

Leaving With No Regrets
Lesson 05 of the series, "No Regrets"

A. Our lives here on earth are short.

"LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is. You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath." Psalm 39:4-5 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to live with the end in mind.

"The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away... Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:10,12 (NIV)

"Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties. After all, everyone dies— so the living should take this to heart... A wise person thinks a lot about death, while a fool thinks only about having a good time."

B. To avoid regret we need to determine what we want our legacy to be and work toward it every day.

Legacy = what remains after we are gone. Our legacy reveals our priorities, values, who and what mattered to us most.

"Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith. He was even called the friend of God." James 2:23 (NLT)

"God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'" Acts 13:22 (NLT)

"There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor." Acts 9:36 (NLT)

C. Seven resolutions that will help us leave with no regrets.

1. Resolved: Today I will make sure my eternal destiny is settled.

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation."

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NLT)

2. Resolved: This year I will share my faith with my friends and loved ones.

"There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores... Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side. The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.' "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.' Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'" Luke 16:19-28 (NLT)

"Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel..." Ephesians 6:19 (NIV)

3. Resolved: This year I will invest in eternal things.

"Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)

4. Resolved: This year I will make plans for leaving my house in order (life insurance, will, burial plots, etc.)

"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." Proverbs 27:12 (NLT)

5. Resolved: This year I will say what needs to be said.

"Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!" Prov.15:23 (NLT)

- "I love you!"
- "I'm sorry, I was wrong, please forgive me." / "I forgive you. Let's move on."
- "Good job!" / "I am proud of you."
- "Let's get some help." / "I need your help"
- "We need to talk."
- "Let's start again."
- "Thank you!"

6. Resolved: This year I will stop waiting for "someday".

"Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest."

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT)

"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Matthew 6:34 (NLT)

7. Resolved: This year I will spend time with God every day.

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me." John 15:4 (NLT)

"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

Luke 12:21 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. In 1888, the death of Ludvig Nobel caused several newspapers to mistakenly publish obituaries of Ludvig's brother Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. The obituaries stated that "The merchant of death is dead" and that Alfred "became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before." It horrified Alfred to think that he would be remembered this way so he donated the bulk of his estate to fund the Nobel Prize. If someone wrote an erroneous obituary about you today what would it say? What would you want to change about your life to improve your legacy? What can you do this year to reach this goal?
2. Read Psalm 90:10-12 & Ecclesiastes 7:1-4. How does thinking about death and funerals help us live smarter? Why do some people refuse to talk about death? Have you prepared anything for your funeral? What wisdom do you want to make sure you pass on?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 11:4 & Matthew 6:34. Why do we often procrastinate and wait for "someday" to do the things we know we should be doing today? Spend some time as a group praying for each other asking God for the strength and determination to get things done.
4. Read Proverbs 15:23 and discuss the following statements that often go unsaid:
 - "I love you!"
 - "I'm sorry, I was wrong, please forgive me." / "I forgive you. Let's move on."
 - "Good job!" / "I am proud of you."
 - "Let's get some help." / "I need your help"
 - "We need to talk."
 - "Let's start again."
 - "Thank you!"

What keeps us from saying these things? How can we help each other speak up?

5. Read Ephesians 6:19. Spend some time as a group praying for boldness in discussing our faith with friends and family members who are far from God. Spend some time praying for people by name. Ask God for a breakthrough this year.
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The next best time is today." Chinese proverb

"The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." William James

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." Jim Elliot

"We can make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill

"When you were born, you were crying, and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so that when you die, you will be smiling and everyone around you will be crying." Anonymous

"I have so much to do today that I'm going to need to spend three hours in prayer in order to be able to get it all done." Martin Luther