

## No Regrets

=====

Good Morning

Connie and I really appreciate ... all the well wishes and prayers while I was out of commission

We are hardly ever ill ... it's an unfamiliar thing ... and very humbling

I so appreciate the willingness of all the guys that preached over the last months

And so skillful ... our congregation is truly blessed

All of you who stepped up need to be proud ... in an okay way ... you raised the bar.

=====

Let's begin our lesson with a story ...

A story about Lou Gehrig ... the famous Yankees first baseman

He played 17 seasons // he was a solid hitter ... durable ... dependable ... his nickname was the "Iron Horse"

His career batting average was .340 ... 8000 at bats ... 2700 hits ... 493 home runs

He died at age 37 ... with ALS ... Lou Gehrig disease

One day ... the story goes ... he came to the plate with two outs in the 9<sup>th</sup> ... winning runs on 2nd and 3rd

The count ran to 3 and 2

The pitcher wound up ...and let go with a smoking fastball ... right over the middle of the plate

Pause ... Gehrig didn't swing

The Ump called "Strike three!" ... game over!

Very ... slowly ... Lou Gehrig turned ... and said something to the Umpire.

The crowd went wild ... Gehrig never spoke back to the umpire.

Reporters ran and swarmed around the umpire ... "What did he say" ... what did he say to you?"

The umpire smiled ... and called for Lou Gehrig to come over.

"Lou, tell these men what you said to me ... when I called that third strike."

Lou replied ... "I only said ... 'Mr. Ump, I would give ten dollars to have that one back!'"

=====

The title of the lesson today ... is ... "No Regrets"

Talking with Eddie last week ... he told me he saw a cartoon ... or a tv ad ... where a fellow got a tattoo that ... unfortunately ... said "No Regerts"

In a way ... that says it all ... doesn't it?

You can't go back ... you can't change the past

Every day that goes by ... every minute that ticks off ... is forever in the history books

=====

This lesson is about living in such a way ... as to have "no regrets"

"No regrets" from a godly point of view

This lesson will focus on marriage ... how to have a marriage that is as free as possible ... from regrets

There will be references as well ... to living the Christian life ... as "regret-free" ... as possible.

=====

How many millions ... would give ten bucks ... or even ten-thousand ... to get just one minute back ... to change something they said or did ... or something they didn't say or do!

Those are feelings of regret

Sorrow over circumstances beyond our control ... beyond our power to fix

We might regret taking a promotion at work ... or not taking the promotion.

We might regret having told that person off ... or not saying something when we had the chance.

=====

There are two mistakes ... we need to avoid ...

One ... is spending our whole life ... too focused on the future ... we'll miss out on today

The other ... is spending our time ... living too hard for today ... we'll be unprepared for the future.

The Bible cautions us against both

Instead ... God teaches a happy medium ... a balance

=====

When I saw the movie "Dead Poet's Society" ... with Robin Williams ...

There was a scene that took my breath away

All the young men ... looking at the black and white photos ... of other young men ...

... who had stood where they were standing ... 100 years ago ... still in their prime

“They’re all pushing up daisies” ... “Carpe Diem!” ... “Seize the Day!”

Live “today” ... like it matters for all “eternity.”

Each day of our lives ... has eternal significance.

What you do today ... will make a change ... how you regard the **value** of your life ... when your time on earth is through ... when your time on earth is through.

What you do today ... will have impact years beyond your earthly lifetime.

=====

**Decide the kind** of person you want to be ... the kind of person you ought to be in God’s eyes ... and do something today to make it true.

What kind of person do you want to be?

What kind of husband ... what kind of wife ... do you want to be? ... with no regrets?

What kind of a Christian do you want to be? ... with no regrets?

What is ... what ought to be ... of utmost importance to you?

=====

Consistency was important to the Apostle Paul ... consistency ... consistency and faithfulness

Near the end of his life ... he wrote ... “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Tim 4:7)

Earlier in his ministry ... Paul said ... “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me” (Acts 20:24)

If you could ask Paul ... “What do you want to be true about you?” ... what do you want to be true about you? ...

