

## Three Alternative Goals

The bad goals of control, ownership, and independence that we examined in the last article are the antithesis of abundant life (John 10:10). But the “herd mentality” takes over and we want what others want, what others have, or what others tell us we should want. We fall into the pursuit of society’s definition of success, not God’s. This is brought about by the greatest deceiver, Satan. How can we break away and elevate our lives?

The first alternative is guidance. Some of James’ readers were boasting and bragging about the future, but no Christian can live apart from God (James 4:13-15). For Christians to leave God out of their plans is an assumption of self-sufficiency, a “Declaration of Independence” from God. The second alternative is stewardship. By understanding the concept of stewardship, we recognize that we are merely taking care of what we have for the true Owner (Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12). Concentrating on stewardship will remove the materialism and much of the selfishness in life. The third alternative is fellowship. Instead of focusing on individualism, fellowship focuses on family, friends, congregations, and on connecting everything to God. Instead of looking for ways to do better than others, it aims at ways of doing better with others (Proverbs 27:17; 1 Corinthians 16:18). There is no place for any loose stones in God’s edifice (1 Peter 2:5)!

If we focus on control, ownership, and independence, we may do a great job in being in the world, but a bad job in not being of the world (John 15:19; 17:11-18). On the other hand, if our model is guidance, stewardship, and fellowship, we will see the world more realistically, and will have little trouble in keeping ourselves from becoming of the world.

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