Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 14: Personal Development Planning

Talk 6: Personal Development Planning - Spiritual Development

Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership where we are focusing on personal development planning for leaders. If you as a leader do not develop yourself you cannot expect your followers to do it. And you have to be intentional about it because human development does not just happen on its own. You are a person created in the image of God, with a mind and a will. Therefore your development should be a matter of intelligent planning.

Your personal development plan should consist of the following four elements:

Your vision of the future
Your life mission
Your goals and strategies
The values you live by

Having looked at vision and mission we started to talk about personal goals and strategies. A goal is what you intend to achieve. A strategy is how you intend to achieve it. Last time we covered the meaning of SMART goals. We explained how our goals have to be Specific, measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound. We then used physical development planning as an example of how to develop a SMART goal with accompanying strategies.

What about other aspects of our personal development? We have to develop smart goals for our spiritual development as well. Here is how John the Elder begins his third letter addressed to Gaius:

> *Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

John's prayer emphasizes holistic prosperity. John prays that Gaius will enjoy good health and that all may go well with him, even as his soul was getting along well. Today John would have written this differently. There is so much emphasis in the churches on material and physical prosperity. We even now talk of the prosperity gospel. What is glaringly absent from this so-called "gospel" is the prosperity of the soul. So John would have probably written, "I pray that you may enjoy spiritual health and that all may go well with your soul, even as you are prospering physically and materially."

You see your relationship with God is more important than anything else. It is from God that you derive your purpose, your mission, your strength and ability to endure. So you need smart spiritual goals. Now John the Elder says, "It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." So why not let knowledge of God's truth be one area for formulating smart spiritual goals. Here is a possible suggestion: "My goal is to read through the entire Bible in one year." Another goal might be: "I will memorize two Scripture passages per week this year."

Now let's turn to the area of intellectual development. We have before talked about stewardship of our minds, which means that we must love studying and learning. A Christian leader should always be improving his mind through study. Paul says "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a

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workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." But intellectual development must go beyond studying the Word of God. It must extent to a diligent study of all other areas of knowledge, not just the Bible. We have an excellent example from Daniel and his 3 friends as recorded in Dan 1. It is said

> *In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.*

These young people did not despise so-called "secular learning". I really wish Christian leaders would have this same kind of attitude. We need to be people of excellence in our learning, not only the Bible but in all other fields as well.

So, what are your intellectual smart goals? You must never stop learning. If you already have a first degree, can you do a smart goal for the achievement of a Master's degree? What about a smart goal for attending one of the many courses being offered to improve skills in areas like computing speed learning etc.? Maybe your smart goal does not even have to be in an area of formal learning with certification at the end. You can even do a smart goal in terms of reading one substantive book every month. So what are you waiting for? Start crafting your smart intellectual growth goal now.

What we have saying about smart goals can equally be applied to other areas of our lives like our professional and financial development. But I would like to conclude by encouraging you to remember social development among your smart goals. We once talked about the vital need to add value to the relationships God has given us, particularly family relationships if we are to succeed in life generally, and in our task as leaders in particular. So what kind of smart goals will you come up with in order to enhance the relationships the Lord has given to you?

You might, for example, take a lead from what Gary Chapman says about the five languages of love and coin smart social goals accordingly. Gary Chapman says that love expresses itself in five ways:

1. Quality time
2. Words of affirmation
3. Acts of service
4. Gifts and
5. Physical touch

In drafting goals you can use these five as potential areas for investing in relationships. The Bible says that we reap what we sow. This means we need to invest in relationships if we are to reap the many benefits that come from good relationships. Relationships do not run on auto-pilot. They need intentional investment of effort and time. The effort can include acts of service – going out of our way to help others to succeed or to meet their many other needs in life. Investment of time means making an effort to spend quality time with those who mean much to us. Quality time is spent talking and sharing with others – being open and vulnerable in sharing ourselves with them. Do we take an interest in other people? Do we show that we care about what is important to them? Do we take their opinions seriously? This is the sort of investment in relationships that pays a lot of dividends.

So, as an example you could coin a smart goal in terms of the quality time you will spend with your loved ones, like your wife and children. A goal could be coined like: "I will reserve every Monday evening for quality time with my family." In other words this is a time when you will not accept any other engagements because it has been designated as family time. Similar goals could be set for the way you will give eight statements of affirmation for every critical or corrective statement that you make.

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Well, our time is up. Today we have gone into some detail on the crafting of smart goals covering all aspects of our lives – the physical, spiritual, intellectual, professional and social development. I just need to end by reminding you that all these goals must be in line with our vision and mission as discussed in earlier programmes. Next time we meet we will complete our consideration of personal development planning by discussing the issue of being values driven. And now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. I thank you.

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