He would probably say ... “I want to be faithful to the very end.”

How can you make that happen for you?

You can be like Paul ... He knew what kind of person he wanted to be ... the kind of person God wanted him to be ... and every day ... he did something to make it true.

Can you see it ... in 1 Cor 9:27? ... “I beat my body and make it my slave ... so that after I have preached to others ... I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

To be found faithful ... at the finish line of his earthly race ... Paul had to be faithful “TODAY.”

He lived every day like it had eternal significance.

=====

Every day matters.

The everyday details of our lives may seem unimportant ... but they’re filled with eternal significance.

We may think we're just killing time, but we could be strengthening the bond of a relationship.

It may just seem like small talk to us, but we could be saying something that will change someone's life forever.

We may think we're just laying bricks, but we could be building a life that will bring glory to God.

God hopes we'll learn to value the meaning in the little things

We see this Christ's life ... again and again.

He turned a meal with a friend ... into a life-changing experience.

He'd be walking along with his disciples and see a tree ... or a vine ... and teach his disciples a lesson in faith.

Do you want to create a life without regrets?

Remember this ... "there are no throwaway moments."

Every day matters

Look for the eternal significance in your work ... in your words ... in your relationships ... in your actions.

=====

Do something significant today.

Do you want to be generous? Give today.

Do you want to be known as a kind person? Be kind today.

Whatever you want to be true about you, do something today to start making it true.

How about some homework? ... You're probably thinking ... "Oh boy ... I thought he'd never ask"

Seriously though. Today, after you go home ... think of the three most important character qualities you would like to develop ... in your marriage ... as a parent ... as a child of God.

For the next week ... do at least one thing each day that will move you in the direction ... of making each quality ... a reality in your life.

If you want to be a considerate person ... then for the next seven days ... go out of your way to be considerate ... at least once each day.

Do you want to be patient? Go out of your way to be patient.

Do you want to be caring? ... compassionate? Go out of your way!

Do you want to study the Bible more? go out of your way!

If you do this with each desired quality ... at the end of the week ... you'll have taken 21 steps toward becoming the kind of the person ... God wants you to be.

It works. People who live godly lives and godly marriages ... don't get there by accident.

People who are faithful Christians ... don't get there by accident

They get there by effort. The Bible says ... "A prudent man gives thought to his steps." (Prov 14:15)

Let's go a step farther. If you don't attend regularly ... do it for a month. If you don't attend Bible class ... do it for a month.

Decide what kind of Christian you want to be ... and live to make it true. No regrets

Listen to this:

I am your constant companion. I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure.

I am completely at your command. Half of the things you do you might as well turn over to me and I will do them - quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed - you must be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons, I will do it automatically.

I am the servant of great people, and alas, of all failures as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine though I work with the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a person. You may run me for profit or run me for ruin - it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

Who am I? Habit ... that's who

=====

It can take 21 days to break a bad habit and replace it with a good one.

There are NO throw-away days ... hours ... minutes.

Learn to live a life with no-regrets

=====

Focus on what you want to give ... not on what you want to get.

Goal-setting seminars ... nearly always ask you to make a list of what you want.

Instead ... make a list of what you are willing to give (or give up) to become what God knows you can be.

There's a huge difference between having things ... and living a life of significance.

Set a goal for how much money you will give

Set a goal ... not for a promotion ... but for what you could do to make yourself a more valuable employee.

It's not wordsmithing ... it's a change in focus ... It's not what you get ... but what you give

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. (Proverbs 11:4)

What's Solomon saying? He's reminding us that what you do is more important than what you have. It is your accomplishments, not your acquisitions>

If you're committed to doing God's will ... It is He who will supply the dream of what you can accomplish in life.

= = = = =

Marriage.

The excitement & joys of the wedding day ... and the honeymoon ... are soon replaced by the challenges of married life.

Just as there are no Christian lives without challenges ... there are no marriages without challenges.

