



Pacific Youth
Correctional Ministries

MatchPoint® of Orange County

LIFE ACTION PLAN

I press on toward the goal to win
the prize for which God has called me
heavenward in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:14

Scripture taken from the
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Explanation of Arbitrary Punctuation

Parentheses () and Dashes — —: signify additional phrases of meaning included in the original word, phrase or clause of the original language.

Brackets []: contain justified clarifying words or comments not actually expressed in the immediate original text.

Bold: used for emphasis
not actually expressed in the immediate original text.

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Inquiries may be directed to:

R. Steve Lowe
Pacific Youth Correctional Ministries
562-596-5352
P.O. Box 8333
San Bernardino, CA 92412-8333



**There was a man in the time of Jesus who was a murderer.
He had a radical experience that changed him forever.
This event caused him to see he needed to get on with his life in a totally new way.**

**His name was Paul.
He met Jesus.**

**Jesus helped him set new goals for his life
and showed him how to reach them.
Paul wrote two-thirds of the New Testament.**

Paul said:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:12-14

MY NAME: _____

MY MENTOR: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

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THERE IS HOPE

Standing at the Crossroads

Our lives are made up of choices.
Our choices bring good or bad results.

A choice is like standing at a crossroads:
we can choose the better way to follow Jesus Christ
Who has the power to change our life
and give us hope,
or we can choose a lesser path
and go our own way.



If we really want our life to change we must be willing
to accept responsibility for our choices,
for better or worse.
Other people and circumstances may add to our problems,
but we cannot blame our bad choices
or tough things that happen to us on other people.

Some of our past choices have led to harmful results,
but God has the power
to work all things together for good,
even the results of our past sin (*Romans 8:28-29*).

No matter what your past has been like

YOU CAN BEGIN CHANGING NOW!

Change begins with making smart choices.
Making smart choices depends on...
Reading the Bible
Praying for God's wisdom

Why Plan Smart?

The Life Action Plan (LAP) will help you Make Smart Choices and gain control of your life.

Along with God's Word, it will help you **identify** problems in your life, **develop** solutions for those problems, and create a smart plan of action to **solve** problems you have identified. This plan will help you locate yourself – to figure out where you are today, and help you plan where you want to go. Here are things you will work on to take smart spiritual control of your life:

- Take responsibility for your choices
- Understand your choices have either good or bad results
- See how God uses problems to give you patience and power to stand up under pressure
- Make good action plans to help you change

JESUS - UP FRONT AND CENTER

Christians need Jesus to be the center of their lives. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit lives within all Christians, and so does the awesome power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. (*1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:18-20*) This power can enable you to overcome the influence of sin, satan, and other problems in your life. It is critical to grow in your relationship with Jesus, to get to know Him well.

Spiritual discipleship (*following Jesus and learning from Him*) is a key part of your mentoring experience. To assist you in growing closer to Jesus while completing the LAP, you will also be working through three other discipleship workbooks with your mentor. Please track your progress on page 45 of the LAP.

1. **Getting to Know Jesus** – Will help you know and experience what it means to have a close and lasting **relationship** (*friendship*) with God through trusting Jesus as your Savior and depending on His input for choices and decisions.
2. **The New Me** – Will teach you how God sees you now as a Christian, going step-by-step from your “old life” in Adam (life before trusting Christ) into your “new life” in Jesus Christ. By understanding your **position** (*where you stand*) in Christ and the awesome **power** (*ability to change*) He brings into your life, negative desires will go away. As you begin to depend on God and the truth of His Word, you will experience success.
3. **Walking in the Light** – Will help you find the path to a deeper relationship with Jesus, focusing on your new spiritual life now in **process** (*action steps*) as you walk with and grow closer to Jesus, and apply God's truthful solutions to daily choices and decisions.

The Reckless Son

There is a truth or principle of life called “cause and effect.” When we make **choices** (*cause*) they have either positive or negative **results** (*effect*). We see this truth in the story of the Reckless Son in the Gospel of *Luke 15:11-24*.

Jesus continued:

“There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed his pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ So he got up and went to his father.

But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”



The Reckless Son at the Crossroads

Consider the results of the Reckless Son's choices:

- 1) What choices did the Reckless Son make that led him into *the pit of his life*?

TOOK HIS FATHER'S MONEY

WASTED THE MONEY

WORKED WITH THE PIGS

LIVED WITH THE PIGS - The Crossroad

"...then, he came to his senses..."

- 2) What choices did he make at his crossroad that *led him back to his father*?

