

KNOWING WHEN TO QUIT

God is on the move, isn't He? He is always on the move. Is your life like that? Are you always moving, moving forward? Most of us are like that that live in America. In fact, Americans are crazy because we are so busy. After I went to Russia for the first time, I came back and said, "Americans are crazy. They are too busy. The rest of the world does not live like this. I am not going to do it anymore." Within six weeks, I was back in it. The next time I went, I came home and said the same thing. Six weeks after that, I was doing the same thing. That went on for a long time. I began to realize that a lot of what we do in America is because we see everyone around us doing it. You are a product of your environment. You are a product of what you are around. If you are around good people, you act good. If you are around busy people, you are going to be busy. Today, we are going to talk about how you know when to quit, knowing when to quit.

If you are trying to quit being busy, you are going to be like a salmon swimming upstream if you live in America. If you live in another country, they do not even understand what we are talking about when we talk about stress. I remember going to Africa. I said, "You know how crazy everything is and life is stressful, you are so busy." They looked at me and said, "No. What are you talking about? What is stress?" The whole world does not live like this. Those of you from other countries that are watching, you look at America and see how prosperous America is. Everyone seems to have a big car, a big house, and great clothes. You do not realize how hard Americans work. There are more Americans working and taking less vacation than they have ever done. They work longer hours. They work for hours without any pay. You might not believe that. If some corporations had to pay their employees for all the hours they put in, they would not make the profits they make. In fact, in America, people almost brag about how long they work, how hard they work, how many hours they work. "I work a 50 hour week." "I work a 60 hour week." "My friend works 90 hours." I was talking to a really successful business man the other day. I said to him, "How are you doing?" He said, "Busy, busy." I told him, "Me, too. It is terrible isn't it? You just feel like you are running and running." He said, "Yes, and there is no finish line." When he said that, I thought, "He's right. There isn't. What are we doing all of this for?"

Part of the reason that people work too much is they like everything they are doing and they do not want to miss out on anything. They want to try everything. Their kids are in soccer, baseball, football, volleyball, traveling, swimming, diving, everything. Then they are in soccer, touch football, quilting. Everyone is busy trying to cram as much as they can into their life. We are just busy.

When it comes to quitting, how do you know when to quit? How do you know when you are doing a job that it is over, that you need to stop? I have a friend named who had taken a new job. She knew in the first week that she was in the wrong job. It was working her to death. Her boss instantly did not like her. She was very hard on her. The stress was killing her. She got fired after she had only been there nine months. At the end of all of that, she developed shingles. Shingles are nerve endings extremely irritated. It is very, very painful. She was miserable because she was caught up in the American lifestyle and took this job because she thought it would be the right thing for her and then it turned out to be a total disaster. But, she did not know how to quit. She did not know if she was being a quitter and not sticking with something, which would be a character issue that we talked about in the last lesson. She did not know if she just did not have the talent for the job or if she was in the wrong job. She could not bring herself to quit and the lady finally fired her.

I have had the same problem of knowing when to quit something. I like to be busy and I like hard jobs. I like to work hard. When things get tough, I just dig in harder. One wonderful thing about the denomination that I was in for so many years was they taught you to work until Jesus comes. That is how long you work. You work until Jesus comes. I had that training and I did not realize that God has quitting points in different situations and I needed to be able to recognize it.

(Look at this exit sign picture. That is a reminder to you.) Do you know when to exit something? Do you know the signs of the times? Are you able to discern, "This is happening, that is happening, I believe God is telling me my time is up here." Then why will you not quit? Why do people not quit when they should quit? Part of it is because the thing that makes them a good worker is the thing that makes it hard for them to quit. They have a lot of determination, problems do not stop them. They are able to solve problems and just keep going. They might be a very persistent people, which is a wonderful characteristic quality. Hard times make them try even harder. Hard times make them look for ways to solve something. They are

Hard times make the very thing that proves you have good character and that proves you are a good worker is also the very thing that keeps you from quitting when you need to quit.

What are you going through right now? Are you involved in something that no longer has the thrill it once had? Sometimes people will not quit because they are afraid. They do not know how to seek God to find out, "Are you telling me to quit?" Then step out, hear God, and go for something else. I am not telling you to quit your job and then starve. I knew a man who said, "God has called me to be in the ministry and I quit my job." He moved to the town and neighborhood we were living in in Arlington and he could not feed his family. Everyone in the neighborhood always had to take groceries to them because they were really struggling. The man quit too soon. He thought he heard God tell him to go to the seminary, and He probably did. But he did not stop and say, "What is your timing on this Lord?" He just heard God say, "I want you to quit your job and go to the seminary." He just quit his job, jumped up and left. Obviously, there are things to learn about when you quit too soon. What would that be? When would it be that you are quitting too soon?

