



At the start of this month I did my [Reflections on 2014](#). January is usually a time for resolutions or goals. Reading over my reflections post, listening to the [Stuff I Learned Yesterday](#) podcast, and being sick this weekend got me thinking about goals for the year.

OK, let's break this down a little. Taking the time to look at last year and share that with others got me thinking. I saw areas where I struggled and where I succeeded. I remembered how important family, family of God, and friends are to me. I was the Lord's faithfulness to me through it all. All that and a point I brought up about not journaling leads me to my first Goal.

1. Write more this year.

The older I get, time seems to pass more quickly. I think one of the major issues we face in our culture is a lack of reflection and truly appreciating the moment. We suffer with F.O.M.O. (fear of missing out) we are so busy trying to take in the "live streams" of social media that we neglect those around us and what the Lord is trying to teach us. So it is my desire to journal Sunday through Thursday nights before bed. I have a beautiful old roll-top desk and rolling chair that were my Granddad Gentry's. I intend to sit down and reflect on the day, record prayer requests and let things out on paper. The entries don't have to be long, but I want to be consistent. I've journaled (off and on) for over a decade and I find the

Lord uses that to help me lay down the day's burdens, lift up prayers and remind me of His faithfulness. The second part of that goal, is what I'm doing now. I want to blog more often. I started blogging with Xanga years ago and it was (a little) less intimate sharing about the day or the week. I'm not going back to that, but I do want to share more often. Part of that is opening up time to listen and reflect and then letting the words flow. Because when I do, the Lord is faithful to share through me.

2. Learn, experience, and share more freely.

The Stuff I Learned Yesterday podcast is a great encouragement to look at everyday life and realize that you can learn something every day if you take the time. I want to challenge myself to be in the moment more, learn more, experience things and most of all share it with others. I can do that sharing here on the blog, via social media and by one on one conversations. I want to encourage those around me and those I know via social media, by sharing with them and encouraging them in the things they have taught me. Yes, you can be involved in social media and learn as well as share!

I've been a part of the #fmsphotoaday [challenge](#) for several years. Each day you are given a word or phrase prompt and you use your mind and skills to capture that prompt. I want to continue doing the challenge, but I want to use it to show the beauty of God's creation. God has created a marvelous world and beautiful people. I want to capture more of that and show Christ's redeeming grace through it all. That is just one part of goal 2. Goal 2 leads to goal 3.

3. Cherish God's Word and serve His people.

I admit I'm not digging into the bible as much as I should. This year I'm trying to focus on it more in my personal quiet times, homegroup and Sunday's at church. I'm not gifted like some to be a teacher, but in studying to teach at homegroup I learn more. Out of knowing the Lord more through His Word, comes a desire to serve. I'm loving the challenge of serving Him at [Antioch](#) and [Arts Alive](#) in the ways I have in the past and in new ways as the Lord leads. Serving is a spiritual gift for me, but motive matters. I serve because it is easy for me, I serve because it helps me find a place & purpose, but too often I miss that fact that serving is to bless others. Christ served others but he never let the act of service overshadow ministering to the person (See the story of Mary & Martha). He loved and

cared for those He served. That is a heart attitude I want to cultivate this year.

OK now we get to the point where you have forgotten the last of the three things that lead me to do my goals or you are scratching your head as to why. You are thinking how does being sick get him thinking about making goals?

Well let me explain. I had a very busy week of work and dealt with post-nasal drip & sore throat all week. But by Friday that and my sinuses had worn me flat-out. By the time 4 p.m. rolled around, I was DONE. Work last week at school was busy and the coming week is even more so, with the end of the semester work I do and the report card work. I'm so thankful for a 3 day weekend. The Lord knew it is what I needed. He has helped me know myself and know when to say no. I made the decision to rest all three days. I'm grateful that one of the guys on the A/V crew at church stepped up and covered the men's breakfast audio recording and working ProPresenter (for the song lyrics and sermon slides) for the service today. I hate missing church and men's breakfast. But I listened to my body and am doing what's best.

One part of today that I will really miss is our church's New Year's prayer time. The families, couples and singles of the church gather and come up to be prayed for and over by the elders and anyone else in the body who feels led. It is one of the traditions I LOVE about Antioch. It is humbling to stand and have a group of people pray over you and have them share the words the Lord has given them to share to you. I need it and hopefully will be prayed over soon. But what I love even more is being a part of that service. I love opening up and letting the Lord share His words of encouragement and challenge over my brothers and sisters. So that leads me to my last goal.

4. Pray more in a more consistent and focused way for my family, family of faith, friends and the world.

There are needs and needy people all around us. Even though I enjoy prayer as part of my daily relationship with God, I too often get busy or self-focused to pray for others. My desire is that when I have finished journaling for the day, I spend time praying. I want to focus first on my relationship with the Lord, then the needs of others and then mine. I'm connected to people all over the world and it is a blessing to be able to pray for them. I know how much of a blessing prayer is to me and I don't need to neglect it for others!

I see these goals not as self-improvement, but ways I can surrender to the Lord and be made more like Christ. I hope as you look at your goals you will focus your needs but not just you. God made us to live in community. We live in a community of family members, community of friends and neighbors, and most of all a community of brothers & sisters in Christ (both locally and world-wide) that will exist in eternity. Remember through it all we make plans but the Lord has the full plan.

Jeremiah 29:11 English Standard Version (ESV)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare^[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (<http://biblegateway.com/>)

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