LIVED WITH THE PIGS - The Crossroad

"...then, he came to his senses..."

RETURNED HOME

ASKED FOR FORGIVENESS

RECEIVED MERCY

WAS FORGIVEN

At the Crossroads there is Hope!

Despite the fact you have made wrong decisions with many negative consequences, if you choose to begin to make good and smart choices, your life will improve and God will bless your efforts! The biblical story of the Reckless Son is a perfect example of someone who blew it big-time. The cause and effect of his choices led him to a place of hunger, misery, and hopelessness. But then “he came to his senses.” He made a hard but smart choice. He knew he was at an important crossroad in his life.

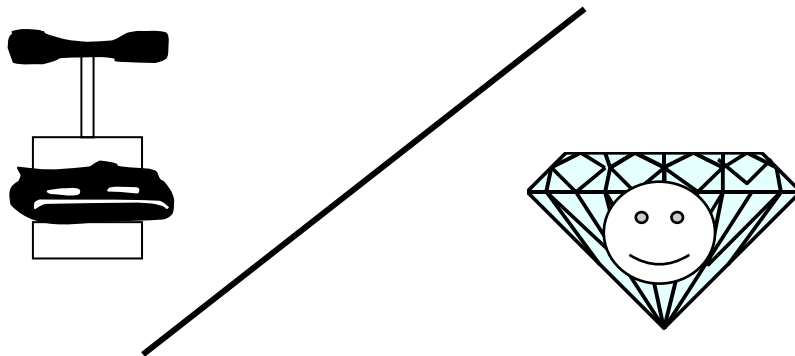
So he made a plan, and followed his plan to return to his father. He chose to change his miserable circumstances and life with the pigs by making a right decision to make a change. The young man made a plan, and then he followed his plan. **You can do the same thing.** God will bless you and give you strength when you choose to do what is best for your life.

God has Good Reasons

A diamond starts out as a lump of coal. After many, many years of intense pressure and heat it turns into a diamond, one of our most prized jewels. In the same way, God uses problems and pressures in our lives to shape us into “diamonds.” These pressures cause us to become more patient and more understanding of other people’s needs.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote about personal problems and pressures:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance (“hanging in” when it’s hard). Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4



Hope and the Power of Love

The Bible says we will surely face problems in our lives.
We can trust God to work in our lives with power and love.
God uses problems to give us patience and the choice to change.

We can count on God's amazing power to help us change because the Bible promises each of us that we can say with absolute assurance...

*"I can do all things through Him Who gives me strength."
Philippians 4:13*

PLUS

*"And my God will meet all your needs according
to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19*

We may say with certainty about ourselves:

- ◆ I have messed up my life – I have problems
- ◆ Bad things happen sometimes
- ◆ Life is not always fair or perfect

We may also say with absolute certainty:

- ◆ God controls the universe
- ◆ God knows all things – including everything about me
- ◆ God loves me unconditionally – no strings attached
- ◆ God has a good and perfect plan for my life

God is for Me

When we get to know God and trust Him, we can respond to our problems supernaturally (*with Godly power*) because of Christ's Holy Spirit Who lives inside us.

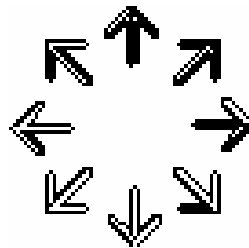
Like Jesus, Who knew God and trusted Him,
we can keep our cool in the hottest situations.

Sometimes it helps to know God uses problems and pressures in our life
so we can become the stronger and smarter person He wants us to be.

Making it Real, Giving it to God

If I really want to change with God's help,
if I really want to make positive and smart plans for my future,
I must decide to trust God.

I must give Him all my choices.



I must depend on Him for my strength and wisdom.

If this is your hope and your desire, say this prayer:

Dear Jesus,

*I know I need to make changes in my life.
I know I can't change on my own.
I know I need your Holy Spirit to help me come to my senses.
Please help me want to change.
Please help me make right choices.
Please help me stick with it.
Thank you for hearing my prayer.
Thank you for loving me.
Amen*

LOCATING MYSELF

I Locate Myself by Being Honest about My Life

The Reckless Son located (*found*) himself living in the fields with pigs and thought to himself, “What’s wrong with this picture?”

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my fathers hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.’”

Luke 15:17-18

You might ask yourself the same question, “What’s wrong with my life?
What wrong choices have I made causing me to be...”

