

Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets
5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Next Move

Session 5

Question #4: The Maturity Question – What is the wise thing to do?

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
- **George Santayana, Poet and Philosopher**

Session Overview

Nobody is ever doing anything *wrong* . . . until they are. Drawing our lines, setting our limits, establishing our moral and ethical standards on the borderline between right and wrong, legal and illegal, healthy and unhealthy, eliminates any margin for error. It's a foolish and dangerous way to live. You're dry and safe and then you're drowning. You're sober and then you're not. This explains why we respond the way we do when someone we love is snuggling up to that elusive line. We react not to what they are doing but to the direction they are heading. We seemingly overact because the margin of error is such that one wrong move could spell disaster or regret. In those moments, the issue is not right or wrong, legal or illegal, moral or immoral. There's *something else* in play, something that remains virtually invisible when it pertains to us but is as apparent as the noses on our faces when it comes to those around us. What is this something? Wisdom. An option can be *not wrong* and *unwise* at the same time. And that brings us to our fourth question. The Maturity Question. What is the wise thing to do?

Conversation Starter

I'm not doing anything wrong. People do this all the time. I'm not hurting anyone. I can handle it. There's no law against it. God will forgive me.

Share a time you embraced one of these flawed excuses for a decision and the outcome.

Watch the video

Group Discussion

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* 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?

Making Better Decisions

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. Let's start making today's decisions with tomorrow in mind.

Pick a key area of your life. In light of where you want to be in five to ten years, what's the wise thing to start or stop doing now? What habit or excuse do you need to break?

Session Wrap Up

What is the wise thing for you to do? If you had been asking this catalytic question all along, you might have avoided your greatest regret. More importantly, if you begin asking this question now, you significantly decrease the chances of that bit of unfortunate history repeating itself. We'll all be somewhere in five or ten years. Shouldn't you decide rather than letting faulty assumptions – or others – decide for you? Imagine how different your life might look a year from now if this multifaceted question was part of your decision-making grid from this point forward. So ask it. In light of your past experience, your current circumstances, and your future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing to do?

Between – Session Personal Study

Do

Listen to the song "Son of Man" from the *Tarzan* soundtrack by Phil Collins. It begins with the lyrics, "Oh the power to be strong and the wisdom to be wise. All these things come to you in time." What words resonate with you regarding the journey to wisdom? The purpose of the Maturity Question is *not* to stop you from doing something wrong but to keep you from doing something unwise. How would your story shift if you stopped settling for what's acceptable and held out for what's wise? This week, which will you choose to do? Just because there isn't a specific "Thou shalt not" attached to something doesn't necessarily mean "Thou shalt". Why is it foolish to live on the border of what's permissible, legal, and acceptable instead of what's wise for you based on your past story, present struggles, and future dreams?

Reflect

You are a unique blend of your past experiences, current circumstances, and future hopes and dreams. In this quest for wisdom, describe what you found most revealing from spending time considering: (1) Your past experiences. (2) Your current circumstances. (3) Your future hopes and dreams.

Decide

Wisdom allows you to customize the decision-making process to your specific professional, financial, spiritual, and relational aspirations. Take the opportunity this week to evaluate your goals in these four categories. Be specific.