

When It's Time to Close the Door

Part Two

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Intro: One important theme that I want you to remember is this, **Good cannot begin until the bad ends**. The fact is, even the most gifted of people and leaders are conflicted about ending things. So often they resist, ignore, or look past the inevitable because they cannot get their heads around a very important truth- everything (except for God and some of the divine things that accompany this realm) have a shelf-life. The next step in moving forward is making endings a normal part of business and life instead of seeing it as a problem.

I. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

A. This is what it says in the original Greek, *"So that if anyone is in [in union with] Christ, they are a new creation. To go past the previous, behold! To become new"* (Adams, Greek Translation).

1. The phrase that I find very pertinent to our discussion is "To go past the previous."

- a. Victor Vroom's Path Goal Theory- If we work harder, we will get a good result. This will lead to a reward.
- b. We look at some situations and think, if the team would just work harder, or if I just had better personnel, or if I could just have this or that- that could turn it around.
- c. This may be true, but often what the real issue is, is the leader's difficulty of getting past the previous, in order to move into the new.

2. Let me be clear, an ending does not necessarily mean death. It can mean transformation.

- a. A good illustration is the caterpillar turning into a butterfly.
- b. Most good ideas have problems, hit obstacles, and leadership takes them through the crises and struggles to success.
- c. However, there is a time when it is truly over.

B. There are three things every leader must understand and embrace.

1. Life, business, and ministry are composed of life cycles and seasons. EVERYTHING HAS A SHELF-LIFE.

a. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

b. Each season is accompanied by certain activities.

1) Spring

- a) Cleaning out what is left over from the winter's dying plants
- b) Gathering seeds
- c) Figuring out which fields you are going to work
- d) Making sure you have the resources to take you through the year
- e) Actual sowing and planting
- f) Protecting seedlings from the elements and intruders
- g) Nurturing the vision of the harvest to guide the task.

2) Summer

- a) Directing resources to ensure the crops are growing

- b) Preventing disease and keeping insects and other pests away
 - c) Watering, fertilizing, and pruning
 - d) Supporting the plants until they can stand on their own
 - e) Monitoring, managing, and protecting the crops for the future.
- 3) Fall
- a) Acting with urgency to get the crops out of the field before they rot or are damaged by the elements.
 - b) Gathering the harvest completely, not leaving anything in the field
 - c) Harvesting with efficiency and watching the costs
 - d) Harvesting with care so you don't destroy the field in the process.
- 4) Winter
- a) Getting the financials in order
 - b) Squaring accounts with lenders for last years' crops and lining up next year's money
 - c) Repairing equipment and getting it ready for next year
 - d) Preparing fields for the upcoming year
 - e) Reviewing the successes and failures of the past year and tweaking things to do everything better next year.
2. There is too much life and not enough resources
- a. Qualitatively
 - 1) When the numbers are too high, quality suffers.
 - 2) Success depends on having the time and energy resources to go deep with a few relationships.
 - 3) Sometimes fewer is more
 - b. Quantitatively
 - 1) Sometimes there are more activities and opportunities than you have time to service.
 - 2) Too much can crack the system as it is overloaded.
3. Acceptance of the incurable sickness.
- a. Your life will change when you understand that there are some people who are not going to change no matter how much you or others invest in them.
 - b. Similarly, some businesses, strategies, visions, tactics, or products are too sick to recover and need to be scrapped.
 - c. It's about getting in line with reality.
 - 1) Some people want a universe where every day is harvest time.
 - 2) Some people want a universe where they have no limits.
 - 3) Some people want a universe where every person is committed to being good and getting better.

"Reality is still the only place to get a good steak."

Woody Allen