Lets look at four decisions ... you can make ... to say "goodbye to marital regrets"

Four decisions you can make to live beyond the would-haves ... the could-haves ... the should-haves

You've missed opportunities ... we all have ... all

You can't undo the past ... but there's a lot you can do ... to shape the future

Let me ask you who are married ... a somewhat personal ... revealing question

If you were to lose your spouse ... would you have any regrets about your marriage?

A heated argument ... a criticism ... an angry remark

Always trying to fix or change your mate

Missed opportunities you had to spend together

Was having every dish cleaned before taking walk after supper ... all that important?

Did you rush home from services ... or a friend's home ... just to ... to ... you name it?

What things took precedence over your marriage ... that dimmed its importance or sanctity?

A separation from a mate is always filled with grief and sorrow ... but it's compounded when mixed with regrets

Gen 23:1-2 ... Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old.

She died in Hebron ... in the land of Canaan ... and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.

Grief, yes ... but what about regrets over the situation with Hagar that dampened the spirit of their marriage?

Not once ... but twice ... he placed his own safety above the safety of Sarah ... ("The Egyptians will kill me and let you live," he told his faithful wife)

We can never eliminate the grief of losing a spouse ... but we certainly can diminish it ... soften it

Four Steps!!

I can't take credit for the general form of this lesson ... I only hope I can preach it in a way that honors God ... helps us all to be better Christians ... wives ... and husbands

Four steps

**#1**

Going to Genesis ... chapter two 2

The most foundational resolve you can make is this ...

**"I WILL NOT DIVORCE MY MATE"**

Time after time ... experience has shown ... that divorce and remarriage does NOT eliminate problems ... it compounds them ... and it can anger God

In Matthew 19:3 ... Christ emphasizes marriage fidelity and purity

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for **any** reason" ... like she burned the toast ... or any trivial reason a man might come up with to trade in his wife

There were two views at large in these days ... based largely in tradition

One popular Rabbi taught ... "You can divorce for any reason."

Another taught ... "There is no reason except adultery."

The Pharisees only wanted to trip up Jesus. ... no matter how He answered ... He'd anger half of the Jewish population

But just as He dealt with Satan in the wilderness ... He turned to the Word of God

"Have you not read ... "? Husband and wife are no longer 'two'"

Marriage is uniquely designed by God ... tailor made to fit the other mate ... male & female

Marriage **creates an unbreakable bond** ... they cleave to one another

In Ruth 1:16 ... Naomi and Ruth “cleaved” together

If anything tries to part husband and wife ... jobs ... in-law problems ... growing pains ...

“Wherever you go I will go”

In Deut 10:20 ... We are to cleave (cling) to God

Anywhere does God say ... “I want you to serve me ... but if you find another, go serve it?” NO

Matthew 19:6 ... every marriage is orchestrated by God ... let no man separate

In the Garden ... after God made Eve for Adam ... We read that God brought the woman to the man

**“I WILL NOT DOVORCE MY MATE”**

## #2

**“I WILL MAKE MY MATE’S HAPPINESS A PRIORITY”**

Only 17% of marriages ... they say ... can be truly classified as “happy”

What’s the main cause of unhappiness ... any guess? ... “selfishness”

How do you start a fire? Rub two sticks together

When both mates ... are determined to get their own way ... friction

So then ... what’s the source of happiness? ... putting the other’s needs above your own

Selfishness is a big problem in congregations.

Hymns ... types of sermons (doctrinal ... daily living) ... too hot ... too cold ... our own way

James 4:1 ... source of quarrels among you? your own pleasures

Phil 2:3-4 ... do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit ... look out for the interests of others

Humility of mind ... regard other as more important than yourself ... attitude in Christ ... He did not hold on to Heaven ... Christ’s needs were being met on Heaven ... came to earth to meet our needs

Why wouldn’t I want to go do or see what my wife wanted to go do? What wouldn’t I? Do what she wanted to do? See old neighborhood? Shop? Watch TV show?

