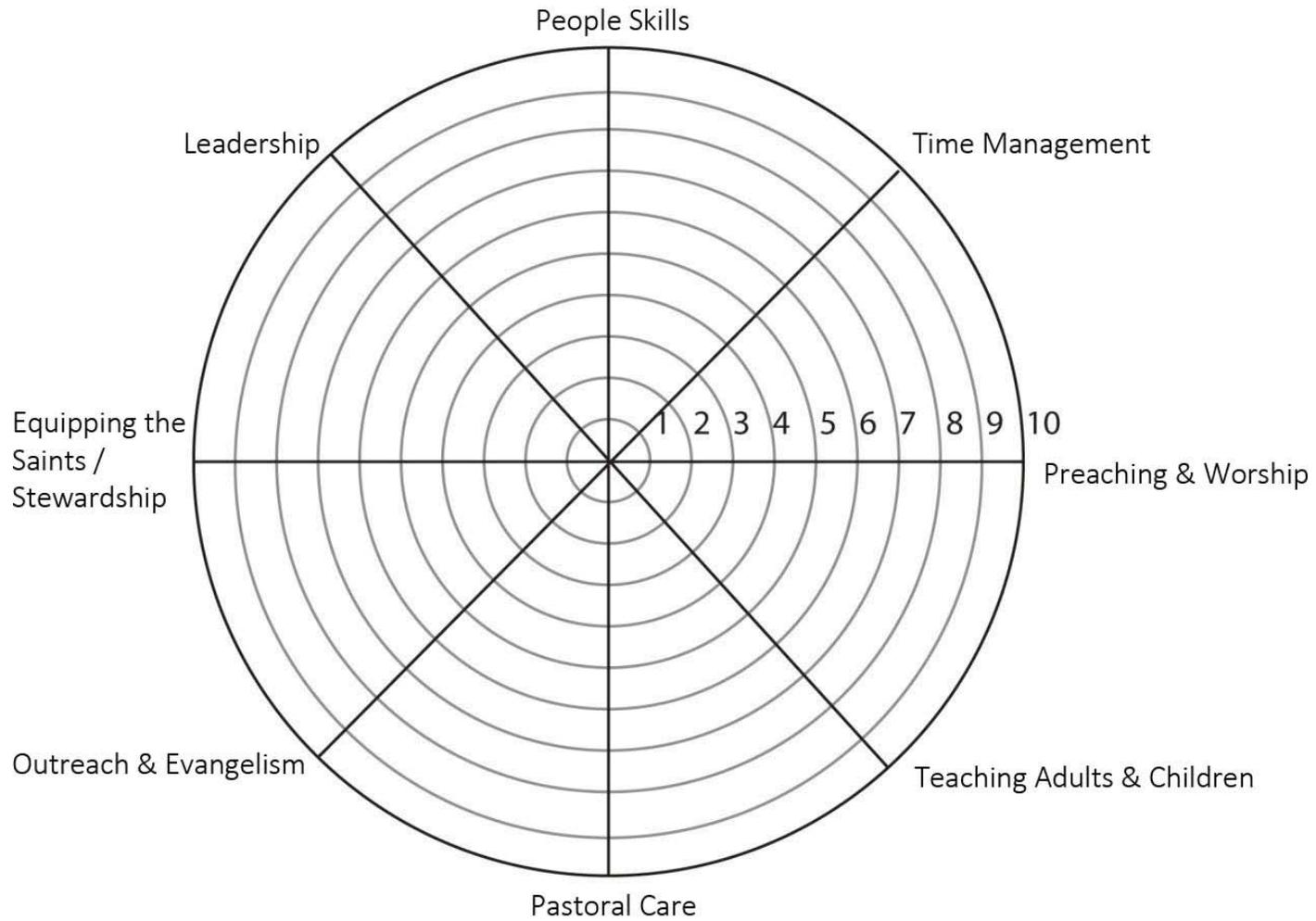
Use the chart to do two things:

1. Rate from 1 (low) to 10 (high) how the one asking for feedback is doing in each listed area of public ministry.
2. Provide a brief explanation for the rating you gave and note the top two categories where growth could bring the greatest blessing.

Once you have completed the chart, transfer your ratings to the royal priestly wheel on the next page, then “connect the dots.” This visual can prove helpful in determining where in these callings growth might prove beneficial for the one to whom you are giving feedback.

Category	Here’s the understanding and opportunities for growth being evaluated in each category	Rating from 1 (low) -10 (high)	Provide a brief rating explanation <i>including marking 2 categories where you believe growth/change could bring the greatest blessings</i>
Time management	Managing himself in God’s gift of time including planning, prioritizing, scheduling and seeking a healthy balance between time spent in various callings		
Preaching & worship	Planning for and leading gospel-focused worship as well as proclaiming with all the variety of Scripture each text’s unique specific witness to law & gospel		
Teaching adults & children	Planning a congregation’s comprehensive educational ministry and teaching in a way that reflects how to most wisely communicate God’s truth to each unique age group		
Pastoral care	Providing visitation and counseling for those who because of illness, grief, or other special needs are in in need of focused pastoral care		
Outreach & evangelism	Helping a congregation to grow in an outreach mindset and planning and overseeing an outreach strategy that is matched to a congregation’s unique ministry setting		
Equipping the saints/stewardship	Assisting God’s people to see all of life under the Savior’s gracious ownership and preparing them to put their gifts to work in the congregation and in their other vocations		
Leadership	Leading with a clear understanding of his own leadership gifts and partnering with lay leaders to assist the congregation in developing a focused ministry plan		
People skills	Relating to members and prospects in a way that displays servant love like Christ’s even when loving confrontation is needed		

Public Ministry Wheel



KEY STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

D. CONSIDER SOME POSSIBLE SPECIFIC DESTINATION IDEAS AS YOU COMPLETE STEP #2

Now that you have completed using the charts/wheels above and, God-willing, received feedback from others in the body of Christ, jot down some possible “destinations” (goals) that may have begun to crystallize in your mind as you have walked through all the portions of step #2. (Again...don’t worry about framing these into well-worded and precise goals. That – finally – is coming next in step #3!)

TASK #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE



In navigation apps, once we've entered our location and our destination, the next step is to select the preferred route from our current location to our destination. In step #3, this workbook seeks to help us select wise routes from where we are to the greater faithfulness we seek in our callings. That means designing specific turn by turn routes we will pursue under God's blessing that we pray will move us toward the destination of greater faithfulness in our callings. While the exact eventual fruit from our actions rests with God, he still calls us to act in a way that takes seriously that his gifts have been given to us for the purpose of fanning them into flame for the benefit of those God has called us to serve as well as the benefit of our own souls.

In order to help us design such growth goals, Step #3 will lead us to:

- Assemble a list of potential goals for our Calling as a child of God, for our calling to public ministry, and for our royal priestly callings;
- Select from that list specific, concrete goals that we pray God will bless for his purposes in our callings;
- Anticipate steps to meet challenges that will inevitably arise to derail us from those goals; and
- Stay connected to how each goal contributes to the overarching goal of honoring God as his masks in all our callings.

A. GATHERING OF POTENTIAL GOALS FOR THIS YEAR

Throughout this workbook, as you've pondered the various questions and worked through the exercises, you've been slowly building lists of potential goals. Here is where you will begin to make use of those initial ideas about which you were told: "Don't worry yet about refining your ideas?" Find those ideas you've jotted down on paper – or perhaps just find them spooking around in your head. You still don't need to refine them...just gather them!

Make a list below of all the potential goals you've been contemplating – or are contemplating now. Put your lists into the three categories listed below.

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

Possible goals relating to my calling to faith as a child of God: (Personal use of Word and prayer, etc.)

Possible goals relating to the various royal priestly callings God has given me: (son, brother, husband, father, friend, neighbor, etc. – and don't forget potential goals that support your energy for all your callings - exercise, rest, good diet, etc. – as you seek also to honor your calling – used a bit more broadly – as a steward of your health and strength)

Possible goals relating to my public ministry calling:

Now, circle the top two, three, or four potential goals in each list. If you are having trouble deciding, ask this question: "What would make the biggest impact on living out all my callings to the honor of Christ and the benefit of those God has called me to serve in those callings?"