- ◆ Locked up or in placement
- ◆ Separated from family and friends
- ◆ Feeling down all the time
- ◆ Lonely

*Part of locating yourself has to do with your TODAY.
Part of locating yourself has to do with your TOMORROWS.*

*Later in “The Plan,” you will be locating yourself
by thinking about problems
you may face
when you get released.*

BUT FOR NOW ---

LET’S BEGIN WITH TODAY

Locating Myself Today

Begin by looking at choices you made that have led you to where you are today.

I can locate myself today by honestly judging eight areas of my life

- ◆ How is my current relationship with Jesus Christ? (Spiritual)
- ◆ Do I have right thinking? (Mental)
- ◆ Where I am in my education? (Knowledge/Education)
- ◆ What about my employment? (Job/Career)
- ◆ Do I manage my money smartly? (Financial)
- ◆ Can I make new friends who will help me? (Social/Peers and Friendships)
- ◆ Do I spend my free time in positive ways? (Social/Free time)
- ◆ Am I seeking to improve my family relationships? (Family)
- ◆ Am I healthy? (Physical)



**Change that lasts is hard work.
It seldom happens overnight.
But, Jesus Christ offers us
His life-changing power.
He gives us the promise that
He will never leave us,
And is always with us.**



My Life – My Choices

On the downward steps shown below, write three wrong choices you made to bring you to where you are today. Write one choice on each step. (Example: Wrong peers.)