My husband ... my wife ... is the most important person in my life ... “my way or the highway just makes both parties miserable”

Put your mate’s happiness above your own ... it must make you happy to make them happy

**“I WILL MAKE MY MATE’S HAPPINESS A PRIORITY”**



### #3

#### **“I WILL REFRAIN FROM USING HURTFUL WORDS WITH MY SPOUSE”**

Someone said ... “For every negative comment you make to your spouse or a family member ... it takes four positive comments to get you back to even” to reverse it

What do you think?

I don't believe that ... I don't think you ever reverse the effects of hurtful speech (Hymn “Angry Words ... O let them never ... ”)

Like a nail in the wall ... you can remove the nail but the hole remains

Be VERY careful about the things we say to your spouse

James 3:6 ... the tongue is a fire ... it can defile the whole body ... it sets course of life on fire ... set on fire by hell

One hurtful word can destroy the spirit of a marriage

Use a filter ... think it through ... Eph 4:29 ... use only words that edify

Think ... an acrostic

T ... Is it true Eph 4 I... ay aside all falsehood ... you NEVER help me around the house ... you ALWAYS have something negative to say to me ... avoid “always” and “never”

H ... Is it helpful ... or does it hinder

I ... Is it inspiring ... does it build up or does it tear down

N ... Is it necessary ... does everything that comes into your mind need to be said?

K ... Is it kind? ... Eph 4:32 ... is it compassionate ... is it graceful ..... even if it's necessary, is it in the spirit of grace and kindness?

#### **“I WILL REFRAIN FROM USING HURTFUL WORDS WITH MY SPOUSE”**

### #4

#### **“I WILL BUILD PLEASANT MEMORIES WITH MY SPOUSE”**

What's the secret a man was asked ... Simple he said ... dine out twice a week ... fancy dining ... she picks where on Tuesday ... I pick where on Thursday

People began to laugh.

“No ... no!” he said ... I don't mean separate ... I mean together ... together

No separate lives ... that was never God's plan

Don't have to do “everything” together ... you're different ... but make it priority to be together

You don't have to be alike ... the same ... just together

God made marriage for companionship

“Not good for man to live alone” ... God said

Eccl 9:9 ... “enjoy life with the wife you love all the days of your life ... your reward in life”

Don't just mark time ... waiting for the kids to grow up ... to get out of school ... for the mortgage to be paid off ... for the retirement years to come ...

Then suddenly life is over ... or tragedy comes ... .. don't make this mistake

Is there a hobby you'd like to pick up with your mate ... a trip you've been putting off? GO TODAY!

There is no promise of a tomorrow

There is nothing that can erase the grief of losing a partner ... but the ones that deal with it the best ... are the ones that have no regrets

A storehouse of memories ... what a treasure

I've preached funerals ... some of you have

A man or woman cries ...

How would I feel? ... How would you? ... when facing such a situation

There's a 50/50 chance that each of us married folks here today will be in that situation some day

Make these four Biblical commitments that will ensue a marriage without regrets ... will transform a marriage ... will help heal a broken one

**“I WILL NOT DOVORCE MY MATE”**

**”I WILL MAKE MY MATE’S HAPPINESS A PRIORITY”**

**“I WILL REFRAIN FROM USING HURTFUL WORDS WITH MY SPOUSE”**

**“I WILL BUILD PLEASANT MEMORIES WITH MY SPOUSE”**

There is an old poem that has always had meaning for me.

It asks a pointed question ... “How will you build”

I saw a group of men ... tearing a building down.

A group of men in my hometown.

With a “heave” and an “ho,” and a mighty yell ...

...they swung a beam ... and the sidewall fell.

So I said to the foreman, "Are these men skilled? to take it higher, if you want to build?  
And he laughed and said ... why no, indeed, ... common labor's all I need  
For I can tear down in a day or two ... what it took builder ten years to do.  
So I thought to myself ... as I walked away ... which of these roles am I going to play?  
Am I the type that constantly tears down ... as I make my way foolishly around?  
Or am I the type that builds with care ... in hope that my town will be glad I was there?

### **Closing**

How will you build your relationship with your husband or wife?

How will you build your life as a Christian?

### **Invitation**