

CREW Bible Study

Message Series NOW & LATER – Week 3

About this series: We're all making decisions now that can affect our later—our future—whether we like it or not and whether we realize it or not. And while many students may get this intuitively, there's often a competing idea that what they do now doesn't really matter in the long run. That's why, in this series, you'll be leading students to the secret behind good decision-making: wisdom. Through the wisdom found in Proverbs, you'll help students learn what it looks like to apply wisdom to their everyday decisions NOW, which can lead them to a better life and a better future LATER.

- **BOTTOM LINE:** The end you want tomorrow is connected to what you do today.
- **GOAL:** To help students realize that setting and reaching goals now can lead them to the places they want to be and the person they want to become later.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. – Proverbs 14:23*

MESSAGE

What was the last goal you set for yourself? And did you achieve your goal?

In these days of social distancing, with school online and sports and activities cancelled, so many things that were supposed to happen are not happening. And because of that, maybe the goals you had set for yourself are literally on pause. But think about those goals again for a minute and ask yourself this: When it comes to goals, would you say you are more "*walk the talk*" or "*just talk*"?

Some of us are really good at thinking about and talking about our goals, but we never quite achieve them. We're just talk. We start off with the best intentions, but when the work we have to put in gets harder, we back down. Or the goals are so big, we don't even know where to start. Or the pressure and anxiety over achieving the goal is just too much. We don't want to fail, so we just back away.

When it comes to hustling to reach our goals, it's all nice in theory. It sounds good. But in reality, hustling to reach your goals is HARD! It can be exhausting. So instead of putting in the work and walking the talk of what we set out to achieve, we become just talk and those goals pass us by.

Throughout this message series, we've been looking at different verses from the book of Proverbs. We've called Proverbs a "wisdom book" because it has so many good pieces of advice and wisdom for how to live our best lives. One of these

pieces of advice speaks to this exact situation we find ourselves in when it comes to working towards our goals.

Listen to these words from Proverbs chapter 14, verse 23

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Look at what is contrasted in this verse:

- Work is contrasted with talk.
- Profit is contrasted with poverty.

Let's think a little more about the words profit and poverty, because our first thought is that they relate to money. Instead of specific financial gain, think of these words in terms of general growth and change.

We set goals because we want to grow in life, to become the best version of ourselves. When we put in the hard work and "walk the talk" to achieve a goal, we profit by growing in some way.

On the flip side, think of poverty as lacking something. When we don't achieve a goal, we don't grow. "Just talk" produces zero growth, zero change, zero benefit.

Proverbs teaches us that if we want the benefits of hard work, then hard work needs to happen.

But did you notice the first word of this verse? This verse starts with the word "all." It's not just *some* hard work that leads to profit – it's *all* hard work leads to profit. For those of you who find yourself giving up on a goal because you don't want to fail, this is super important to realize. Proverbs says that even if you don't fully achieve the goal, the hard work you put in does lead to some profit. It may lead to a good reputation as a hard worker, like we talked about last week. It might lead to making you stronger or smarter or better skilled. Whatever it is, that hard work *will* give you a profit in growth.

So where do you go from here? Well, even though our current situation makes it seem difficult to act on our goals, think outside the box.

You can't work out with your team, but you can do workouts on your own or through YouTube to keep yourself strong for the next season. Set a goal and work towards growth.

You can't play with the band or the orchestra, but you can practice scales and music yourself. Set a goal and work towards growth.

What is something you've wanted to achieve? Set a goal and work towards growth.

Remember this: *You* are the owner of your skills. They don't belong to anyone else. Put in hard work and gain a profit. Today is a good day to start.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the most recent goal you set for yourself? Have you achieved it yet?
2. What is one goal that you've been afraid or hesitant to go after?
3. When it comes to putting in the hard work to achieve your goals, would you say you tend to be more "walk the talk" or "just talk"? Does it depend on which area the goal is related to (health and fitness, music, reading, etc.)? In which areas are you more likely to follow through and achieve your goals? Which are you less likely and why?
4. You are the owner of your skills. Does that idea make you feel better or worse about setting goals and putting in the hard work to achieve them?
5. What does the phrase, "The end you want tomorrow is connected to what you do today" mean to you? Think of one thing you want for your future. What is one goal you could set today to make that future a reality? What is your plan to get started?