

# LIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

One way to *begin* establishing priorities as an individual or organization, is to use an assessment tool called the SWOT Analysis. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.<sup>1</sup>

## STRENGTHS

Analyzing your strengths can be a difficult task as you do not want to be perceived as arrogant or prideful. When your strengths go unmentioned, they also become unnoticed and as a result, many of us do not know what we do well, what we should replicate, and what to celebrate.

Maines identifies two primary benefits to identifying our strengths: “First, we see more clearly what will bring health to [ourselves, or] our organization in the future. We are immediately encouraged to keep doing certain things because they are producing the fruit we have hoped for. Second, we see what we should be celebrating. By identifying specific Strengths, we are able to thank our team for specific contributions and can celebrate the things that are working well. Our leaders deserve the encouragement and the opportunity to see how their contributions are making a significant difference.”

- How would you define “success” for yourself or organization? What are the “wins” and what accomplishments do you expect to hear God say, “Well done”?
- What would not get done in your family or our community if your actions or accomplishments did not exist?
- What are your hobbies, passions, strengths?
- What gets celebrated becomes repeated. What do you need to celebrate to nurture an environment you can thrive, and not just survive?
- What favorite or familiar Scriptures guide your life/organization?

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<sup>1</sup> The descriptions of SWOT, minimally adapted, are from an article titled, “Evaluation Part 1: Giving the Gift of Evaluation to Your Ministry” by Mark Maines, found at [www.cyfm.net](http://www.cyfm.net)





## THREATS

In every aspect of change or effort to maximize effectiveness and growth there are potential and certain threats. Threats can exist both outside and inside of life or organizations. Ignoring threats will not make them disappear but only increases the potential for greater damage to be done. Maines says, “threats can be minimized and even neutralized when we approach them honestly, directly, and thoughtfully.”

- What (or whom) must you pay attention and/or communicate?
  
- What (or whom) has the potential to jeopardize your efforts?
  
- What are the hurdles that you need to overcome?
  
- If success is hearing Jesus speak the words, “Well done,” then failure is succeeding at things that will neglect the attention of God’s heart, the applause of heaven, and never matter in eternity. Where are you failing, and what will you do about it?

## REFLECT

The person we desire to be and the influence we dream of having stems from one word – discipline. Desires and dreams are not enough to cause movement or change in an individual’s life, or an organization. Discipline nudges one toward action, implementation, and execution. The fact of the matter is we need all three: desires, dreams, and discipline.

*“Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:4-7)*

*“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.” (Matthew 6:33)*

What are your next steps?