

Family Action Ideas



New Year—New Directions: Charting a course with God

Of the three **T's** one must master in their service to God (time, treasure and talents), time seems to be the most elusive to us in the developed world. Moments fly by, minutes run like sand through our fingers, hours seem to shrink until we pause and wonder where the day went! Think how quickly 2010 passed.

For this reason, one of the things we emphasize in *Mission As Life* is being intentional. We all know that the things on which we focus are the things which will be accomplished during the year. Being intentional is not the same thing as having good intentions. Being intentional involves planning, setting goals, and scheduling.

Celebration of the New Year for me involves a number of important activities.

- First, my wife Jacque and I **reflect on the past year**. What were the highlights of the year? How did we see God's hand in our life and work? Were there areas where we fell short in our responsibilities to Him? What are the areas where we are spiritually weak or that have been neglected? This inventory taking is valuable in so many ways. We want to see how God has been faithful and provided so that we will be emboldened to launch out into deeper waters of faith this year. We want to allow God to strengthen and shape us into better tools for His use. We want to be more faithful with what and in what He has entrusted to us. We take time to discuss all of this together knowing that we have different perspectives and insights, knowing we have blind spots and needing wisdom God has given each of us. We are one flesh.
- Next, we **set goals for the next year**. This is part of what it means to be intentional. The more we can schedule or nail down, the more likely they will get the appropriate attention. We set financial goals, part of which involves freeing up treasure for God. We set time goals. We set aside time to be with God and serve Him, individually and together. Together we dream in faith. We want our goals to exceed what we are capable of doing by ourselves. We want our goals to reflect the bigness of the God we serve. **We want goals that require God to step in to accomplish them.**

How intentional are you and your family when it comes to your life with Christ? Are you all on the same page, or are you all going in 5 directions at once? What follows are some things you can do as a family that will enrich your life together in the Lord this year. You may not be able to do them all but you can certainly do some of them.

- **Make January a month of reflection and goal setting.** A good place to start is at the dinner table. Talk about how God has blessed your family this past year. Talk about areas where you think you individually and as a family need to grow. What will you do to increase scriptural knowledge, apart from attending church? What will you do to increase obedience to scripture, and hence God, over the next year? What are things you need to drop to free up time, treasure, or talents for God?
- **Make one night a week a family date with God.** Take one night a week over the next year and turn it into a night where you as a family together seek God. Each family member can take responsibility for a different date night and present the Bible study or challenging missional story (adults can help the smallest children do their part). The goal is to help all family members become

adept at sharing their faith and deepening their knowledge of God and His agenda in the world. It is a time of increasing mission vision and allowing God to capture your heart. It should be a time that goes beyond factual knowledge (though that is essential), goes beyond mere devotional reading (though that is important) and emphasizes a holistic understanding of God and His word. At the end of the year every family member should be able to clearly explain the why, what, how, who and when of salvation. A great goal would be to take the *Nicene Creed* and go through it, finding the scripture that supports each section, and have the creed memorized by the end of the year.

- **Plan monthly family local outreaches for the year.** Together as a family, plan a monthly outreach in your local community where you as a family can serve together. Make sure everyone has input. I'm sure you will find that each family member may have a different idea of where they would like to serve. Part of what you need to do after each service experience is to sit down as a family and discuss what happened and what you learned (great activity for the weekly family date with God).
- **Plan a family mission trip for the year.** Serving together on a family short term mission trip can become a highlight of the year. Together discuss where you would like to serve and when. Be sure that the kids have input in this as well.
- **Turn your family into treasure hunters.** Together sit down and set goals for giving to missions that is above and beyond what you usually give in church. Together talk about what each one of you can do to generate more treasure for advancing God's Kingdom. Odd jobs, baby sitting, yard sales, etc., are just some ways your kids can raise funds to advance God's Kingdom. Sit with them and decide where the money will go each month. I strongly recommend picking a mission agency or missionary and becoming a long term monthly supporter of them. As a minimum step, consider taking on the Mustard Seed challenge of saving change and sending it quarterly to Mustard Seeds and Mountains.

With the right attention, you and your family can chart a course that will not only increase your knowledge of God over the year, but deepen your devotion and commitment.

God bless you and your family. I pray that you see an amazing transformation in your spiritual life as you seek to more fully obey and serve Christ.

For the Kingdom,
Randy and the Staff at Mustard Seeds and Mountains.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.