B. PREPARING TO DEVELOP WISE GOALS

We've all heard statistics about how woeful people are in achieving what are often called "new year's resolutions." Health clubs make a considerable profit from those who crowd their locker rooms and sweat all over their treadmills for a few days or weeks at the beginning of new year, but who never darken their doors thereafter all the while continuing to pay the monthly fees. ("Thanks for your patronage! And we appreciate that you are not using any of our towels!") The problem isn't that goal setting is a fool's pursuit. It is rather that most set goals quite foolishly. A vast and accumulating amount of research has been done and is being done in studying ways to help people not just set goals, but actually accomplish them.

The following section from the book *Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals* by research psychologist Dr. Heidi Grant Halvorson, walks us through briefly many of the most common errors people make in goal setting. While her words clearly are written from a purely secular perspective, there still are many useful First Article "mind and all our abilities" insights available here. We can then "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:5) in true Second Article fashion as well as remembering the Third Article truth that it is the power of the Spirit at work in a renewed human heart that is the real power for any real and lasting change (Philippians 2:13).

Please understand that what is below is a brief "executive summary" of points that may seem simplistic. Here they are divorced from the research and details found elsewhere in Halvorson's writings. (Suggestions on further reading can be found at the end of this step!)

As you read, you may find that you are good at observing some of these insights (thank God for that!), but you may also find some "aha's!" related to how God wired you (or how sin has short-circuited some of that wiring) that could help you greatly in the future.

As you read, do two things:

1. Circle any helpful insights you note that could change how you pursue your goals; and
2. Underline anything that may reveal what Michael Hyatt calls a "limiting belief." Limiting beliefs are lies we tell ourselves – often without even being aware of the lie - that almost ensure we will self-sabotage progress toward a particular goal.

Nine Things Successful People Do Differently

From *Succeed: How we Can Reach Our Goals* by Heidi Grant Halvorson (241-245)

Why have you been so successful in reaching *some* of your goals but not others? If you aren't sure, you are far from alone in your confusion. It turns out that even very brilliant, highly accomplished people are pretty lousy when it comes to understanding why they succeed or fail. The intuitive answer – that you are born predisposed to certain talents and lacking in others – is really just one small piece of the puzzle. In fact, decades of research on achievement suggest that successful people reach their goals not simply because of who they are, but more often because of what they do.

1. **Get Specific.** When you set a goal, try to be as *specific* as possible. "Lose five pounds" is a better goal than "lose some weight," because it gives you a clear idea of what success looks like. Knowing exactly what you want to achieve keeps you motivated until you get there. Also, think about the specific actions that need to be taken to reach your goal. Just promising you'll "eat less" or "sleep more" is too vague – be clear and precise. "I'll be in bed by 10 p.m. on

weeknights” leaves no room for doubt about what you need to do, and whether or not you’ve actually done it.

2. **Seize the moment to act on your goals.** Given how busy most of us are, and how many goals we are juggling at once, it’s not surprising that we routinely miss opportunities to act on a goal because we simply fail to notice them. Did you *really* have no time to work out today? No chance at any point to return that phone call? Achieving your goal means grabbing hold of these opportunities before they slip through your fingers.

To seize the moment, decide *when* and *where* you will take each action *in advance*. Again, be as specific as possible (e.g., ‘If it’s Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, I’ll work out for thirty minutes before work.’) Studies show that this kind of planning will help your brain to detect and seize the opportunity when it arises, increasing your chances of success by roughly 300 percent.

3. **Know exactly how far you have left to go.** Achieving any goal also requires honest and regular monitoring of your progress – if not by others, then by you yourself. If you don’t know how well you are doing, you can’t adjust behavior or your strategies accordingly. Check your progress frequently – weekly, or even daily, depending on your goal.
4. **Be a *realistic* optimist.** When you are setting a goal, by all means engage in lots of positive thinking about how likely you are to achieve it. Believing in your ability to succeed is enormously helpful for creating and sustaining your motivation. But whatever you do, *don’t* underestimate how difficult it will be to reach your goal. Most goals worth achieving require time, planning, effort, and persistence. Studies show that thinking things will come easily and effortlessly leaves you ill-prepared for the journey ahead and significantly increases the odds of failure.
5. **Focus on *getting better*, rather than on *being good*.** Believing you have the ability to reach your goals is important, but so is believing you can *get* the ability. Many of us believe that our intelligence, our personality, and our physical aptitudes are fixed – that no matter what we do, we won’t improve. As a result, we focus on goals that are all about proving ourselves, rather than developing and acquiring new skills.

Fortunately, decades of research suggest that the belief in fixed ability is completely wrong – abilities of all kinds are *profoundly* malleable. Embracing the fact that you *can* change will allow you to make better choices and reach your fullest potential. People whose goals are about *getting better*, rather than *being good*, take difficulty in stride and appreciate the journey as much as the destination.

6. **Have grit.** Grit is a willingness to commit to long-term goals and to persist in the face of difficulty. Studies show that gritty people obtain more education in their lifetime and earn higher college GPA’s. Grit predicts which cadets will stick out their first grueling year at West Point. In fact, grit even predicts which round contestants will make it to at the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The good news is, if you aren’t particularly gritty now, there is something you can do about it. People who lack grit, more often than not, believe that they don’t have the innate abilities

successful people have. If that describes your own thinking...well, there's no way to put this nicely: you are wrong. As I mentioned earlier, effort, planning, persistence, and developing good strategies are what it *really* takes to succeed. Embracing this knowledge will not only help you see yourself and your goals more accurately, but also do wonders for your grit.

7. **Build your willpower muscle.** Your self-control "muscle" is just like the other muscles in your body – when it doesn't get much exercise, it becomes weaker over time. But when you give it regular workouts by putting it to good use, it will grow stronger and stronger, and better able to help you successfully reach your goals.

To build willpower, take on a challenge that requires you to do something you'd honestly rather not do. Give up high-fat snacks, do a hundred sit-ups a day, stand up straight when you catch yourself slouching, try to learn a new skill. When you find yourself wanting to give in, give up, or just not bother – don't. Start with just *one* activity, and make a plan for how you will deal with troubles when they occur ("If I have a craving for a snack, I will eat one piece of fresh or three pieces of dried fruit.") It will be hard at the beginning, but *it will get easier*, and that's the whole point. As your strength grows, you can take on more challenges and step up your self-control workout.

8. **Don't tempt fate.** No matter how strong your willpower muscle becomes, it's important to *always* respect the fact that it is limited, and if you overtax it you will temporarily run out of steam. Don't try to take on two challenging tasks at once, if you can help it (like quitting smoking and dieting at the same time). And don't put yourself in harm's way – many people are overly confident in their ability to resist temptation, and as a result they put themselves in situations where temptations abound. Successful people know not to make reaching a goal harder than it already is.
9. **Focus on what you *will* do, not what you *won't* do.** Do you want to successfully lose weight, quite smoking, or put a lid on your bad temper? Then plan how you will replace bad habits with good ones, rather than focusing only on the bad habits themselves. Research on thought suppression (e.g., "Don't think about white bears!") has shown that trying to avoid a thought makes it even *more* active in your mind. The same holds true when it comes to behavior – by trying *not* to engage in a bad habit, that same habit gets *strengthened* rather than broken.

If you want to change your ways, ask yourself, *What will I do instead?* For example, if you are trying to gain control of your temper and stop flying off the handle, you might make a plan like, "If I am starting to feel angry, then I will take three deep breaths to calm down." By using deep breathing as a replacement for giving in to your anger, your bad habit will get worn away over time until it disappears completely.

Use the following to process what you just read from Halvorson.

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

What were your top three “aha’s” from the excerpt above that could prove useful in your goal setting?	List any “limiting beliefs,” as Michael Hyatt calls them, that you noted that may be at work to sabotage your goals.	Replace each of the “limiting beliefs” you listed with what Michael Hyatt calls a corresponding “liberating truth.”

C. SETTING YOUR GOALS FOR THIS YEAR

On the pages that follow, you will find ten blank goal setting forms. Before beginning to use those forms, here is a brief explanation for what you will - and won't - find in each form.

- **The form has no line set aside for cynicism:** Our Old Adam’s cynicism is one of the greatest enemies of goal setting (not to mention a killer to the work of the church militant in every respect!).
 - “None of this will work anyway” is a powerful lie whose “proof” is in its very nature as a powerful self-fulfilling prophecy. Such cynical thinking carries with it almost as much prophetic certainty as God’s promises.
 - For Confessional Lutherans cynicism can be a seemingly theological and appealing distortion of the theology of the cross. We erroneously think that expecting nothing much to change (in our lives, marriages, families, churches, etc.) is what it means to avoid a theology of glory!