The Result of My Choices

#1 –

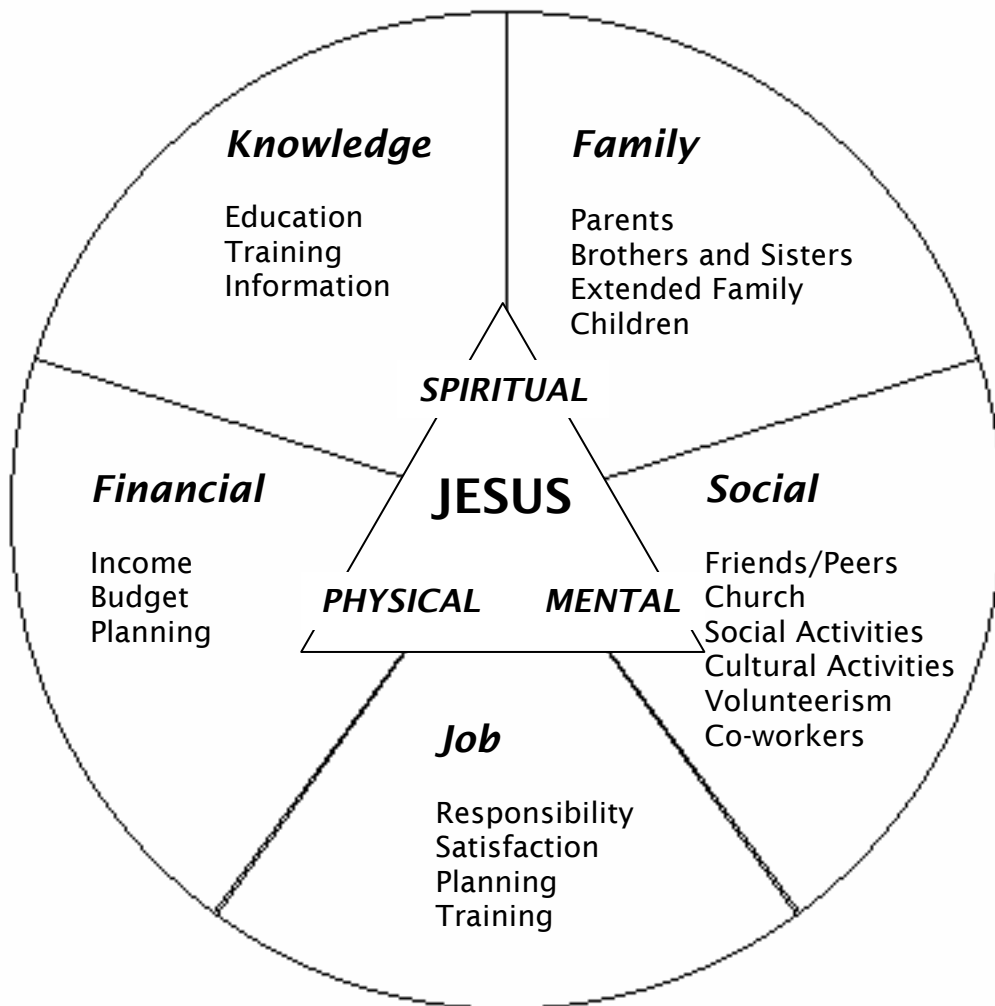
#2 –

#3 –

LOCK-UP

Wheel of Life

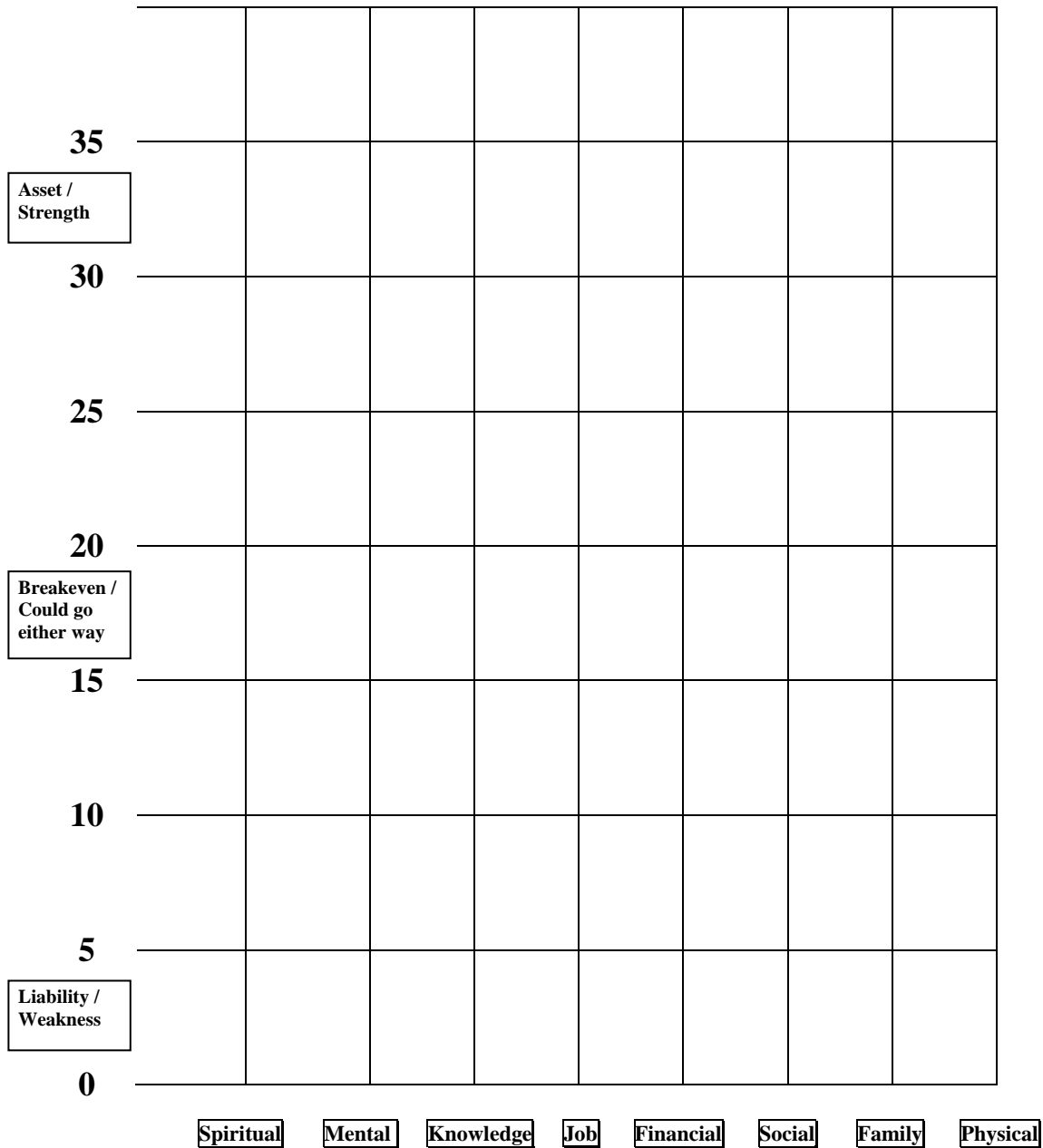
The Wheel of Life helps locate areas of my life where I need to make changes, always remembering to keep Jesus at the center and His power will transform (*change*) and bring purpose to my life.



The LifePlan Personal Performance Profile was developed by Marc Michaelson and George Pfeiffer
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Where Am I Now?

Directions: Calculate your total points from the “Where am I” worksheets on pages 18-25 of the LAP.



