

**Introduction:**

- Helen Keller (who was blind), shortly before her sixtieth birthday, expressed pity for the real unseeing, for those who have eyes yet do not see. Her long years of physical blindness had given her a spiritual insight which enabled her to enjoy life in all its fullness. She says: *"If the blind put their hand in God's, they find their way more surely than those who see but have not faith or purpose."* I am not 60 but I am 55 today.
- On my 55th birthday today I want to share with you the top 5 things I have learned in 5.5 decades.

**I. My Identity Is In Christ/Faith Loves an Adventure!**

- A. *"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb."* (Psalm 139:13-18, NLT)
- B. You may not think this is a great lesson to learn: (My Identity is in Christ.) But it is!
  1. Knowing that "identity" gives you answers to two of life's biggest questions:
  2. Who am I?
  3. Why am I here?
- C. Why does this matter? Most of the internal issues that people face are there because they do not know who they are. The insecurity of not knowing their identity leads people to:
  1. Medicate the pain of not knowing.
  2. Try to be something or someone that they are not. I.e. They live as copies and not original therefore they experience less value.
  3. Work to find significance. When that work stops your purpose goes away.
- D. Knowing where you come from gives you roots.
  1. Roots mean that you have a history. I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
  2. History gives your identity. I am a child of God. I am loved. And I have His nature.
- E. God has a book with all the days of my life written in it. "God let me see that book!"

**II. Don't Be Stupid**

- A. *"Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life."* (Proverbs 9:11, NLT)
  1. Joshua and I have a laughing point between us, "Dont be stupid!" I have been there done that. And I still have to deal with the 'spirit of stupid' from time to time.
  2. God wants us to have long lives! Because He wants us to have extended influence in the earth as believers.
- B. I found a passage of scripture shortly after I was saved: It became my second life scripture: *"Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more."* (Proverbs 9:9, NLT)
  1. Learning from God is awesome! Learning Kingdom principles for everyday life is empowering.
  2. The wisdom of God makes this life much more enjoyable.
  3. Read proverbs and look at the destiny of the fool compared to the wise man. I.e. Jimmy Cricket. *"I'm no fool! No sir-ee! I wanna live to be 93. I play safe for you and*

*me 'Cause I'm no fool! Anyone can be a fool And do things which are wrong But fools find out when it's too late That they don't live so long."*

C. I find as I start my 56 year of living that I am much wiser than I used to be.

### III. Love the Word, Live the Word and The Word Will Live For You

A. *"My child, listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life."* (Proverbs 4:10, NLT) Wisdom listens to those who are wiser, smarter, and older. The key word is "listens."

Three things the proverbial writer gives here:

1. Listen to me. To listen you have to hear what is being spoken. And in this movement we are talking about hearing God speak. The first and easiest way is to read the Bible.
  - a) Ps 119 It is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
  - b) Jn 6:63 The word of God is spirit and it is life.
2. Do as I say.
  - a) In the words of Yoda, "Do or do not. There is no try." Many things in life are like that.
  - b) Let me express it this way. Ie. When I was on the farm and my father was teaching me how to work with different farm implements. I was introduced to a thing called the PTO (Power Take Off) and the PTO shaft. You must be extra careful around this! No loose clothing, hoodie strings , etc. If you must be around it you must shut it off! "Do or do not. There is no try."
3. If you hear the word, live the word....You will have a long, good life.

B. My whole life has been a struggle.

1. For clarity: just because you read the word, and do the word does not mean that all of life will be 'peaches and cream.' It does not mean that life will become easy.
2. Lester Sumrall: The doing is hard when you don't see immediate fruit. The doing is hard when every step you take you have to work for. But in the end...it is worth it. "Short cuts do not pay off in the long run."
3. The goal is a long and good life. And God has shown us how to get there. That is a great lesson to learn.

### IV. Blessed are the Flexible...for they shall not be broken.

A. *"But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon."* (Psalm 92:12, NLT) Mark 2:22 *New wine calls for new wineskins.*

B. These two scriptures speak about vitality, and the movement of God in our lives.

1. Vitality - the word of the Lord in Ps 92 is that the godly will flourish!
  - a) They will have flexibility. The unique thing about palm trees is that they are alive from the inside out. Christians are to be alive from the inside out. "When we're flexible, our inner peace is not held hostage by an outside source." The life of God

- gives us a spiritual vitality. Like the palm there is a resilience to bend with the storm.
- b) They will have strength. I remember our farm having cedar fence posts. They were strong and could take the pressure of livestock, fence, and weather.
2. The movement of God in our lives.
    - a) God is always doing something in us. He is always bringing more.
    - b) This movement of God requires a flexibility in our understanding of God and of people. Old systems, traditions cannot contain new movements. God is not saying that old ways are bad but He is saying He is always moving and we have to be able and willing to move with Him. My prayer has long been, "Lord, help me to do what are blessing."
  - C. "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken." Let me change it a bit: "Blessed are the flexible, for they are pliable in God's hands." Stay pliable in God's hands.

## V. Keep Your Eyes On the Prize - Jesus

- A. *"The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple."* (Psalm 27:4, NLT)
- B. David starts this Psalm with, "The Lord is my light and my salvation...my fortress why should I tremble?"
  1. Something happened to me on January 6th, 1980. I let the King of glory become Lord of my life. I discovered that God is good and that He does good. He saved me! And in doing so He became my light and my salvation!
  2. When you have been touched by God like that, He becomes the One that you seek.
- C. Life is filled with 'ups and downs'. The challenge is to keep your eyes on Him while life is up and while life is down. This lesson focuses us on who He is!
  1. My walk with God has had pain...but I could not abandon Him, blame Him or accuse Him. All I could do was keep my eyes on Him.
  2. Keep Jesus at the center of your life. To have Him at the center of your life is to have Him as Lord of your life. Your life revolves around Him.
  3. Ps 84:5 *Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.* NKJV
- D. Worship is what happens in the house of the Lord! Worshippers keep Jesus as the central point of their lives. I want to always be a worshipper.

## Conclusion:

- *"May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace."* (Numbers 6:24-26, NLT)