

Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets

Session 5

The Maturity Question – What is the wise thing to do?

Overview

5 questions will be at the heart of this study.

1. The Integrity Question – Am I being honest with myself?
2. The Legacy Question – What story do I want to tell?
3. The Conscience Question – Is there a tension that deserves my attention?
4. The Maturity Question – What is the wise thing to do?
5. The Relationship Question – What does love require of me?

Key Summary in Session 3

In Session 5, we're focused on the Maturity Question. A person's willingness to ask this question says a lot about their maturity. It has little to do with age. And it isn't simply about right or wrong. It is deeper – and more personal – than that.

Consider your greatest regret. It was likely preceded by a series of unwise decisions that weren't wrong or illegal. But looking back, they were terribly unwise. And it was that series of unwise decisions that paved the way to the moment in time you've regretted ever since.

The apostle Paul understands. In a letter to Christians living in Ephesus, he writes:

“Be very careful, then, how you live. Not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Paul knew the point of regret is always preceded by a series of unwise decisions. That's why he says: “Be very careful how you live: Not as unwise but wise.” He continues with a bit more explanation: “Making the most of every opportunity.” Literally, redeeming or ransoming the time. Don't you wish you

could go back and reclaim the time you wasted recovering from bad decisions? Paul then adds a warning: “... because the days are evil.”

We don't live in a morally neutral culture. Think about it. When was the last time you saw an ad that encouraged you to be wise? Careful? Self-controlled? I'm guessing never. Culture baits us to the line of regret and then shames us when regret becomes a reality.

The purpose of the Maturity Question is not to stop you from doing something wrong. It's to keep you from doing something unwise. Unwise is a gateway to regret. It paves the way to the point of no return. Excuses escort us to the threshold of regret.

So, don't settle for good, legal, permissible, acceptable, or tolerable. Let's put away our old worn-out excuses once and for all. They've never served you well. They just silence your conscience, cloud your reasoning, and diminish your ability to hear the voices of wisdom around you. Instead of excusing yourself forward, dream and plan your way forward.

What is the wise thing for you to do? That's the Maturity Question.

Questions

1. A common assumption is that it's okay to do whatever we want as long as it isn't illegal, immoral, wrong, or over the line. What's wrong with that line of thinking? And why is wisdom the better guide than good, legal, permissible, acceptable, or tolerable?
2. One more drink, one more business trip, one more stack of chips, one more pair of shoes, or one more swipe of the card. At some point, *one more* doesn't add *add* anything...it subtracts. What “one more” do you struggle with? Why does that hold an appeal to you?
3. Consider your greatest regret. What was the first unwise (but not wrong or illegal) step that ultimately led to the tipping point?

4. The apostle Paul says, “Be very careful, then how you live – not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16). Which phrase stands out to you most? Why?
5. In this session, it’s stated that we don’t live in a morally neutral culture. Where do you see proof of this in the ads and offers and entertainment of everyday life?

Concluding Thoughts

If you never stop long enough to decide ahead of time where you want to be, you will live your life unaware of the sacrifices necessary to get there.

Everybody ends up somewhere in life. I recommend you end up somewhere on purpose. Wisdom paves the way.

You have some idea of what you want your future to look like. You have a mental picture of your preferred future – what could be and should be – how you envision the next season to play out. But keeping it general rather than specific isn’t helpful.

Pick a key area of your life. In light of where you want to be, what’s the wise thing to start or stop doing now? Is there a habit or excuse you need to break? To make it specific, decide 3 goals and write them below.