

Necessary Endings

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, ³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

We are lousy at realizing that God has created life cycles that go through seasons and that there are things that have to end. Sometimes things are broken, and they're not going to get well; we need to end the pattern of brokenness.

Endings are necessary. They are a part of life.

Patterns are hard to end.

God called Abraham out of Ur – an ending of everything he'd done and known.

God called the Israelites out of Egypt (Deut. 6).

God called Lot and his family out of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jesus called the disciples to follow Him and fish for people.

We have a problem ... we hang on to things longer than their season.

Illustration: My Life In Five Short Chapters

WHAT IS IN YOUR LIFE TODAY THAT IS NOT IN LINE WITH YOUR TOMORROW?

- Clinical – anxious, depressed
- Relationship Pattern
- Gifts, talents, career, etc.

Orienting Concept: Pruning Exercise

You prune a rose bush ...

1. More buds than it can sustain
2. Sick and they're not going to get well (John 15)
3. Dead

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Instances of these categories in life ... is it time to do some pruning?

There are things that you do in your life that were at one time good, but it's not the life-giving 20% that you should be investing in now at this point.

Singles – why do you keep recycling old inventory? Go down a different road! Change traffic patterns.

Real Hope vs. False Hope

We cannot hold on to something sick and still ask God to give us the “promised land.” What fellowship has dark with light?

Illustration: STOP IT (Bob Newhart YouTube)

People don't create endings because ...

- **They don't want to hurt others' feelings.**

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”
Hebrews 12:11

- **They fear the unknown.**

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”
Proverbs 3:5-6

- **They fear confrontation.**

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”
Proverbs 29:25

- **They fear grief.**

“The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.”
Ecclesiastes 7:4

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- They don't have the necessary skills.

“He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”

2 Samuel 22:35

- They have too many past hurts and losses.

“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth ... ² they have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me. ³ Plowmen have plowed my back and made their furrows long. ⁴ But the LORD is righteous; he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked.”

Psalm 129:1-4

- They're used to tolerating pain.

“The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.”

Isaiah 50:4

Who are the hoarders? (hold on to everything because “I’m the source”; we’re not, He is!)

“Remember Lot's wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

Luke 17:32-33

What do you need to end? What do you need to let go of to move forward? Will you allow God to empower you to let go of those things you're holding on to?

Let's Pray!

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Discussion Questions:

1. What are you thinking about as a next step?
2. What resources will you need to accomplish this?
3. How could you make your goal more specific or measurable?
4. What are you tolerating/putting up with?
5. What obstacles do you face to accomplishing the necessary ending?
6. What do you need right now (emotionally, physically, financially, relationally, etc.)?
7. What consequences might there be?
8. Who can you talk to about this?
9. How might you compensate for the risks?
10. On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to ending what is necessary?
11. Who will be the best person to hold you accountable?
12. When will you talk with them?