



WELCOME

*Hello, AHS Worldwide Students!
It's 2024, and with this new year
has come a second semester of
schooling.*

For those of us that are ancient, including me, it marks the final semester of school altogether before college, a mission, and the rest of our life. I had never realized until only a couple months ago how close I was to graduation. I always knew that 2024 was my graduation year, but it had never really occurred to me that it was so close until New Year's Eve. Now, with so many decisions looming ahead of me, I realized that I needed to finalize my goals: not simply loose plans or noncommittal routes. I needed to be certain where I wanted my life to go from this point forward. The late Elder Ballard gave a wonderful talk in general conference in April of 2017 titled "Return and Receive". If I could quote the whole talk here, I would. But for the sake of space and time, I'll give you my favorite paragraph, which just happens to be one of the very first: "Over the years, I have observed that those who accomplish the most in this world are those with a vision for their lives, with goals to keep them focused on their vision and tactical plans for how to achieve them. Knowing where you are going and how you expect to get there can bring meaning, purpose, and accomplishment to life." (Elder M. Russell Ballard, Return and Receive, 2017).

Elder Ballard goes on to describe the difference between a goal and a plan. He describes a goal as an end, or a destination. A plan, he describes, is a "route by which you get there". This is why it is so important for us to be certain of what we want to work for in our lives. For those who have read "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People/Teens", you'll recognize the three first habits: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, and Put First Things First. These three habits, also known collectively as the Private Victory, are all about setting good goals and making good plans. For those who have not read this book, may I recommend it to you? It is full of good advice on how to focus your life on the most important things. Let's not forget the importance of a plan, either. Once you have set your reasonable, attainable goal, you must make a thorough and well-balanced plan to achieve the goal you set. A good plan should never include steps that are too big to take easily. Instead, your steps should be bite-size "mini goals", so to speak, challenging enough to motivate you without being too difficult. And don't worry! It's okay to not be 100% sure of what you'll do for the rest of your life yet. If you are confused, I recommend Elder Ballard's advice: any goal we set, no matter how large or small, should fit within the framework of Heavenly Father's eternal plan. Plan well, and work hard this semester!

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