Adapted from PF® Life Plan Workbook

Locating Myself Tomorrow

Facing the Near Future

Check problems or pressures you may face when released.
Add anything you can think of that is not on this list.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too many choices | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting a job | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of positive friendships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual temptations | <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to live up to people's expectations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temptations to drink | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear I won't make it out there |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temptations to use drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflicts with family and friends | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection by other people | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Managing my time | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of money | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

What problem or pressure is my biggest concern? _____

Making It Happen – Making Smart Plans

Why Set Goals?

**A goal is a target,
something to shoot for.**

**A goal is a realistic target
to be worked toward and achieve.**

**Today some goals may appear out of reach,
but by applying yourself, and with God's help,
they will happen.**

***Jesus knew about goals.
Jesus had a plan.***

Jesus came from heaven to planet earth over 2000 years ago as a human baby. His mother was a sexually pure young woman. His Father was the Holy Spirit of God. Although Jesus was both human, and as God's Son perfectly holy, He made choices just like you. He made plans and had goals, but Jesus always made God's will (*God's best plan for His life*) His first choice.

“Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:52

- ◆ Jesus was educated
- ◆ Jesus had a trade (carpenter)
- ◆ Jesus learned from God and man and grew smart

Proverbs 4:4-7 speaks of the importance of wisdom.

Wisdom goes beyond knowledge and understanding.

Wisdom has to do with making smart (*wise, good*) choices.

- ◆ **Knowledge** – Getting facts
- ◆ **Understanding** – Meaning of facts
- ◆ **Wisdom** – Using facts

Goal Setting

❖ **How to SET a goal**

❖ **How to WRITE a goal**

SMART Goals are:

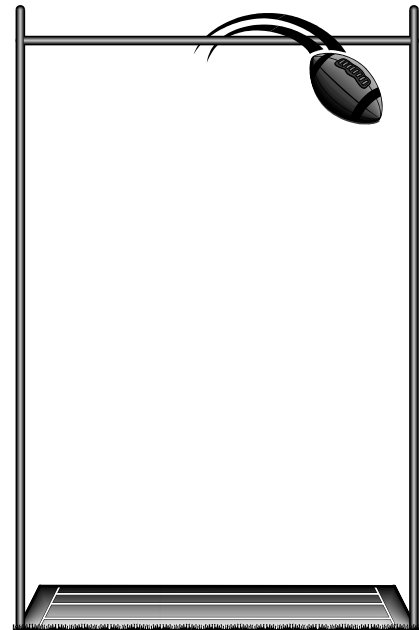
Specific – Describes exactly what I will do

Measurable – I will know if I accomplish it by seeing a difference

Assignable – If it's for me, it's up to me

Realistic – Considering the way things are today

Timeframe – Accomplished by a certain date



TOUCHDOWN !!

On the next page are your 8 smart goal target areas

- Consider where you are now
- Consider the results you want to reach
- Choose 3 target areas most important to you

What's Most Important to Me?

Directions:

1. Write your total points from the "Where am I" worksheets on pages 18-25 of the LAP in the inmost circle of each goal area.
2. Rank the **THREE MOST IMPORTANT SMART GOAL TARGET AREAS** for you to work on by placing a 1, 2, and 3 in the arrows pointing to the goal areas you select.

Spiritual

Mental

Knowledge

Job/Career

Financial

Social

Family

Physical

Adapted from PF® Life Plan Workbook

Setting Smart Goals

Looking at the prior page, list your three selected smart goal target areas and write a smart goal for each area.

Smart goal target area #1 _____

Goal #1 – _____

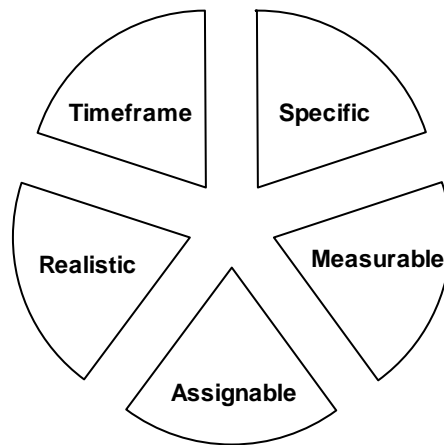
Smart goal target area #2 _____

Goal #2 – _____

Smart goal target area #3 _____

Goal #3 – _____

Smart Goals have 5 Parts



Ask yourself if each of your three smart goals fit these 5 guidelines:

1) It is **Specific**: What exactly do you want to do?