- **The form incorporates the AACTION acronym:** The research of the last few years has moved many past the old reliable SMART goal acronym. Building off the work of Halvorson, the templates in this workbook use the AACTION acronym that Michael Hyatt prefers to use when he teaches goal setting (taken from his video course *Five Days to Your Best Year Ever*). Here’s how Michael Hyatt defines each letter in that course workbook (18):
 - **Actionable:** begins with a verb
 - Can you see yourself “doing” a specific and concrete action?
 - Remember, we cannot program the Holy Spirit, but we can trust him to work as we do what he has given us to do.
 - “I will find a way to turn everyday conversations with prospects into opportunities to witness to God’s truth of law and gospel at least five times each week between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday.”
 - How many adult confirmands will that yield?
 - That latter number is the Spirit’s business.

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

- But looking for and seizing opportunities means you trust the tools he has given you!
- **Aligned:** with seasons of life, values, and each other
 - Are you living in the current stage or season of life into which God has positioned you, or are you vainly reaching back or ahead?
 - Is the goal consistent with what the Spirit has taught you to believe?
 - Are you setting up goals whose incompatibility will put them at war with each other? Halvorson noted that you are asking for trouble if you say, “I am going to quit smoking” and follow that with a simultaneous goal to “lose weight.”
- **Challenging:** set high enough to demand your best effort
 - It’s a matter of finding the sweet spot between what Hyatt calls “the comfort zone” and the “delusional zone.”
 - If the goal causes you some degree of fear, uncertainty, and doubt, Hyatt notes, you are probably in a good (!) place.
 - Little in life is ever learned without some – often a lot – of discomfort (not to mention that our old Adam hates dying over and over again).
- **Time-bound:** assign dates but not the same date to each goal
 - Anything that has no specific time when it will be done or by when it will be done is nothing more than a nebulous dream.
 - However, be careful, one of the most common reasons for failure is pursuing multiple goals all at the same time or with the exact same deadline (all ending at December 31 or June 30).
 - Make use of the different chronological rhythms God has woven into the passing of time. Not everything needs to be accomplished in the same week, month, or quarter of the year.
 - Pay attention to the predictable “seasons” of your year when it would be wise to avoid setting any goals that need significant focus and effort (translation: avoid setting too many goals during Lent and Advent!).
 - While this workbook encourages you to set anywhere between 7-10 goals, wisdom seeks to spread those over the entire year. This helps avoid “syllabus shock” (students handed all the syllabi at the beginning of a semester always feel overwhelmed since their brain falsely tells them: “All of this is due next Monday!”). Let the rhythms of the year serve as your friend.
- **Inspiring:** not boring
 - If a goal cannot capture your heart with its importance for your service in the kingdom, it is better to wait until your heart has been better prepared for it.
 - If you are adopting a goal merely under pressure from others, a problem is brewing.
 - As Confessional Lutherans, we are always wise to go back to the foot of the cross and there die to the motivations that pander to our sinful nature and rise to live to that which delights our new self as we honor our Savior in all our callings.
- **Objective:** includes some internal criteria by which progress can be evaluated
 - Will you be able to know in a concrete way that you have “arrived” at the goal?
 - Will you be able clearly to mark progress along the way to the destination?

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

- It's very hard to celebrate a victory God's grace is granting, or even know that progress is being made, if there are no objective criteria to the goal.
- Consider the objective criteria in the example above about the sharing of law/gospel with prospects.
- **Narrow:** specific, not broad or general
 - "I will be a better preacher by the end of the year" is an example of a far too broad of a goal (not to mention that it lacks almost completely some truly measurable, objective criteria!).
 - "During the summer I will move step by step from having my manuscript in the pulpit to preaching with only selected notes in front of me." That is both narrower and able to be objectively evaluated with progress concretely measured step by step.
 - Did that last one make any of us a bit fearful, uncertain, and doubtful? Yes? Good! Then it's not only narrow and objective, but challenging!
- ***The form seeks to keep you focused on the "why" of your goal:*** It is absolutely critical that you state in written form your motivation for seeking to achieve that particular goal in succinct, eloquent and multiple ways. When you hit the inevitable times when you want to give up on that goal – and those times may be **many** – recalling these will be very helpful.
 - From our perspective as Christians, ***connect the goal to the callings you are seeking to live out to God's glory as one with whom God is already well pleased!*** Use that gospel-empowered approach to help you answer these two questions:
 - Positively: How will achieving that goal honor God's name and serve those in my sphere of influence since I am privileged to be his blood-bought/washed and holiness-clothed representative in every facet of life?
 - Negatively: How would failing to keep that goal dishonor his name or do a disservice to those in my sphere of influence? I am, after all, privileged to be his blood-bought/washed and holiness clothed representative in every facet of my life.
- ***The form invites you to engage in "if...then" thinking:*** You will be encouraged to engage in what Halvorson calls "mental contrasting" (***Nine Things Successful People Do Differently, 9***). In mental contrasting you imagine what it would be like to achieve the goal (tapping into the "why" mentioned above) and then contrast that with specific barriers that you anticipate will be raised in your path internally and externally. For each barrier you will be asked to consider a clear "if...then" plan to prepare in advance for that situation so that you are not be caught flat-footed and weak-willed when a temptation or obstacle appears. You will have prayerfully (most important) rehearsed (not unimportant) how you will act by God's strength in a way consistent with your goal!
- ***The form seeks to keep us from attempting too much "what" for any given "when":*** One of the most common reasons for failure in goal setting is that too many challenging goals are set at one time. Being challenged is good, but too many challenges all at once easily works against needed focus. The form has a place to list the month/season in which you will pursue that goal. Under God's grace, optimism is important, but it is also important that our optimism is realistic.

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

- ***The form urges us to consider all our callings:*** Each goal sheet will ask the one filling it out to mark whether the goal that is being set relates to our Calling as a child of God, our calling into the public ministry, or our royal priestly callings.
 - It may be that the majority of our goals in any given year or season or life-stage may be in one or the other of the three categories.
 - However, there is wisdom in not losing sight completely of pursuing goals in all three general areas where there are gifts of God to be fanned into flame.
 - Each year there is wisdom in having at least one goal that addresses our growth in faith as a child of God. That is our primary calling, and growth here blesses every other calling we have in life since it renews us in the gospel. A goal that seeks God's blessing of growth in faith connects us to the source of strength for all our goals.

Now, make sufficient copies of the AACTION goal planner sheet you will find on the next page. Use one sheet for each of the prioritized goals you listed in the first part of this step. The encouragement is to make no more than 7-10 goals. Here too less may in fact be more. Having many more than ten goals may easily be evidence that we are engaging in unrealistic optimism. More goals can always be added later if God has blessed you with success in reaching those already planned.

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

AACTION Goal Planner	
Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings	
Goal #:	
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: Public ministry: Royal priestly:	
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	Month/season
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 	
Why this goal?	
Potential obstacle?	“If...then...”
Why this goal?	
Potential obstacle?	“If...then...”
Why this goal?	
Potential obstacle?	“If...then...”
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)	

Finishing Off Step #3

First, and foremost, pray for God’s blessing of strength, perseverance and determination to pursue these goals. Trust that, as he often does in limitless grace, he may go well beyond what you can even think or imagine in blessing this process.

Then, share your goals with at least a couple of those who partnered with you in this process. Their insight helped you to set these destinations, their prayers can support you and their God-given wisdom can help strengthen your goals!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES RELATED TO STEP #3

For those who would like to probe a bit deeper into the fruit of research on achieving goals, there are two books worth reading and pondering by Heidi Grant Halvorson.

- ***9 Things Successful People Do Differently*** (Harvard Business Review Press) expands to the next level of complexity on the “nine things” in the Halvorson quotation found earlier in this step. This is a mini-book of 106 pages. Your first reaction may be like this authors (“What a rip off for the price!”), but this book can easily be consumed in an hour or two – and the multiple “aha’s” may pay back the small investment of time and money.
- ***Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals*** (Plume – a Penguin Book) goes several steps further in exploring the research and insights behind the “nine things” in the quotation above. There are further insights to be gained for those who wish to spend a bit more time pondering. The brief “Nine Things Successful People Do Differently” shared earlier is a “bonus” of this volume.

