

Larry Tomczak: Fresh Motivation to Turn Your Dreams Into Reality

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you intend to be.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“What the new year brings to you depends upon what you bring to the new year.” – *Vern McLellan*

“The bad news—time flies. The good news—you’re the pilot.” – *Anonymous*

To encourage all of us to start 2022 successfully, I wrote a previous article that I encourage you to read. This gives you fresh motivation to turn your dreams into reality! Whether regarding a career, mate, family, ministry, business, weight-loss, health breakthrough or long-pursued goal, your future is in God’s and your hands.

Right from the get-go, understand there are no shortcuts. Abraham Lincoln said, “I will prepare myself and one day my time will come.”

When tempted to become discouraged, remember how Abe drew upon discipline to persevere:

- 1831 – failed in business
- 1832 – defeated for legislature
- 1833 – again failed in business
- 1835 – sweetheart died
- 1836 – suffered nervous breakdown
- 1838 – defeated for Speaker
- 1840 – defeated for Elector
- 1843 – defeated for Congress
- 1848 – again defeated for Congress

- 1855 – defeated for Senate
- 1856 – defeated for Vice-President
- 1858 – again defeated for Senate
- 1860 – elected President of the United States

Roll Tide

For the sixth time in seven years, Alabama's Crimson Tide rolls into the College National Championship game; this time against Georgia, whom they vanquished weeks ago. Nick Saban's teams are known for their discipline.

Winning the semifinal game against an undefeated Cincinnati team that had one of the best defenses in college football, Bama gave a fifth year senior his first opportunity to run the ball at this level. Out of obscurity, running back Brian Robinson responded with a record-setting performance. In the post-game interview, he said it was a "dream come true," stating repeatedly how the discipline of preparing himself was key to his success.

Must-See Film

Leap over *Spider-Man* and instead take your spouse, children, your whole church to see the phenomenal film *American Underdog*. Learn how a castoff athlete faced adversity, ending up stocking shelves in a supermarket yet one day became the MVP of the Super Bowl! Kurt Warner's discipline has inspired millions.

5 Tips to Becoming More Disciplined

1. Celebrate the reality that discipline is not legalism but freedom and a fruit of the Spirit. Secure in our acceptance by God through the finished work of Jesus on the cross, we no longer are striving by performance and dead works in our Christian lives! Discipline is a character quality in our lives initiated and sustained by the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23), now that we have been set free from the power of sin to serve the living God (Rom. 6:11-14).

As new creations, we are empowered to choose not what we feel to do but what we know to do to please God and achieve God's plan for our lives. Peter tells us that without self-discipline, we will be "ineffective and unproductive" (2 Pet. 1:6, 8), which none of us want as Christ's followers.

2. Repent of any areas of an undisciplined lifestyle. Once and for all, turn away from all compromising and covering over "besetting sins that have so easily entangled you and run with perseverance the race before you fixing your eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of your faith" (Heb. 12:2).

"Lazy dreamers will never achieve the high goal of spiritual maturity without self-discipline—in appetites, emotions, moods, speech and priorities." – *Richard Shelley Taylor*

I recommend the author's book "The Disciplined Life" to dig deeper and derive life-changing results.

Start the new year with a clean slate! Make a quality decision that you will now regulate conduct by principle rather than impulse. "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1).

When Alexander the Great came upon a soldier asleep at his post, he asked him his name. The trembling soldier said, "Alexander, sir." The brilliant commander challenged him as Christ does us: "Change your conduct or change your name!"

3. Establish daily, quality communion with God as your first priority. Jesus set the example. If we can't establish consistency here, it's just like missing the first button on a shirt, then everything else veers off from there! There simply is no substitute for regular time in scripture and prayer to become the mature, disciplined man or woman of God we're called to be.

"Now in the morning, having risen a great while before daylight, He went out and departed into a solitary place and

there He prayed" (Mark 1:35).

4. Seek out a friend for support. Jesus sent out the disciples in pairs so they would be accountable and supportive of one another. Disciple means a "disciplined one." We don't come to maturity in isolation.

"Two are better than one... If one falls down, his friend can help him up" (Eccl. 4:9-10).

When I was converted at the age of 20, I sought out a friend passionate for Jesus so we could share encouragement and accountability. We took turns calling each other each morning, which helped us get out of bed and get going on the day. From our friendship forged in those early days came a ministry of tens of thousands that spanned the United States and abroad.

5. Start small and stay the course! Scripture tells us, "Do not despise the day of small beginnings" (Zech. 4:10). Remember the nugget from the 5 million bestseller, *Atomic Habits* "Small Changes/Remarkable Results."

One of the most influential educators and the man considered the "Father of American Psychology," William James, told us, "Take the first opportunity to act on a good intention!" Don't wait until tomorrow to seize the opportunity God is putting before you as you cross over into 2022!

Make a quality decision that you are going to persevere in the process. "Starting is easy. Sticking is hard." As you sit down and write out some of the goals God is giving you for the new year, realize setbacks and discouragements will come but you will not cave!

Another resource I commend to strengthen you is a previous article I wrote, "The Secret of Success is Not a Secret." We don't begin by taking on Goliath, but rather we go step by step like David did by first handling a lion and then a bear (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

Develop a disciplined life by starting out in what may appear to be small and insignificant areas of daily living (making your bed, clearing the counter of clutter, being punctual, paying bills on time, etc.). This enables you to develop success and confidence for the more challenging tasks ahead.

Here's the Deal: Make a quality decision right now to “strike while the iron's hot” to make 2022 the finest of your life for the glory of God! “I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it but this one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on to win the prize for the goal for which Christ Jesus has called me heavenward. Let those who are mature be thus minded” (Phil. 3:13-15). {eo}

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