Example: Not specific: Lose weight
Specific: Lose 20 pounds

2) It is **Measurable**: How will you know when you have reached your goal?

Example: Not measurable: Get in shape
Measurable: Run 2 miles on Tuesdays and Thursdays

3) It is **Assignable**: Are you willing to handle responsibility for your goal?

Example: Not assignable: Find a ride to work with friends
Assignable: Take the city bus

4) It is **Realistic**: It is likely that you can do what you want to do?

Example: Not likely: Get a job as a restaurant manager
Likely: Get a job as a cashier

5) It is **Timely**: How will you plan to complete your goal?

Example: Not timely: Get some job applications
Timely: Apply for two jobs this week

Taking a Better Look

Write below your original goals from page 31.

GOALS	Specific	Measurable	Assignable	Realistic	Timeframe
Original Goal #1 -					
New Goal #1 -					
Original Goal #2 -					
New Goal #2 -					
Original Goal #3 -					
New Goal #3-					

Are your goals -

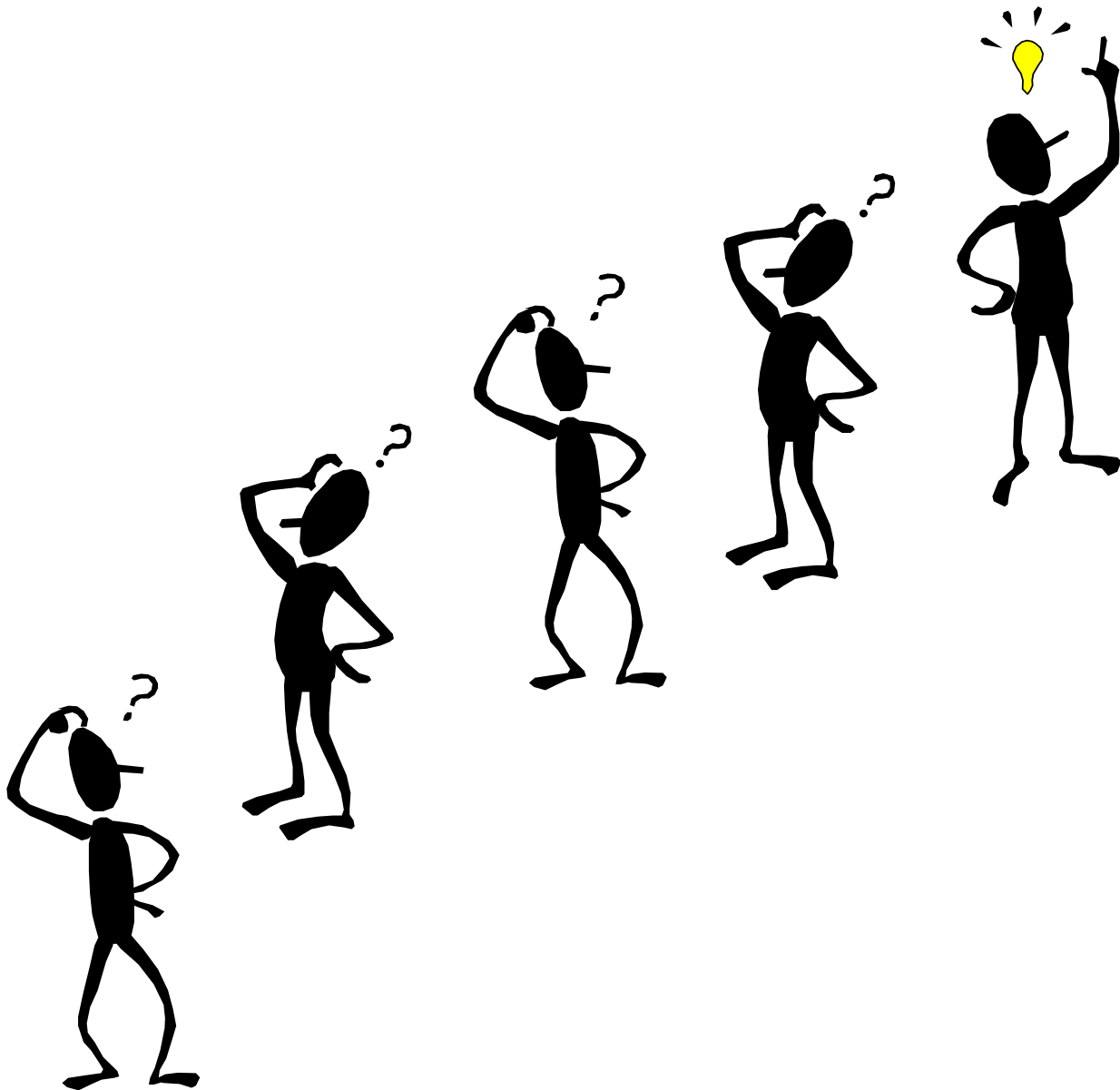
- ✓ Specific ___ Yes ___ No
- ✓ Measurable ___ Yes ___ No
- ✓ Assignable ___ Yes ___ No
- ✓ Realistic ___ Yes ___ No
- ✓ Timeframe ___ Yes ___ No

If not, write new goals that are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and measurable.