Here are some other resources that can assist in developing strong goals and plans:

- ***Living Forward: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Get the Life You Want*** by Michael Hyatt & Daniel Harkavy (Baker Books) is a very helpful book on Life Planning that offers a path somewhat similar to this workbook. While Hyatt in particular is a committed Christian, this book was written for a broader audience and so the gospel heart of planning is only hinted at briefly in a few places in the book. That tends to lead to a very man-centered approach to Life Planning (as evidenced even in the book’s subtitle). Even so, the book has many pieces of practical advice that could prove quite useful for the process we are following in this workbook.
- ***Five Days to Your Best Year Ever*** by Michael Hyatt is a video based course (with a printable PDF workbook) that this author enjoyed taking and profited from. (Just be aware that Hyatt will become **very** familiar with your inbox!) Multiple insights gained have been documented in this workbook. While Hyatt is a Christian (he was formerly the CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers), his convictions are only rarely explicitly stated (perhaps in an effort to appeal to a broader audience?). This often leaves the participant wondering if Hyatt is as dependent on the tenants of the human potential movement as Halvorson. He’s not, but the not-so-discerning participant in his course could easily draw that conclusion.
- ***Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don’t*** (Harper Business) by Jim Collins is a long-time classic business book (focused mostly, though not exclusively, on corporations, not so much on individuals). It is purely secular in its outlook. For those reasons, some discerning spiritual “translation” will always be necessary. However, the “Stockdale

STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

Paradox” alone is worth the price of the book and the time needed to consume it. If only they realized how close they have come to an optimistic theology of the cross – and yet how far they are from any articulated grasp of the heart of the gospel.

STEP #4: REVISE YOUR ROUTE AS NECESSARY



Finally, when using navigation apps, the whole process would be useless unless we actually head out in our vehicles and follow the directions – which includes wisely pondering mid-course revisions dictated by traffic or road conditions. As the app monitors our progress along our route, ignoring mid-course revisions risks significant delay or even failure in reaching the desired destination.

So too in Step #4 we will consider what it may look like to actively navigate by taking our goals and plugging them into the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual routines and decisions of life. This prepares us regularly to remember our goals, assess progress toward those goals, and choose mid-course corrections as needed (with trusted partners all along the way helping us to see our way clearly). Since God has wisely chosen to hide from us the details of our future, such changes will almost always be needed as we receive from him our daily bread and new strength for each day.

In order to prepare us to assess progress regularly and revise our path accordingly, step #4 will help us to:

- Build routines into our daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual patterns that will assist us in regularly monitoring how God is blessing our progress toward our goals;
- Enlist the regular support of others in the body of Christ who can encourage us and assist us with making wise mid-course revisions; and
- Celebrate God’s blessings along the path – even when those blessings make their appearance in far different forms than we may have anticipated.

A. PLAN YOUR FIRST ACTION STEP FOR EACH GOAL

Go back to the goal sheets you filled out in step #3. Now is the time to fill out the last box on each page. (If you did so already, congratulations you are already ahead of the game and well on your way to completing your goal!)

In that last box, you want to put the first concrete, specific, and timed action step for each goal! For goals that are in the second, third, or fourth quarter of the year, the concrete, specific and timed action step will be setting a reminder into your calendar that the “time” for that goal has arrived and noting that you now need to determine the second concrete, specific, and timed action step.

Those who have used and enjoyed David Allen’s classic *Getting Things Done* will recognize a powerful trademark of his system. Neither the simplest nor the most complex goals in our lives can move ahead without clarity about the “next step.”

TASK #4: IMPLEMENT YOUR GROWTH PLAN

B. PUT YOUR FIRST ACTION STEPS INTO YOUR CALENDAR FOR EACH GOAL

Here is the critical strategic move for each “first action” you write into your goals sheets: enter that action into the appropriate date/time spot in your calendar (that first action step was timed, right?). Then, when you get to that spot, and complete that task, don’t “put that goal away” until you ask yourself what the next concrete, specific and timed action step will be. Once you have developed a routine both of taking an action and then finishing up by setting the next concrete/timed action, you are well on your way to a step by step accomplishing of that goal.

C. DEVELOP A REGULAR ROUTINE FOR REVIEWING YOUR GOALS

No system for setting and working on goals is ever iron-clad. Life happens. We get busy. The needs of our various callings – or even just one of those callings – consume us and cause us to lose track of the goals we had in good faith set up. Discouragement may set in as we seem to be making little or no headway towards our goals. That discouragement leads us to fail to see or seize opportunities to act on our goals. Cynicism wants to lead us to conclude that we were foolish even to try.

But since God’s compassions are new every morning and great is his faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23), fresh starts are always possible. The key to jump starting our memory for “where we left off” - and resuming progress toward our current goals - is to build into our schedule the routine of reviewing our goals. Such a routine makes it our regular practice to read through all our goals on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. It is important in that review to refresh our memory for why that particular growth goal was so important in that particular God-given calling. It is also at such times that we can consider mid-course corrections - modifications to the goal – that made be needed.

Yes...guilt may often be the result of such review. But then we remember that we live in this life *under* Jesus’ cross, not *on* it! When guilt wants to drag us down, we remember that our identity before our God is built completely on his Son’s perfection and suffering for us, not our perfection in pursuit of our goals or beating ourselves up for where we have stumbled. As in every area of sanctified living, here too we live by a daily return to our baptism as we die but also rise to live.

Write down below how you will make use of the God-created rhythms of the day, week, or month to keep your goals in front of you. Weave this into the patterns you already use to plan your day, week, or month. If you do not have any such patterns established, you would be wise to add developing such patterns as a goal (and remove another if you already have ten!). A wise first action step might be to purchase, read, and then implement the suggestions that fit your life and ministry from any of the books listed at the end of this step!

Here is the routine I will follow to keep my goals in front of me on a regular basis:

TASK #4: IMPLEMENT YOUR GROWTH PLAN

D. ENLIST ENCOURAGERS FOR WHEN THE TRIP SEEMS LONG!

Why have a regular encourager(s) as you pursue your growth goals? The evidence is overwhelming that the pursuit of our goals has a far higher chance of succeeding if we have regular encouragement from others with whom we have openly shared our plans. Those who know how often Scripture speaks of the importance of the support of others in the body of Christ will not be surprised by this.

Many who write about this speak of others providing us with **accountability**. As Lutherans, we might compare the concept of accountability to the function of God's law serving as a curb. Just knowing that someone else is going to ask us about our progress toward our goals serves as a check on our lazy sinful nature. Building into our lives such curbs on our sinful nature is not legalism; it is dealing honestly with the reality that we are *simul justus et peccator*.

However, the greatest benefit of having ongoing encouragers is on the side of the gospel. When by our own weakness we have stumbled in making progress toward our goals, others can provide the **encouragement** we need to put the past behind us and start fresh in God's forgiving and empowering grace. Where God has blessed us with progress toward a goal, they can help us by encouraging us to remember the grace of God that has enabled us to will and to do according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:13).

There is also the blessing of an objective observer who can note when situations truly beyond our control have made it necessary to alter our timetable or revise our goals. It is at such times that they can remind us that our plans are our servant, not our master. They can remind us that all our plans were made "God willing." That can help us realize that God may have allowed other necessary ministry to family and calling body to take precedence. If we were to judge all this by ourselves, we may feel we are only creating conscience soothing excuses. These others can help us more objectively identify when we are simply facing realities of life that have legitimately altered the playing field. They may also be able to help us see where God has answered our prayers for growth in a way that we did not plan, thereby yielding even richer growth than we had sought.

There is also one additional strong blessing yet to be considered in partnering with others. Since we would certainly ask those who are encouragers to pray for God's blessings on our pursuit of growth, we have received the gift of another righteous one in the blood of Christ approaching God's throne on our behalf. Since the prayers of everyone declared righteous in Christ are "powerful and effective" (James 5:16), we cannot fully estimate the blessing of someone praying for us that God would bless us with growth according to our plans (and above and beyond our plans according to God's plans for us)!

And why get specific about how and when that encouragement will be offered? In the midst of our too often hectic lives, if we have no plan other than a rather nebulous desire to "check in" with others, a multitude of simple opportunities for encouragement may slip right through our fingers. What may also slip away then is any real pursuit of our goals.

IDEAS FOR FINDING AND UTILIZING ONGOING ENCOURAGERS

Here are some ideas for how to go about selecting and making the most of your encouragers.

Choose someone to encourage you in your spiritual and royal priestly growth goals: In regard to your goal for *spiritual growth* and in your *royal priestly callings*, one particular family member, a good friend, or a circuit pastor, or other ministry peer who knows you well may be among the best options to serve as encouragers about those plans.

