

January 5, 2024

## You In 5 Years – (Part 1) Small Steps, Big Results

Welcome VVCC to the first Sunday gathering of the New Year. It's 2024.

Our purpose as a church is to help each of us take steps from wherever we are to where God wants us to be.

Welcome to part 1 of this new series, "You in 5 Years", the title today is "Small Steps, Big Results."

We begin this morning with a series of introductory questions...to help us think about the steps to "You in 5 years."

### QUESTIONS:

1. What could your life look like by the first Sunday in January 2029? What would it take to get there?

[Do the math...how old will you be?] Write it down. [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

2. How many of you have in the past experienced a failed New Year's Resolution?

3. How many of you have given up on making New Year's resolutions?

I believe this series has the potential to raise your success rate far beyond the new year! Anyone interested??

We tend to overestimate what we can do in the short term and we tend to underestimate what we can do in the long term.

4. What are small steps that could have big results if you were consistent for 5 years?

### Examples Just to get us thinking.....:

- If you read 6-7 pages a day you will have read 60 books in 5 years (average page length 200 pages).
- If you work intentionally on a book idea ten minutes a day ... and write a little, you could write a book.
- 5 years is plenty of time to learn another language.

- Is 5 years enough time to “get in shape” by small steps?
- 5 years is enough time to radically reshape your life... spiritually, or relationally.

Small steps, big results is a neutral idea. Not all small steps are equal. We are all already taking small steps on our life path right now. The question is where are these steps taking us?

5. What if you do nothing different? Where is the path of your current small steps leading you?

- Some paths will lead to divorce in 5 years...or less. Neglect your spouse and it doesn't take long.
- Some paths lead to prison.
- Some paths lead to major life threatening addictions.
- Some **work patterns** lead to having to change jobs repeatedly over the next 5 years.
- **SPENDING PATTERNS** over 5 years can rack up a mountain of debt.
- **EATING PATTERNS over 5 years look far different than 1 year.** 1 inch on the waist line isn't as noticeable as 5 inches... that same pattern for 5 years. 5 pounds in 1 year is not as noticeable as 25 lbs, that same pattern over 5 years.

6. Since five years is a long enough time to get really healthy or really unhealthy, what will it be for you?

...mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally

I. The ways you **LET IN** become the ways you are **SET IN**

*Galatians 6:7 (NIV) Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

The statement “you reap what you sow” is a neutral statement. You can sow good things and reap good things. You can sow bad things and reap bad things. It's neutral.

“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

So...Why do so many New Year's resolutions fail?

II. **SELF-HELP** does not go far enough

**Self-help is little help when self is the problem.**

- God teaches us the truth about ourselves.
- What is the truth about every self?
- We all struggle with the problem of SIN.
- What is sin? Sin is usually defined as “missing the mark”. Sin is not just a bad shot that misses the target, SIN is the human tendency to want to aim for the wrong thing.
- SIN is NOT just a behavioral problem, it's a heart problem.

- SIN is a problem inside of us. It's WHY we think the wrong things, and want the wrong things, and do the wrong things.
- SIN is basically SELF-CENTERED rather than GOD-CENTERED.

Not just “missing to the mark” to the right or left a bit... It's more like shooting at a target 100 yards away with a cracked bow and a crooked arrow.

Our broken equipment without God's solution will always fall short.

*Romans 3:23 (NIV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

TRYING harder with broken equipment doesn't work.  
SO WHAT DOES WORK? Paul describes it this way!

*Galatians 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

That sounds mysterious... What does that look like?

- “Living by faith in Jesus” is a completely different way to live...because we have been made “New Creations” (**Galatians 6:15** & 2 Corinthians 5:17) The old way gone, the New Life begun!

WHICH WAY WILL IT BE FOR YOU... the old way? or the NEW?

*Galatians 6:7–8 (NIV) Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. \* Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

- “FLESH”: (“bodily appetite” yes, but more– it is the “self-centered pattern we have based on our inherited SIN nature)... that's what Jesus came to deal with for us.
  - What does the OLD way reap? DESTRUCTION! (v. 8)
  - What does the NEW way reap? ETERNAL LIFE!
    - The OLD way... by self directed effort!
    - The NEW way ...by faith in Jesus!

I. The ways you LET IN become the ways you are SET IN

II. SELF HELP does not go far enough

### III. **SMALL seed habits make a HUGE difference over TIME**

*Galatians 6:7 (NIV) . . . A man reaps what he sows.*

- Think in terms of SEEDS which are SMALL and what these do over TIME.

You can accomplish more over time by sowing small seeds by faith than by your herculean efforts.

VIDEO “Habits Domino Video Illustration.mp4”

- And that's how over time, ongoing consistency trumps short-term flared up intensity.

"New goals don't deliver new results. New lifestyles do. And a lifestyle is a process, not an outcome. For this reason, all of your energy should go into building better habits, not chasing better results."

—James Clear, *Author of [Atomic Habits](#)*

**NEXT STEPS: (Talk It Over / THINK It Over QUESTIONS)**

**ESP: # 5, 6, 7**

Thank you for coming today. I hope you have been encouraged.

1. **Connect Card** (information Table, gift bag for you)
2. **Prayer Cards (in giving box)**
3. **Or Prayer TEAM**



**Talk It Over**

You In Five Years

Part 1

“Small Steps, Big Results”

## **SMALL TALK**

1. Have each person pick 2 questions from the 6 introductory questions and share their answers.

## **VIEWPOINT**

2. **Read Galatians 6:7.** What does this mean?
3. **Read Galatians 6:7-8.** What does this mean?
4. **Read Galatians 1:6-7, 2:16, 3:28, 5:1, 19-23.** What is Paul's main theme in his letter to the Galatians, and how does this give context to the truth of "you reap what you sow"?

## GETTING PERSONAL

5. So what does the "Small Steps, Big Results" look like in the life of faith? What does "Small Steps, Big Results" look like in a life that lacks faith in Jesus?
6. Everyone is taking steps... but not every path is taking us where we want to be in 5 years? Do you have any ideas about where you want to be that will require different steps than you are currently taking?

## MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

**Action Step Challenge.** Write down dreams and ideas in a rough draft brainstorming session about who you want to be in five years with God's help.