FIGURING IT OUT

The following pages will help you think deeper about setting goals for your life, and will help you think about adjusting to being outside again.

As you work through each page and think about these things, this process will help you manage areas of your life better.



Getting on with God **(Spiritual)**

You have already made the radical choice of allowing God to change your life. Progress must continue to be sure your new life action plan is a success. Growing closer to God will be more difficult on the outs than you expect. Life will offer many distractions and reasons to draw you away from God. Your smart choices to attend church, Bible study, and have a mentor are choices that have already made a positive difference in your life. God wants nothing more than to see you succeed and to grow in your relationship with Him.

The following questions will help you continue to grow closer to God.

1. How much has God helped me to change my life?
_____ None _____ A little _____ A lot
2. Do I want God to continue changing me? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Do I think I can continue to change without God's help? _____ Yes _____ No

If "yes," pray this prayer to God right now.

Dear God,

*Thank You for every thing You have done for me.
Your love has made a difference.
I want You to pull me closer to You, especially when I am released.
I can't change without You.
I'm depending on You to keep me on track.
Thank You for hearing my prayer.
In Jesus' name,
Amen*

4. Where will I go to church outside? _____
5. When does church meet? _____
6. Who can take me to church? _____
7. How many hours do I think it will take each week to go to church, read my Bible, pray, and continue discipleship with my mentor? _____
8. Am I willing to give God this time? _____ Yes _____ No

Setting My Mind (Mental)

Your battles in life are won or lost in your mind. The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of right thinking, because right thinking leads to right choices. Right thinking takes effort. Old thought patterns must be replaced with wisdom. God promises to help give you a new mind if that is your choice. You can think clearly, reason well, and see life the way God sees your life. Your mind and thought life is very important. God considers your care of your mind to be “job one!” You can begin caring for your mind by answering the following questions:

1. How has my drug or alcohol use affected my thinking?

2. How has day dreaming, fantasy, or escaping reality affected my thinking?

3. Am I willing to make an effort to begin thinking about what I think about? (*the Bible calls this taking each thought captive*) _____ Yes _____ No



***Do not be surprised when God does not allow you
to say or do things that are not true,
He is leading you in the way of truth.
Truth is the way to right thinking.***

Finishing School **(Knowledge/Education)**

Finishing your education reduces the chance for delinquency. It is true that education is a key factor in getting jobs that provide higher salaries as well as higher possibilities for job satisfaction. The following questions will help you plan steps to complete your high school education, as well as considering additional steps toward higher education you would like to pursue.

1. Am I currently working on completing requirements for:
 _____ G.E.D. certificate
 _____ High school diploma

2. What is my target date for obtaining a certificate/diploma? _____

3. What must I do to finish the requirements and meet the target date?

4. If I pursue a G.E.D. certificate, do I also want to pursue my high school diploma?
 _____ Yes _____ No

5. If yes, my target date and steps for acquiring a high school diploma are:

6. What other types of education would I like to pursue?

EDUCATION	AREA OF INTEREST	FIRST STEP
Junior College		
Senior College or University		
Trade School		
Military		
Other:		

Finding a Job **(Job/Career)**

The following questions can help you plan steps you can take in looking for a job.

1. What skills or talents do I have?
(Skills learned from previous jobs, special training, and other experiences)

2. What skills did I use in my criminal life?
How can these same skills be used for “doing good?”

3. How can I improve my skills or education?
Can I ask someone to tutor me in a subject or skill or write a resume?

4. How will I go about looking for a job?
Do I have friends who may know about job openings where they work?
Would they introduce me to the people in charge of hiring?

5. Write one specific goal for getting a job.

Being Smart With My Money

(Financial)

Make a list of the **needs** I will have after being released from juvenile hall.

Make a list of my **wants**. What choices do I have to meet my needs? (For example: If I need a way to get to and from my job I may want a new car, but is buying a used car or taking the bus a better choice for my budget?)