Choose someone to encourage you in your public ministry growth goal: In regard to your plans for growth in your *public ministry calling*, in addition to your circuit pastor (see the note just below), other options would include a spiritually mature lay leader in the congregation, and/or a friend in the ministry.

 **Note:** As mentioned earlier, when it comes to concrete fruit of your public ministry goals, the hope is that these are communicated annually in the reporting called workers do to the Conference of President's through circuit pastors. Having a circuit pastor as a regular encourager could streamline that annual process!

Look for opportunities to offer mutual encouragement: In selecting encouragers, there is wisdom in looking for those who wish to make offering such encouragement a two-way street.

- For example, a husband and wife might share with each other their growth plans in the area of spiritual growth and their royal priestly callings.
- Or, two friends who both serve in the public ministry might agree to be the primary support for each other as they pursue specific growth goals.
- It may offer a very significant added advantage of partnering with another in specific growth goals when similar or identical goals appear on each person's growth plans. This would allow for opportunities to study and grow together.
- Larger groups of called workers (for example, a pastoral circuit) may decide that a common goal found in several of their growth plans informs the agendas of that group when it meets to pursue growth.

Seek out a trained mentor or coach: Another option in developing a strong support system for accountability and encouragement is to make use of a trained mentor or coach. Mentors and coaches have been trained to provide just such support to those who are striving to grow spiritually and in their God-given callings. Obviously it would be important to look for a mentor or coach who shares a common faith in the gospel and who understands a Confessional Lutheran gospel-focused approach to life and public ministry.

Determine the when/how for receiving encouragement: As far as setting up a structure for receiving ongoing support, the two key elements may be obvious:

- Determine the frequency of when you will check in with each other. There is probably wisdom in checking in at least once a month since any less frequency could easily have the feel of starting from scratch each time.
 - **Whatever you agree on with your partner(s) becomes an entry in your calendar as real as any other appointment made in your various callings.**
- Determine how you will check in with each other at the agreed upon times.

TASK #4: IMPLEMENT YOUR GROWTH PLAN

- For those who live in close proximity, an enjoyable venue may be to agree to meet for a monthly meal together as you discuss progress toward your goals.
- For those who serve as peers in public ministry in the same area, you may have the option of using regular circuit or conference gatherings to provide many of the monthly opportunities to “check in” with one another.
- Digital technology has made it possible to partner “virtually” face-to-face with friends and ministry peers even when thousands of miles may separate you.

List here the who, when, and where for how you will use of the support of others:

E. FINAL KEY REMINDERS AS YOU JOURNEY ON THE WAY

- ***Your plan is your servant, not your master. That means...***
 - Keep in mind that your plan provides useful direction for action, but has no power to supply strength to act.
 - Remember to live from the gospel, not from your plan (your plan in many ways is the law at work as curb and guide). If we expect our plan to drive us, our goals will quickly become nothing more than another burdensome list of “to do’s” (yielding either pride or discouragement). Daily draw strength to implement your plan from the width, length, height, and depth of Christ’s love ***that is already yours as a justified child of God!*** You have nothing to prove to him by growing in your calling as a child of God, in your royal priestly callings, or in your public ministry. Instead, you are seeking to grow in your confidence in his grace as well as displaying ever more clearly to the world the goodness of a gracious God.
- ***Keep on putting specific appointments with your goals and with your encouragers into your calendar.***
- ***As you review your goals, don’t be afraid to make mid-course corrections.***
 - When reviewing your goals shows that mid-course corrections are needed (reducing or reworking what you’ve planned), that is not defeat. That is simply acknowledging that only God perfectly knows the future.
 - It is never failure to stumble on the way to a goal. Instead, failure is refusing to embark on or continue the journey under God’s grace.
- ***Most importantly: pause regularly for thanksgiving!***
 - Celebrate God’s grace where daily, weekly, or quarterly evaluation reveals that God is blessing your plans with evident growth.
 - Celebrate even when God in wisdom allows a cherished part of your goals to be blocked. Sometimes our plans to “work in Asia” (Acts 16:6) don’t match God’s timetable!

TASK #4: IMPLEMENT YOUR GROWTH PLAN

- Celebrate when he improves on the plan in ways you never would have expected. Since God is always good (Psalm 118:1), all of this must also be good!
- Be sure to set aside at least a full day to evaluate progress and give thanks for blessings at the beginning of each new planning year...and you will have arrived back at step #1 of this workbook!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES RELATED TO STEP #4

Below is a brief summary of three books that could greatly assist a called worker in managing ourselves wisely in the midst of God's gift of time. We really can't manage time. Everyone is entrusted with the same amount on each day of grace he or she is allotted. But we can, by God's grace, find the strength to manage ourselves more wisely in the midst of God's gift of time!

- ***What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done*** by Matthew Perman (Zondervan: 2014)

Perman seeks to take the best of David Allen's ***Getting Things Done*** system (see next resource) and translate that into some gospel-focused patterns of our lives.

- ***Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*** by David Allen (Penguin: 2001)

Allen offers very practical and detailed advice on developing a system to allow us not to be overwhelmed by all the things we have to get done in all our callings in life.

- ***The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal*** by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz (The Free Press: 2003)

Loehr and Schwartz confront the lie of our hurried, digital world that we can somehow live at maximum capacity 24/7/365. They seek to help us design patterns and rituals to help us wisely move back and forth between (good) stress and (needed) recovery so as to manage wisely what they call our most precious resource for accomplishing tasks: our energy.

- ***Follow Up Then***

Follow Up Then is a free online resource (www.followupthen.com) that allows you to set up reminder emails at intervals you select. This could be a very helpful resource to jog your memory that it is time to review your goals (and revise as needed).

- Livingforwardbook.com

This is free set of online resources that correspond to Hyatt and Harkavy's book, ***Living Forward: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Get the Life You Want***. The templates they provide for what they call "Your Ideal Week" and the "Your Annual Time Block" could be particularly helpful.

CLOSING ENCOURAGEMENT

There is so much in our lives and callings as children of God that we cannot foresee in regard to God's perfect plans and purposes for us. We live by faith and not by sight. We say that with no regret, but with a great deal of comfort!

And yet, God has indeed so honored us as his children that he entrusts much in his care of this world to our faithful and devoted service to him in our God-given callings. Yes, he can and often must accomplish much without us. But he also delights to work through us as his representatives. The miraculous is not God's standard *modus operandi*. Working wonderful things through those who bear his image is.

It is that conviction of faith in his astounding plan to use sinful – but redeemed! - jars of clay that leads us to bother with this thing called planning. Even with our limited sight, it is an exercise in faith and hope and love.

- It is faith that trusts that God does use us beyond what we can even imagine.
- It is hope that in heaven we will finally see the full scope of the eternal (imagine that!) impact God chooses to have through us.
- It is love that leads us by God's powerful gospel to seek to be ever clearer and brighter glimpses of our gracious God to those he has put around us.

Yes, this whole process takes time, and it is marred by our limited wisdom and insight. And many things over the years that we plan may become casualties to the changing realities of life. But compared to many of the vain things crying out for our time and attention in this temporary world, thoughtful planning for growth in faith and in our callings is no exercise in futility!

So, in that Gospel created confidence, we seek his blessing to fan into flame our faith and our gifts!

Soli Deo Gloria!

June 24

+ The Commemoration of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist +

In the morning:

Order of devotion:	Morning Meditation (CWS 64-65)
Hymn:	By All Your Saints Still Striving (CW 552:1,12,3)
Psalm:	Psalm 1
Lesson:	Isaiah 40:1-5 The LORD reminds us of the great privilege of announcing his great salvation to a world in desperate need of it.
Canticle:	The Song of Moses (CWS 786)

At midday:

Order of devotion:	Midday Meditation (CWS 66-67)
Hymn:	Speak O Savior, I Am Listening (CW 283)
Lesson:	Acts 13:16-26 Paul gives us a vista from which to view God's saving deeds down through the centuries, including a reminder of the place in God's plan of salvation that John the Baptist fulfilled.

At the close of the day's planning:

Note: While much of the day has been spent in personal planning and meditation, this would be a wonderful time to invite others to join you for worship.

Order of devotion:	Evening Meditation (CWS 68-69)
Psalm:	Psalm 85
Lesson:	Luke 1:57-80 The birth of John and the wonderful insight into God's plan of salvation revealed by Zechariah's song.
Canticle:	The Benedictus (CW 276)

June 25

+ The Commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession +

In the morning:

Order of devotion: Morning Meditation (CWS 64-65)
Hymn: The Church's One Foundation (CW 538)
Psalm: Psalm 46 (CW and CWS offer different refrains and psalm tones)
Lesson: Isaiah 55:6-11
The LORD calls us to find our hope not in our thoughts marred by sin but in his thoughts marked by grace. He also promises that his Word will never fail to prosper in making his saving purpose for us and others bud and flourish.

