

## Five Wise Statements

Air Dates: April 3 - 7, 2023

### Day One

I want to share five wise statements with you. Each of these are things I've heard or read and they stuck with me. They make me think about my priorities and my time management and they reinforce some disciplines I need in my life, so I thought they might be helpful to you as well.

I heard a preacher say this recently: *Kill complacency or it will kill you.* Short and pithy—but oh so true. Complacency can be a killer. Complacency is not laziness, although if you are complacent, it could cause you to be lazy. But rather a complacent person is a self-satisfied person. When you are complacent you can be rather smug and uncritical of yourself.

The Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy:

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline (2Timothy 1:6-7).*

The reason that Paul referred to was Timothy's heritage. His mother and grandmother had fostered Timothy's faith because of their sincere faith and now Paul was mentoring him and advising him. And he reminds Timothy not to be complacent. He notes that God had gifted him but it was his job to fan that gift into a flame.

Years ago, I wrote this passage in my prayer journal and began to pray that God would show me how to fan into a flame the gift of God in me. To not be satisfied with just being okay; to not settle for getting by. But to refuse to be complacent and content where I was in my spiritual growth.

If you've been born again, you've been given the Spirit of God indwelling you, and that Spirit gives you power, love and self-discipline. Self-discipline is a fruit of the Spirit and when you are self-disciplined, you will not be complacent.

So, my first wise thought is: Kill complacency or it will kill you. It will kill your self-discipline, your love for God and others and it will kill God's power in you. Rather, fan into a flame the gift of God in you—whatever it is. Get better at it all the time. Kill complacency or it will kill you.

### Day Two

Recently in a prayer meeting with some sisters in Christ, one of my friends prayed, "Lord, *Satan wants to put us into the what-ifs.*" That stuck with me, and it's one of my five wise statements.

Have you ever been stuck in the "what-ifs"? This is what James referred to when he wrote:

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That person*

*should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do (James 1:5 – 8).*

You may ask God for wisdom, but if you are doubting when you ask, you should not expect God to give you wisdom. That's what James tells us, and he describes people who doubt as being blown and tossed and unstable in all they do.

That's what the what-ifs will do to you. One day you think you should do one thing; the next day you doubt if that is the right thing to do. Back and forth and back and forth—blown and tossed by fear. And you know that fear comes straight from Satan because God never gives us a spirit of fear. I repeat: Satan wants to put you into the what-ifs.

Another way the what-ifs work is to cause you to live in fear of what may or may not happen. So, you allow your mind to focus on those what-ifs instead of bringing your thoughts into captivity and thinking about things that are good and true, and soon you are stuck in that fear, worrying about the unknown, imagining the worst, and Satan is more than happy to leave you there.

Are you tired of living in the what-ifs? If so, here's what you do: Cast all your care on the Lord because he cares for you, and leave them there, even if you must do that many times a day. And if you're stuck in the what-ifs of some decision you need to make, seek godly wisdom, pray much, do your due diligence, and then take the first step out of the what-ifs and by faith, trust God's wisdom in you.

God doesn't want his children who have been set free from the bondage of sin to be trapped in the what-ifs. Is not a good place to be.

### Day Three

This next wise statement is one I heard in a sermon recently, and it's quite simple. You'll probably find it unimpressive but think about it. The preacher said, *"It's no sacrifice when you get more than you give."*

He referred to this passage from Matthew 16:24 – 25:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."*

Jesus always made it clear that there is a price to pay to follow him. Maybe you can name some prices that you have paid because you have chosen to make Jesus the Lord of your life. Perhaps some rejection by family or friends; maybe some promotions have been denied you. Certainly, there are Christians in the world who suffer continual persecution and whose lives are in peril because they follow Jesus.

The enemy of your soul wants you to believe that to live for Jesus, you must give up so much. I just want to remind you that you can never truly sacrifice anything for our Lord because what you get back in return is so much greater.

There is nothing we can offer Jesus that compares to the peace he gives us. If you have given your life to Jesus, you have received his peace that passes understanding. Unreasonable peace, I call it. And then there's hope. Eternal hope—full assurance that you will spend eternity with our Lord. Nothing you could ever give to Jesus could match this sure knowledge that your future is secure. And joy—unfailing joy even in the midst of troubles or suffering—the joy that Jesus gives us—how could you ever put a price tag on that inward joy that comes from knowing Jesus.

So, my simple message is to remember that you can never sacrifice anything for Jesus—not in the true sense of giving up more than you get. That's because any little or big thing you may give up for Jesus is overwhelmingly repaid with the gifts that he gives you in exchange.

So, don't let the enemy lie to you and make you think you've sacrificed for Jesus. Jesus gave his life for you so that you could have life to the full—full of peace and hope and joy no matter what. You can't call it a sacrifice if you get more than you give.

## Day Four

*Never underestimate the danger of disobedience.* That is my next wise statement for you—things that I've heard or read that I resonate with and I need. And this is certainly one of those.

For those of us who are raising or have raised children, one of our continual challenges was to teach our children that obeying us was for their good, not to make their lives miserable—right? But it is not typically a readily-understood principle as our children grow. They often have to learn by experience that there is danger in disobedience.

And how often does our God have to remind us as his children that there is great danger in store for us when we willfully disobey or disregard his principles. What looks so enticing to begin with or so innocent and harmless can take us into sin that cripples us and keeps us in bondage.

Here's the truth: Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. You've heard it said that anything that is fun is either illegal, immoral or fattening. Well, that is so *not* true. Psalm 16:11 says: "*You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*" It's a lie from Satan that sin is fun and righteousness is boring. Satan is a liar and a very good one, and from the Garden of Eden to this day, he has lied about sin and its consequences. Sin is deceptive, destructive and deadly.

Yes, we have a forgiving God who is ready to forgive and restore us, but initial obedience is always better than asking for forgiveness later because the consequences of disobedience are still with you. You can choose your sin but you can't choose its consequences.

So, is there some lingering sin in your life—some addiction—that has you in bondage? It looked so good at the beginning, so innocent, something you could handle for sure, but it hasn't worked out that way. Proverbs 4:23 – 27 is really good advice:

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.*

Never underestimate the danger of disobedience. That is a wise word I hope you'll remember.

## Day Five

Perhaps you know the story of Corrie ten Boom and how she and her sister were imprisoned during World War II for hiding Jewish people from the Nazis. Well, I have one last wise statement to give you, and this comes from Corrie. She said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows; it empties today of its strength."

We all know that worry is useless and yet I dare say we all still worry, some of us more than others. And Corrie is so right—worrying just takes away your strength and your endurance. What or who is on

your worry list today? How long have you been worrying about them or it? Has it helped? Are things any better because you are worrying?

Silly question—of course not. Yet this is a tendency all of us have—to just worry about most anything, and that takes us easily into the miserable what-ifs that I talked about earlier this week. Here's what Jesus said about worrying:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. . . .<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’. . . .<sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:25-31, 33-34).

This is a directive from Jesus: “Do not worry;” full stop! So that means when you worry, you are disobeying Jesus and believe me, that never ends well. Here's what Jesus told us to do with our worrying situations:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Exchange your worrying burden for Jesus' light one. You may have to do it several times a day, but when you start to worry, stop in the middle, remind yourself that you are disobeying Jesus, and then by an act of faith—not feelings—leave your worry with Jesus and take his light one. It works, I promise. You just have to do it.