

Meaningless Goals

By Sandra Higley

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 6
Focus:

We each have an emptiness that only God can fill.

Lesson 6
Bible Basis:

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3;
2:1-4,10-11; 11:8-10;
12:1, 6-7

Lesson 6
Memory Verse:

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of all mankind.
—Ecclesiastes 12:13b

Students will talk about personal goals and evaluate whether they are meaningless or God-centric.

Materials:

Whiteboard and markers

As your students enter the classroom, ask them to write on the whiteboard any goals they have for themselves and their lives. If your class is meeting online, you can share your screen with a blank document, asking teens about their goals and typing their answers. Goals should be short term and long term (example: graduate with a certain GPA, get an after-school job, attend a specific university, become a surgeon, marry and have six children, etc.). Once everyone has had a chance to contribute, discuss:

➤ **What determines what kind of goals you set for yourself?** (Answers might include: seeing someone else be successful in an area and desiring the same thing for yourself, talents and skills, personal interests, etc.)

➤ **What does it take to see a goal become a reality?** (Answers might include money, opportunity, determination, skill; accept all reasonable answers.)

People come up with and pursue goals for various reasons—and while their reasons may make sense to them, they might not make sense to all the rest of us. Take, for instance, Kanye West talking about running for president. As a music star and celebrity influencer, millions of people listen to his music, attend his concert, and follow his life. But all that money, power, and attention still isn't enough for him to feel fulfilled!

Sometimes, we put our hopes and dreams into goals that will never satisfy, whether it be money, fame, power, or relationships. We get desperate to have or achieve something that just can't make us happy—it can leave us feeling frustrated and unfulfilled. Let's take a look at someone who tried it all—he set and accomplished every goal that came into his head. Let's find out how that worked out for him.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Source: Kanye West isn't going to be president, but his unconventional bid forges on
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/politics/kanye-west-presidential-bid/index.html>

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Meaningless Goals

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 6**Focus:**

We each have an emptiness that only God can fill.

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2:1-4,10-11; 11:8-10;
12:1, 6-7

Lesson 6**Memory Verse:**

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—Ecclesiastes 12:13b

Materials:

- Paper
- Pens/pencils

If your class is meeting online, invite your students to bring an index card or piece of paper, along with a pen or pencil, with them to class.

Today we learned that Solomon set goals for himself when he was young—goals that honored God. But as he got older, he shifted his focus and tried to satisfy personal longings while leaving God out of the picture. He discovered that everything is meaningless apart from God. If we keep God as our central focus, our actions will satisfy as well as please and honor Him.

Hand out one index card to each student and a pen/pencil. If your class is meeting online, invite students to have their papers and pens or pencils ready. Ask them to make a comprehensive list of their goals. This could be a repeat of what they listed on the whiteboard at the beginning of class, or a more definitive list. When they've had time to think and write, ask them the following questions (these questions are for private reflection only and not meant to be discussed aloud.)

➤ **Which of your goals is on the list because it honors God?** (Allow students to evaluate their lists privately; have them circle any that fall into this category.)

➤ **Which of your goals could glorify God if your motivation was correct?** (Again, let students make their evaluations privately. They might want to draw a box around goals that could honor God if achieved with proper motivation. Example: you might want a 3.85 grade average so that you can feel superior to others or even to have the chance of getting into a better college, OR you could do your best in order to please and honor God.)

➤ **Which of your goals leave God out of the equation entirely and are there only to satisfy a personal longing?** (Have your students underline that category. If students need an example of this type of goal, remind them that running for president because you want more power and fame is probably not a God-centric goal.)

Encourage your teens to evaluate their lists this week in light of God's Word. Challenge them

to ask God for help in removing any goals that are self-promoting and not God-centered. Urge them to ask God how to refocus any goals that could honor Him if they gave Him first place; challenge them to ask God to show them how to go about putting Him first in each of those areas.

Close in prayer.

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