Canticle: The Te Deum

At midday:

Order of devotion: Midday Meditation (CWS 66-67)
Hymn: In Christ Alone (CWS 752)
Lesson: Romans 10:5-17
God reminds you how near is his salvation to save you! He also reminds you of the privilege of being called to bring that salvation near many others.

At the close of the day's planning:

Note: While much of the day has been spent in personal planning and meditation, this would be a wonderful time to invite others to join you for worship.

Order of devotion: Evening Meditation (CWS 68-69)
Hymn: Dear Lord to Your True Servants Give (CW 542)
Psalm: Psalm 46 (Use the other version that you did not use in the morning, or simply sing A Mighty Fortress Is Your God.)
Lesson: Matthew 10:32-39
Jesus openly and honestly prepares us for the cross that will come to all who boldly confess the Crucified One. But don't miss the awesome promises of his grace that enable us not to be afraid of our cross.

Canticle: Nunc Dimittis

APPENDIX B: OPTIONAL ACTIVITY – THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY EXERCISE

This optional exercise seeks to help us think more “long term” to seek to discern as much as we can what God may have in mind to accomplish through our service as masks of Christ in each of our God-given callings.

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSINGS AS GOD’S MASKS: THINKING AHEAD TO CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

We have been called to faith in Jesus to live as forgiven children of our Heavenly Father. That is our primary CALLING in life. But along with that CALLING, the doctrine of vocation asks us to ponder the gracious truth that God gives us many other callings in life. In each God-given calling he allows us to be a glimpse of his mercy. Luther calls this being God’s masks. It is so easy to lose sight of that glorious truth in the midst of the seemingly endless and at times seemingly meaningless tasks of each day. But just as it was with Abraham, so it remains true for us: God has blessed us that we might be a blessing to others.

To help us ponder that, let’s fast forward to your 40th year since seminary graduation (for those who have already reached that milestone, think in terms of a retirement celebration). You are attending a celebration dinner that ***gives thanks to God*** for how he’s used you to impact others.⁴ Two groups have been invited to speak. One group focuses on your calling as pastor - the other on your royal priestly callings (brother, husband, father, grandfather, friend, etc.).

Spend some time pondering what you would pray these two groups might say for how God used you to impact their lives. (***Soli Deo Gloria!***).

Specifics you hope and pray that congregation members/lay leaders mention for how God’s grace allowed your life to impact them.
Specifics you hope and pray that family and friends mention for how God’s grace allowed your life to impact them.

⁴ Such celebrations at times make those in pastoral ministry uncomfortable. We are rightly concerned about our natural hearts becoming proud. But when we remember that we take seriously that God does indeed plan to work through jars of clay to accomplish his purposes, then we can remember that noting what he has done through us is simply acknowledging his grace at work. It really is not “all about us.”

Finish this exercise by pondering potential goals for this year that would move you in the direction of seeing God accomplish through your life these very things you have listed.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLES OF COMPLETED CHARTS/FORMS FROM THIS WORKBOOK

SAMPLES OF COMPLETED TASKS FROM STEP #1: REVIEW YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

Areas Related to Our Royal Priestly Callings	Blessings Received in that Area This Past Year
Spiritual life	Grew in saving more time for personal Word and prayer and recognizing that this is not time lost but time that God has promised to bless in ways beyond my understanding
Fitness/health	Became much more regular in following a plan for both aerobic exercise (3 X week) and strength/resistance training (2 x week). Increased significantly the amount of fruits/vegetables that are part of daily diet (and learned to enjoy them!)
Relaxation/recreation	Developed a better pattern of getting to bed on time so as not to live sleep deprived
Finances	Finally began a rainy day fund and a trip fund to prepare for goal of traveling to the Holy Land
Family relationships	Continued weekly bible study and planning breakfast out with my wife Enjoyed visits away in the homes of all married/out of home children.
Close friendships	This remains an area where much growth is needed – getting together with friends is far too infrequently on the calendar
Physical environment (home, workplace setting)	Reduced clutter significantly at home

Areas Related to Our Public Ministry Calling	Blessings Received in that Area This Past Year
People skills	Implemented regular staff meetings that include time to catch up on what is going on in team members' lives – has helped strengthen the sense of team ministry
Time management	Developed a better weekly planning routine that helps process “to do” list in terms of all God-given callings

Preaching & worship	Took a course on freshness and variety in proclaiming law and gospel and saw noticeable growth in reducing tired and predictable law/gospel clichés and stock phrases in preaching
Teaching adults & children	Attending a workshop sponsored by adult discipleship that focused on strategies for teaching adults – have seen growth in implementing these in adult Bible classes
Pastoral care	Trained some mature retired lay leaders to share the tasks of regular pastoral care to sick and shut-ins
Outreach & evangelism	Led a Bible study on vocation for adults that helped them grasp the natural paths for outreach and evangelism through connections God gives them right in their every-day callings from God (God has blessed this with fruit in adults now in BIC class!)
Equipping the saints /stewardship	See “pastoral care”
Leadership	Implemented/modified Geno Wickman’s book <i>Traction</i> to fit how we stay focused on annual goals as church council, boards, and committees

From all the things you listed above, write below the three blessings or areas of growth for which you are most thankful.

- Time spent with wife in Word and prayer has provided great blessings for our faith and our marriage.
- Joy of trained lay leaders in carrying out critical tasks of “pastoral care” in the congregation has been encouraging.
- **Traction** has kept council, boards, and committees much more on track with important goals for our congregation.

List below the three challenges or disappointments from last year in any of your callings for which you are having the most trouble grasping a blessing.

- The support, encouragement, and enjoyment of spending time with couples who are our friends is being mostly wasted by neglect.
- It continues to be hard to truly relax – to easily allow myself to be ruled by “to do” lists even during time off.
- Catechism instruction methodology continues to crave a fresh approach that connects with 7th-8th graders.

List in this column the two or three major recurring themes from your life this past year.	For each theme listed, note what you believe is the life lesson learned from that theme.
Learning to grow in not clock watching as I spend time in Word and prayer	I am just beginning to grasp in grace the truth that time in Word and prayer is not time lost as I live by faith and not by sight that when God is at work wonderful things happen!
Getting ready to be empty nesters at home	Beginning to learn to accept with joy the approaching new season of our lives as a gift of God rather than mourning the loss of the season that is now almost passed.
Entrusting more ministry to my lay leaders according to their gifts/abilities	I have lived far too long in the Messiah-complex that treated every important task around my public ministry calling as if it had to be done by me to be done well, God is opening my eyes to the joy of sharing ministry with well-trained partners

SAMPLES OF COMPLETED TASKS FROM STEP #2: REFLECT ON YOUR DESTINATION

(The listing below reflects what it might look like if someone completed a Strengths Finder 2.0 inventory and pondered the implications of what that revealed for his various callings.)

A gift that Christ has graciously given me is...	This gift provides a blessing in carrying out my callings by...	I am tempted to turn that gift into a weakness by...
Learner	I love to learn new things – I enjoy hearing recommendations from brothers about a good book to read	I often go to purchase one book from Amazon and end up buying three – which just builds a list of “books to read” that becomes a discouragement
Intellection	This fits with my learner gift – as I read a new book I love pondering what that might mean for all my callings	I can at times spend so much time pondering new actions that I fail to take action on things already right in front of me to do
Belief	God has blessed me through his Word and Spirit with a strong set of core beliefs that provide direction for each day	I can be far too quick to judge others when I perceive they have not thought through their core beliefs (even in areas that at times are really adiaphora!)
Strategic	I enjoy very much planning strategy for moving things from where they are toward where they need to be (I love analyzing what some have called the “is/ought gap”	Looking for how something can improve makes me slow at times to give thanks for God’s blessing on how something already is working in my family or in my congregation – I can become

		hyper critical about every weakness
Achiever	I am a careful planner of my week and my day and love being as productive as possible with the tasks in front of me	I can easily be discouraged when God does not allow the day's "to do" list to be finished – I can also easily be so focused on the "tasks" of the day that I miss the people God has put around me to serve