NEED	WANT	OTHER WAYS TO MEET THE NEED
Example: Transportation	New sports car	Used car or bus money

To help you know how to budget money when on the outs, take a look at Fred’s needs below.

Helping Fred

Fred has a job driving a delivery truck. He is paid \$7 an hour and is paid twice a month. Each paycheck is about \$480 after taxes, so Fred can count on bringing home about \$960 a month.

Rent for apartments in Fred’s town are \$400 to \$700 a month. Utility bills (*gas, electric*) cost about \$50-\$75 a month.

Fred looked through the newspaper and saw a room to rent for about \$200 a month, but that won’t give him much privacy. He also saw some people looking for roommates.

Being Smart With My Money – continued

How can I help Fred use his money smartly? How much money can he spend on some of his wants after meeting his real needs?

If you were Fred, what would you plan to spend in each area listed below?

EXPENSE	MONTHLY AMOUNT
Housing	
Transportation (<i>gasoline, car payments, bus fare, etc.</i>)	
Food	
Utilities (<i>gas, electric</i>)	
Telephone	
Clothes	
Medical/Dental	
Fun/Entertainment	
Tithes/Offerings (<i>money given to the church</i>)	
Savings*	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	

*You (and Fred!) should plan now to save part of your paycheck each month. This is good planning for the future.

You don't want to get caught with an unexpected need (*like your car breaking down or getting sick and missing work*) and not have extra money to take care of it. You may not be able to save much at first, but get in the habit of saving something no matter how small an amount!

I Need Help
(Social/Peers and Friendships)

It is important to spend time with people who will encourage you and help you reach goals. The following questions can help you find the kind of support you need.

1. What are some ways positive support groups can help me both inside or in placement, and after I am released?

2. Do I see any problems in finding good support groups? If so, what are they?

3. Can I think of any ways to overcome these problems?

4. What is one support group I might get into while at juvenile hall or placement?

Free Time/Crime Free
(Social/Free Time)

The following questions can help you look for good ways to use your free time.

1. What negative habits do I want to stay away from?

2. Are there certain friends I should not see anymore because they could pull me back into old habits?

3. What places should I stay away from?

4. What are good ways to use my free time? For example:

a. Do I have an interest or special skill I want to work on?

b. Can I serve others through church or community activities?

c. How can I exercise my mind – rather than just kicking back?

5. What are some changes I can make right now to use my free time? For example: Attend a vocational program, exercise, go to a library, or do a craft.

6. With your mentor's help, set at least 1 smart goal for using your free time.
(see pages 32-33 for help on setting smart goals)

Improving My Family Relationships

(Family)

How important is family to God? Family is so important that God has built all of civilization on the shoulders of the family unit. God's best intention for the family unit is that it be a caring, loving, safe place for adults and children. But this doesn't always happen. Wrong choices by parents and their children lead to divorce, multiple partners, abuse, and social alienation. It is God's desire for broken and damaged families to be healed. In your family's life, this healing can begin with you.

Please refer back to page 24 and review your answers to the seven questions about you and your family. Then discuss with your mentor which family goal(s) you will begin to improve.

1. With your mentor's help, set at least 1 smart goal for improving your family relationships.
(see pages 32-33 for help on setting smart goals)



Getting Healthy

(Physical)

God has given you a body to live in. The Bible says your body (*earth-suit*) is the temple of God, because God lives in your body when you become born again by His Spirit. Your level of health and fitness determines the quality (*condition, kind*) of life you live. Looking and feeling your best depends on nutrition (*what you eat*), exercise, and getting regular sleep.

Be honest with yourself as you answer the following questions:

1. How has my drug or alcohol use affected my body?

2. How have my irregular sleep patterns affected my body?

3. How have my eating habits affected my body?

4. With your mentor's help, set at least 2 smart goals to become a healthier person.
(*see pages 32-33 for help on setting smart goals*)

Goal #1 – _____

Goal #2 – _____

GETTING SMART – STAYING SMART

Reaching My Goals – Tracking My Progress

GOAL – Write a smart goal for each area below.	START DATE	TARGET DATE	ACTUAL DATE
Spiritual			
Mental			
Knowledge / Education			
Job/Career			
Financial			
Social / Peers and Friendships			
Social / Free Time			
Family			
Physical			
DISCIPLESHIP			
<i>Life Action Plan</i>			
<i>Getting To Know Jesus</i>			
<i>The New Me</i>			
<i>Walking In The Light</i>			

~ NOTES ~