The first one is that God did not tell you to with a time limit on it. Go back and ask when. Another is quitting too soon; you quit when there are problems and you are not willing to stay there and be part of the solution. That is so important. There is something about sticking with something when it is bad; that if you stick with it long enough it will turn, and you are so proud of yourself and so grateful. You thank God that you hung in there. There are some Scriptures I want you to have for when you are going through those times that you would love to quit, when you say "Just tell me to quit God and I will quit" but God does not tell you to quit. The first Scripture is Psalm 31:15, "Desperate I throw myself on you. You are my God. Hour by hour I place my days in your hand, safe from the hands out to get me."

I was in a church once that was dead. I wanted to quit so badly. Everyone was leaving because the church was dead. I wanted to leave so badly. I called the woman who had been my mentor. I said, "I am miserable. I want to quit." She said, "Let me ask you some questions. Can you leave and give a good report about the pastor?" I said, "Nope, I sure can't. I think it is dead around here." She said, "Can you leave and say that you finished the work that God sent you there to do?" "No, I can't." She said, "Can you leave and say that you have done everything that you could think of and tried as hard as you could try?" I said, "No, maybe not." She said, "Do you have a peace about leaving?" "No, I don't." She said, "Betty, I don't think you can leave yet. I don't think it is the time to quit. I don't envy you for having to hang in there longer, but you have to do it and you can't leave until the Lord speaks to you and says that you can leave, you can quit." I said, "Okay." I got more miserable. I wish I could tell you that everything changed, it got better and I was glad I stayed. It did not. It continued to be dead. My husband wanted to leave, too, but we wanted to be in the center of God's will. One night, in the middle of the night, in my sleep or in my rest time at night, something changed. Suddenly, right then, I knew "You can leave now." My husband knew it, too. He went in and told the pastor that we were leaving, that we loved the people and cared about them, but that God was moving us on. I could honestly say yes to everyone of the questions I had said no to. We are still really good friends with the people from that church. God's timing is huge. You do not want to move ahead of God's timing, and you do not want to miss past God's timing. Have I ever missed God's timing by waiting and staying too long? I could write a book on it. I told you I do not give up easily. It is more likely that I am going to hang on too long than that I quit too soon.

Another Scripture for you is in Jeremiah 8:7. "Even the stork that flies across the sky knows the time of her migration, as do the turtledove, the swallow and the crane. They all return at the proper time each year.

But not my people. They do not know the Lord's law." Have you ever thought about or seen salmon spawning? I was in Lake Tahoe once and we went out on a river and the salmon were swimming back upstream. It was a fascinating thing to watch. In that struggle to get back up stream, they start out brown.

Through that struggle they end up the red color of salmon. That is interesting, isn't it? Animals, birds, fish, everything has a time to migrate, and so do people even in their jobs. Sometimes God calls you to one place your whole life. You are always supposed to be there and He keeps it fresh and alive. He does not ever want you to have anything but the abundant life, even in your jobs. Even if you stay forever, God never says to quit or leave; there should be that life-flowing abundance of the river of joy in your job.

God does have signs, though, to help you know that it is time to leave. Look at Matthew 16:3. "Red sky in the morning means foul weather all day. You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky but you do not know how to interpret the sign of the times." They did not. There was Jesus; He was the Son of God. It was the appointed time for Him to come and do what He was supposed to do and they missed it.

Observing and understanding the sign of the times is very important. What if you miss it? What do you do? You should have quit or you quit too soon. What would you do? You have to find out where you missed it and do the best you can to correct it. One of the big mistakes a person makes is getting under pressure and taking the wrong job. They might say, "I have been without a job, no one has offered me a job. I am going to take the first job that comes along." That is a big mistake because you are taking just anything. Once you get in it, you cannot get out of it. You think, "I can't quit. I have to have the money to

live and I am miserable.” You need to wait. I promise you that God’s Word says, “I will tell you when to move and when to not move.” It even says in Isaiah, “I will be behind you and I will even tell you then that you did the right thing.” It says in Isaiah, “I heard a voice behind me say this is the way, walk ye in it.” God wants you to know when you are to stay.

We have been talking about jobs, but let’s look at ministry. God wants all of us to be involved in a ministry. You will always have a ministry where you are serving God with your talents, time, treasure, everything.