Unique life-stage or personal season issues are you currently facing in one calling or across all your callings?	What unrealistic expectations focused on past or future might you be wise to let go of for the present?	What opportunities for growth may God be giving you unique to your current life-stage or season?	What hope for the future can help you live in the present with greater patience and confidence?
About to become an empty nester	We have spent so much time enjoying our at-home children's activities that we can easily feel lost in that regard	We are about to be handed a time of being able to focus on being husband and wife that we never have had before since the blessing of children arrived so quickly after we were married	With more of our children having established their own homes, the joy of seeing our grandchildren being born, growing, and maturing is coming very quickly (God willing)
Entering last two decades of ministry (God willing)	I must recognize the reality of the fact that I am no longer in my prime of life as far as energy and work capability – the number of tasks completed in a day, and even the number of hours my energy will last each day, is becoming much more limited	I am just beginning to grasp the reality that what I am as I grow in the grace of Christ is more important than the number of tasks I can complete (this encourages me to unapologetically set aside large blocks of time for pondering the Word and for prayer	I trust that God may yet be showing me that the best years of ministry are these last couple decades as he allows the fruit of years of experience – and continued growth in his Word – to bear fruit as he sees fit
Entering a time when mentoring others takes on new significance	I have so easily been so task – and not people oriented – that I can easily lose sight of the opportunity to touch many more lives through others than I can ever on my own	Consciously look for opportunities to be a friend/mentor/coach to those God puts around me in all my callings	There will be joy in retirement in looking back on those God will have used me to encourage who can continue on in their callings even as mine draw to a close

Royal Priestly Callings Chart

Category	Here's what you are evaluating in this category	Current 1 (low) -10 (high) rating	List what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your life/callings
Spiritual life	Your growth in faith as a child of God – in particular as viewed through your personal devotional life of Word and prayer	8	Continuing to strengthen the pattern of a brief time of Word and prayer at noon and before supper to supplement the main time of Word and prayer in the morning (and so as to find some rest for body and soul in the midst of my "to do's" during the day)
Fitness/Health	Your current diet, control of your weight, regular check-ups with health professionals and getting sufficient exercise and sleep	6	Finally defeat the curse of my long-held habit of snacking in the evenings (thus often spoiling a whole day of eating wisely and regular exercise)
Relaxation/Recreation	Taking sufficient time off from work, doing things for fun and enjoyment with family and friends	4	Learning to relax and enjoy time away from "to-do" lists – stopping my habit of minutely planning days off and even vacations (making them as hectic as work!)
Finances	Living within your budget, maintaining a manageable debt load, saving for education and/or retirement, having an emergency fund	8	Building a rainy day fund to provide some cushion for unexpected expenses and starting an "Israel trip" fund so that this trip begins to be much more than a fond dream
Public ministry	Give this a general rating here – this will be treated much more fully in the public ministry wheel	8	Learn to become more consistent in grouping tasks from my various hats I wear in ministry so as to keep projects moving forward even when many plates are spinning simultaneously
Family relationships	Your relationship with parents, siblings, spouse, children according to the family situation into which God has called you	7	Prepare for empty nest parenting and adapting to being just husband/wife around the home
Close friendships	Building, maintaining, and strengthening your relationship with close friends	4	Especially as empty-nesting now presents more open leisure time, work with my wife to make a regular practice of enjoying time with good friends
Physical environment	This is the physical set-up of your home and work space so that you are able to live/work in a setting that is comfortable and productive	7	Finish the decluttering of the house as we move into empty-nesting so that we have a household that reflects being two rather than many more

Public Ministry Chart

Category	Here's the understanding and opportunities for growth being evaluated in each category	Current 1 (low) - 10 (high) rating	List what you believe would be the most important concrete change to make in that area of your public ministry calling.
Time management	Managing yourself in God's gift of time including planning, prioritizing, scheduling and seeking a healthy balance between time spent in various callings	7	Revisit using Evernote wisely with the Getting Things Done system and revamp the weekly planning routine so that it is not so cumbersome but includes a weekly review of all goals
Preaching & worship	Planning for and leading gospel-focused worship as well as proclaiming with all the variety of Scripture each text's unique specific witness to law & gospel	8	Grow in understanding the impact on sermon form and tone based on the type of literature the Spirit used when he inspired the writer.
Teaching adults & children	Planning a congregation's comprehensive educational ministry and teaching in a way that reflects how to most wisely communicate God's truth to each unique age group	6	Rework catechism teaching methodology so as to better engage adolescents in the Word.
Pastoral care	Providing visitation and counseling for those who because of illness, grief, or other special needs are in need of individual, focused pastoral care	8	Continue to strengthen the lay leaders already assisting with pastoral care and keep adding to their numbers with spiritually mature members
Outreach & evangelism	Helping a congregation to grow in an outreach mindset and planning and overseeing an outreach strategy that is matched to a congregation's unique ministry setting	7	Continue to provide God's people with insights in letting their light shine both in and through their God-given vocations so as to help outreach/evangelism be more a natural part of their daily living faith
Equipping the saints/ stewardship	Assisting God's people to see all of life under the Savior's gracious ownership and preparing them to put their gifts to work in the congregation and in their vocations	8	Provide additional training to those trained in pastoral visitation and have them work in partnership with the stewardship committee to do an every member visit on stewardship
Leadership	Leading with a clear understanding of one's own leadership gifts and partnering with lay leaders to assist the congregation in developing a focused ministry plan	7	Organize an off-campus leadership retreat in the fall for the council, boards, and committees to do good planning for the new year
People skills	Relating to members and prospects in a way that displays servant love like Christ's even when loving confrontation is needed	7	Begin a two-year goal of visiting every home and share encouragement and ideas for personal and family devotional life

SAMPLES OF COMPLETED TASKS FROM STEP #3: RESOLVE TO FOLLOW A PREFERRED ROUTE

What were your top three “aha’s” from the excerpt above that could prove useful in your goal setting?	List any “limiting beliefs,” as Michael Hyatt calls them, that you noted that may be at work to sabotage your goals.	Replace each of the “limiting beliefs” you listed with what Michael Hyatt calls a corresponding “liberating truth.”
Setting up a series of “if/then” statements to match challenges that will occur on the way to a goal can help me anticipate the hurdles that will come	I’ve spent too many years snacking poorly at night – I just don’t have any self-discipline in this area	In Christ, even snacking does not own me, under God’s grace I can grow in replacing poor snacking choices with wise ones (don’t just think about what I won’t do!)
For years I have too often been an unrealistic optimist so that when the initial emotion of setting the goal fades I grow discouraged far too quickly when it gets difficult	Setting goals and accomplishing them should be easy – I must not be doing it right when things get tough.	Pursuing goals that honor Christ in my life callings will always be hard since devil, world, and flesh will always oppose them. Expect difficulty – but also expect God to bless the process in his way
I have often focused so much on the bad habit I am trying to break that I fail to set up something to take its place	I will have plenty of willpower if I set my mind toward a goal (only to find out in the heat of battle how quickly I can wilt when faced with unanticipated challenges)	God has given me the ability to think through and anticipate challenges before they arise and plan (“if/then”) for how I will respond under his grace – I don’t need to be caught flat-footed

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 1
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 0 Royal priestly: 1		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	God willing, I will lose 25 pounds by the end of March. For the rest of the year I will then maintain my weight from 170-179.	Month/season Jan-March Winter
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? This has been a powerful discouragement as I believe the lie that snacking owns me. There will be a sense of relief to have conquered this long-standing challenge.		
Potential obstacle? Evening snacking is a powerful draw especially on a busy day. The lie comes that this owns me.	“If...then...” If snacking challenges strike, I will remember this habit doesn’t own me and then a) walk; b) drink water; or c) have a 150 calorie snack.	
Why this goal? This will allow me to be a better example to my family, my members, and my brothers in ministry.		
Potential obstacle? I may develop a strong sense of deprivation from what I have given up making sticking to the plan more difficult.	“If...then...” In order to lessen the sense of deprivation, I am going to enjoy a “not so good for you” snack each Friday with the family.	
Why this goal? This goal has the potential under God’s blessing of helping to slow the loss of energy as I age and to prolong – perhaps significantly my useful years of public ministry and service to my family.		
Potential obstacle? I may turn weight loss into an ever moveable idol in my life (shadow side of my achiever) so that I will not be satisfied with 170-179.	“If...then...” If I begin to fail to rejoice over the progress God gives me, I will remind myself that I once weighed 220+ and that if “looking good” is an idol, I will never be satisfied.	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!) Begin on January 9 reading the book <i>Thin Within</i> as part of evening devotions to see if this can offer helpful encouragements day by day.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 2
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 1		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	God willing, I will read an on average 175 pages of a book and 25 pages of periodicals from April through December. I will develop a log and keep track of the reading. These pages are unrelated to any current specific project assigned to me in public ministry.	Month/season April-June instituting (then maintaining)
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? I am a learner who enjoys intellection and this fits perfectly how God wired me.		
Potential obstacle? I can easily grow tired of reading when I am reading significant quantity of material for “work projects.”	“If...then...” If I am reading a lot for particular projects, during those weeks I will read less while reading more during less intense times.	
Why this goal? I have a whole set of books I’ve been meaning to read – and periodicals I’m behind on. The relief from making progress on that backlog will be encouraging.		
Potential obstacle? I may get discouraged if I have picked a book that proves to be less than helpful.	“If...then...” If I run across a book that begins to bore me, then I will simply stop reading it! (Duh!)	
Why this goal? Here again I will be a better example to those I serve of being a lifelong learner.		
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!) On my wife and my spring getaway weekend (goal #3), I will plan ways during travel to implement this goal.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 3
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 2		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	Deo volente, my wife and I will enjoy an out-of-town get-away at least 2 times during the year so as to reconnect and enjoy one another's company away from the press of the duties of our regular tasks.	Month/season Spring/Fall
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do "mental contrasting" (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the "unholy three" (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p style="margin-left: 40px;">What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use "If...then..." to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers Remember, only God's grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say "no!" and the more important "yes!" to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? Such getaways prioritize our marriage and allow us to enjoy reconnection time.		
Potential obstacle? Making sure other family responsibilities are not neglected at these times.	"If...then..." If we go away, we will seek to do it at a time when youngest has something else going on, or, is away at school.	
Why this goal? This says to one another that we value our callings as husband and wife enough to make special time available to enjoy our relationship and invest in it.		
Potential obstacle? The cost of these trips might be tough if we are also taking trips to see each out-of-the-home child.	"If...then..." If cost begins to be an obstacle, we will save on eating out so as to preserve money for this	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
Plan the first trip on Saturday, January 9 at breakfast with wife (and plan next trip on the first trip...etc., etc.)		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 4
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 3		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. - by the end of July, develop a \$7000 rainy day fund that can be used for unbudgeted expenses and for helping sons/daughters-in-law with house down payments or their own unbudgeted expenses.	Month/season End of Year (end of fall)
Is this goal... Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?		
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? We will have a sense of living in trust in God without assuming that leaping unprepared off temple pinnacles is the equivalent of trust.		
Potential obstacle? The budget for 2016 may be tighter than anticipated because of unexpected December 2015 expenses.	“If...then...” If the budget does indeed end up tighter than anticipated, I will reevaluate the time needed for this goal.	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
On Saturday, January 16, research online where the best place to put rainy day fund may be and then put \$2000 of our “2015 surplus” into this account.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner		
Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt;">5</div>
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 4		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. Spend at least 2 days this year visiting in the homes all our long-distance away from home sons/daughters-in-law.	Month/season End of year.
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? We want to maintain contact with our family who are living far from home beyond just regular phone calls.		
Potential obstacle? The cost of these trips may tax our budget.	“If...then...” If the budget seems tight, evaluate other ways to accomplish this goal at lesser expense (2 trips currently planned as flying)	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
As first get-away weekend is planned on Saturday, January 9, put into calendar proposed dates for all the visits during 2016 and share that with our family to see if it meets their schedules.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner		
Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.5em;">6</div>
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 5		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. In January 2016, establish a "Holy Land" fund that will begin to make our dream trip to the Holy Land a reality. Money for this fund will come from all "gift" income.	Month/season January (through end of year)
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do "mental contrasting" (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the "unholy three" (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p style="text-align: center;">What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use "If...then..." to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God's grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say "no!" and the more important "yes!" to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? We have long dreamed of taking such a trip. This begins to give us the enjoyment of knowing that we have begun the process that will get us there!		
Potential obstacle? Tight budget may require the use of special income to meet budgetary expenses.	"If...then..." I will re-evaluate this goal once the impact of taxes and college expenses become known.	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!) On Saturday, January 9, I will research online where to put this fund (and our rainy day fund) and then invest \$1000 of our "surplus" into this fund as well as other Christmas gift money received.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 7
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 0 Public ministry: 1 Royal priestly: 6		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. By the end of February, put in place a revised personal/professional task management system that will enable me to keep projects and these goals front and center on a weekly basis.	Month/season February (Winter)
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p style="margin-left: 40px;">What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? Having a good routine that includes a regular review of my goals (and projects) will help me to continue to make progress towards those goals and projects		
Potential obstacle? If I make the system too complicated so that it takes too much time or too much effort, I will just punt on the system.	“If...then...” I will make sure that these changes reduce the current time it takes to plan my week.	
Why this goal? This goal will assist me so that I don’t just spin my wheels or waste time tracking down materials and plans that should be readily in front of me.		
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
On Friday, January 8, I will enter into my calendar a day to devote in February to renewing and revising my current system. I will consider using Michael Hyatt’s Evernote tool as well as rapidly rereading David Allen, What’s Best Next, and the Power of Full Engagement.		

AACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner

Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 8
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 1 Public ministry: 2 Royal priestly: 5		
AACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. I will work for an 80% rate of having a noon and evening brief devotion as measured from January through May.	Month/season Winter/Spring
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p style="text-align: center;">What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? I want to take steps in trust in the power of the means of grace and prayer to find my strength in the joy of the LORD (another way to say this: I want to grow in living from the gospel!)		
Potential obstacle? I often fail to cut off my work by the time needed to get my evening devotion in.	“If...then...” If it is 60 minutes before supper, I will set an alarm to ring and then note that I cannot begin any project that will take more than 15 minutes. If it is a critical task, then it will be reassigned ASAP in the clean sweep. Then, at 45 minutes before supper, I must shift to devotion and clean sweep for the day.	
Why this goal? I want to be sure that I have not so depleted all stores of energy on my public ministry calling that I have little left for my callings as husband, father, friend, etc.		
Potential obstacle? I often keep working into the noon hour, thereby making it almost impossible to have a quiet time in Word and prayer, eat lunch, and get a nap.	“If...then...” I will set an alarm for 11:45. At that point, I will make sure I do not continue with any task for more than 15 minutes. If it is a critical task, I will look for a slot to place it before the day ends.	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
I will begin tracking this in my devotional journal on Friday, January 8.		

ACTION Goal and Action Steps Planner		
Circle area of focus: Call to faith Public ministry calling Royal priestly callings		Goal #: 9
# of goals in each area so far: Faith: 2 Public ministry: 2 Royal priestly: 5		
ACTION (Hyatt) goal:	D.V. By November 30, I will develop and beginning working a plan to do more rapid Scripture reading that includes 1) missed sections skipped by the Treasury of Daily prayer in the Testament I am currently reading; or 2) the opposite testament (finished in a year) from which I am working through devotionally during that year.	Month/season Fall
Is this goal...	Actionable? Aligned? Challenging? Timed? Inspiring? Objective? Narrow?	
<p>Below you will use the spaces to do “mental contrasting” (Halvorson) displaying realistic optimism in what the gospel accomplishes as well realism about resistance from the “unholy three” (an optimistic theology of the cross!)</p> <p>Use as many lines below as you need to answer these two questions:</p> <p>Why are you selecting this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List more than one reason how achieving this goal honors God and serves those entrusted to your care • This can also be worded in terms of picturing the <i>deo volente</i> result of this goal <p>What obstacles will devil, world, and flesh raise to block this goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “If...then...” to anticipate gospel-empowered new man answers • Remember, only God’s grace that has appeared to all men teaches us to say “no!” and the more important “yes!” to what brings honor to God and blessing to others (and us). 		
Why this goal? I want to keep a more vivid active memory on the entire flow of salvation history than I currently have since my morning routine mediates on smaller portions of the Word.		
Potential obstacle? I may get bogged down by slowing down to ponder as if this were my morning devotion.	“If...then...” Before I start, I will always remind myself the purpose of this more rapid reading.	
Potential obstacle? I may also treat this merely as a duty to complete and miss much of the blessing that can come from this.	“If...then...” Before I start I will also pray that God blesses me with reverence for what I am reading even though it will be at a more rapid pace.	
My first (timed and in my calendar) concrete action toward achieving this goal... (save for step #4!)		
On Friday, January 9, I will put into my calendar a day for planning this!		