You want to be involved in that. Do not be one of those Christians that just sits in the pew and hear all those great sermons, but you do not ever do anything with your knowledge. You want to have a ministry, or you get a job in a Christian ministry. I had a really good boss named Tom. He was easy to work for but he was strong. When he corrected you, you did not realize that you had been corrected. I can remember a man saying, “Tom is going to be your boss? This is what will happen. You are going to go in to see him. You will have a great time, and he is going to tell you things. Then when you leave you will say, ‘I think I just got corrected.’” All the time he is telling you these things, you are saying “Thanks for telling me that.”

During the time I was working for this man, I began to realize that my time was up and I was through working where I was working. How did I know? Some things began to happen. I did not particularly like some of the things, I did not like the way things were going. I went in and talked to this man later and he said, “Betty, I have studied change a lot. One of the things that I have learned in studying change is that seeing things like you always like it and things that never bothered you now seem to bother you a lot, that is one of the elements of change that God does to get you to quit and move on. If everything stayed great you would not quit.”

(Now look at this picture of this girl. Does she look frustrated to you? What do you think is going on in her mind? What is she communicating? Did you know that 97 percent of what you communicate is nonverbal?

In other words, it is your eyebrows, your eyes, your head, or the way you turn your body. Look at this lady. She obviously is extremely frustrated.)

God can get that way. You might say, “Oh no, God can’t get frustrated.” He does not get frustrated, but he quits striving with people. It says that in Psalms. “My spirit will not always strive with a man.” What does that mean? That means that God knows if He kept coming back trying to convince you to come to Him, you are never going to change. You are determined to do it your own way. Who is an example of that in the Bible? Pharaoh is. Think about it. God loved Pharaoh as much as he loved anyone else in the world, but Pharaoh kept hardening his heart. He would not change. He would not let this new change come about. He would not admit he was to quit being the leader of the Israelites and let them go back to the land that God had for them. He could not quit the status quo; he could not quit what was going on. You have to know when to quit. God did all of those miracles to show Pharaoh to “Stop, let them go.” Instead, he just hardened his heart. You do not want to do that when God is dealing with you. He has something good for you. He has a new place for you. He has a better place for you. You need to be open and pliable, changeable, where God can move you easily. How hard is it for God to move you? When God tells you it is time to quit, do you say, “Okay, all right.” I know one thing, when God is ready for you to quit, He stirs things up. It is like the mother eagle and her eaglets. There is the nest and it is so comfortable.

The little birds are in there relaxing, chirping, mother is bringing them food. They do not have to work for the food; they just have to open their mouths. Do you know what the mother eagle does? She gets sharp, pointed sticks and puts them in that nest so that those little eaglets are uncomfortable, it is not the same. She is getting them ready to leave the nest and fly. God does that, too. If He did not do that you would probably stay there forever. You probably never would leave. It is too comfortable.

Do you know what keeps most people from doing something bigger with their life? It is a pretty good job.

They do not like it. They would like to quit. It is not what they thought, but it is a pretty good job. I know an oil man who was very wealthy and he told us that story. He said, “I was a geologist and had a pretty good job. I had a family to take care of, I was married, I had to do that. But, I was unhappy and unfulfilled, and I couldn’t bring myself to quit because it was a pretty good job. I began to think 30 years from now or 50 years from now, am I going to regret not quitting.” He decided he would. He said he thought, “There is no time like now. I need to do what I need to do.” He quit and became an oil man. He became very wealthy. He has used his money to help colleges, to help young people get an education.

He has done great things. What if he had not quit? What if he had not known there was no time better than right now, because he could not keep going on like this?

How do you quit the right way? What is the right way to quit? First of all, do not wait so long that you have sour grapes, you gripe, moan, groan and complain. You infect everyone else around you with your bad attitude because you are so fed up. If you start talking like that, you have waited too long. You should have done it sooner. There are other people that are still happy there. They like their job. The next thing you need to do is think about when is the best time to do it, the best place to do it, and the best way to do it. Think it out. Be prepared. If possible, have someone ready to take your place. For instance, if you are in leadership and you know you are going to be leaving, try to groom someone to take over for you and

make it easier on everyone around you. You may have to miss it a few times in order to learn when the right time to quit is. I certainly have. God will tell you and you will learn to recognize his signs. You are not satisfied any more, looking at the future depressed you to think you will be stuck here, and you begin to move all out.

God bless you as you move out into the next thing he has for you. God bless you again, over and over.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What are the questions you should ask yourself when you are considering if it's time for you to quit?
2. Discuss how God timings is important to consider when quitting?
3. What steps do you take when you know it's time to quit?

To watch the video on KNOWING WHEN TO QUIT, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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