

20 IMPORTANT THINGS I'VE LEARNED IN 60 YEARS

(I WISH I HAD LEARNED SOONER) ABOUT BEING FRUITFUL
by Dave Williams

I am now in the final half, perhaps the final third, of my life.

I speak like a Father today.

What's important? What is a high priority? How can my time be best invested for the most productivity?

Personal experience is the fourth best teacher in life. The Holy Spirit, God's Word, or someone else's experience is better.

I've learned there are three interlocking keys to everything good in life (Trichotomy):

1. Spiritual
2. Attitudinal
3. Practical

Colossians 1:3, 9–15

³ **We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,**

⁹ **For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**

¹⁰ **That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

¹¹ **Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;**

¹² **Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:**

¹³ **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

¹⁴ **In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

¹⁵ **Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:**

1. I've Learned That I Am Totally Responsible For My Own Life

It's not up to somebody else to fix it for me, design it for me, or make it happen for me.

Saved or Lost? My decision!

2. I've Learned To Believe That Anything is Possible

Mark 9:23 (NLT)

²³ **“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.”**

“We never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible.” —F.B. Meyer

ILLUST: I met Ann and Jerry at Alpha (Ann healed of Crohn's Disease and Fibromyalgia)

“Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible.” —Corrie Ten Boom, 1976

You can defy the odds if God is working with you

- David did
- Gideon did
- Disciples did

ILLUST: Shammah defended the pea patch for the king (Private to General overnight)

3. I've Learned That I Can't Give Up On Everybody Because I Was Hurt By Somebody

1 Corinthians 11:22–24 (NLT)

²² What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

²³ For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

A friend betrayed Jesus, but He didn't give up on everybody.

Someone will try to tear you down, berate you, misunderstand you, speak against you, lie about you, trash you, hurt you...don't carry that hurt over to everyone.

4. I'VE LEARNED THAT THINGS WORK OUT BETTER WHEN I USE MY MOUTH TO SPEAK FAITH, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND CHEER RATHER THAN SPEAKING SICKNESS, LACK, AND THE EVENING NEWS.

Proverbs 15:4

¹⁵ A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

¹⁵ Kind words heal and help; cutting words wound and maim. (The Message)

Proverbs 15:23

²³ "A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

The contrast between the life of a loser and the life of a winner involves their words.

Proverbs 16:28

²⁸ A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 17:9

⁹ Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.

5. I'VE LEARNED THAT IN LIFE I'LL NEVER SUCCEED ALONE

Acts 6: selected men to help—result: multiplication and increase

I've come to the conclusion that If I don't want to be lost, I need to always hang out with those who know where they're going.

"If you want to be a success in life you need to get around people who have already been where you want to go." —Dr. Dave Martin

I must select those whom I will allow in my circle.

Proverbs 13:20 (MSG)

²⁰ "Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces."

Luke 9 & 10: First 12 Disciples, then 70—Even Jesus needed help; he needed a circle of friends; he needed a team.

We never succeed alone!

6. I'VE LEARNED THAT YOU MUST LOVE YOUR WORK...OR FIND WORK YOU DO LOVE

Colossians 3:23

²³ “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”

ILLUST: A recent study (2006) revealed only 6% of America's pastors and churches really have a passion and love for what they do.

ILLUST: A study of 1500 people over the age of 20: 83% chose their jobs based on money; 17% decided based on what they love. Results: After 20 years 103 of the 1500 were millionaires and only 2 of those came from those who chose jobs based on money.

You can accomplish 15 times more in 15 hours of work you love than in 80 hours of unfocused activity you hate. If you don't love your work, change your attitude, or change your work.

7. I'VE LEARNED THAT I HAVE TO WORK HARD AT STAYING SIMPLE AND UNCLUTTERED.

My messages, lifestyle, and even my closet

Some have a weird intoxication with deeper things

Clean out your closet: 75% of the things in there you don't wear anyway

8. I'M STILL LEARNING THE POWER OF FOCUS.

I've found that I can accomplish 10 times more in half the time with focused attention

Scattered (conferences, seminars, spread out) five miles north, west, south, east

ILLUST: Swamp or a River

ILLUST: 150-watt light bulb can light a room. 150-watt laser can cut through 3" of steel

Focus on the important things not just the urgent things

Get the little book, *Tyranny of the Urgent* by Charles E. Hummel.

Everything is urgent in someone's mind. We feel it.

The urgent thing is rarely the important thing, but it's the loudest thing that screams at you.

9. I'VE LEARNED THAT MIRACLES OFTEN HAPPEN AT INCONVENIENT TIMES.

ILLUST: See Biblical Miracles and the Inconvenient

10. I'VE LEARNED THAT IT'S MORE PRODUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE TO SPEAK BY THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT RATHER THAN THE ECHO OF MAN'S OPINION.

1 Peter 4:11

¹¹ “Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you.” (NLT)

I learned that I can be a parrot (speaking only what I've heard other men speak), or I can be a prophet (speaking what the Spirit of the Lord speaks).

11. I'VE LEARNED THAT FOOL'S GOLD SHINES BUT HAS NO VALUE.

Matthew 7:15

“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.”

John 3:6

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Learn the difference between Ishmael and Isaac

Difference between synthetic (man-made) and authentic (God-made)

12. I'VE LEARNED THERE ARE THREE MONSTER MENTALITIES THAT WILL GUARANTEE MY FAILURE AND LACK.

No. 1: Victim mentality

Humor: Somebody once asked Winston Churchill what most prepared him to lead Great Britain through WW II. This was Churchill's response: "It was the time I repeated a class in grade school." The questioner said, "You mean you flunked a grade?" Churchill said, "I never flunked in my life. I was given a second opportunity to get it right."

Victim's focus is always on "me." They live in a cycle of self-demeaning attitudes and dehumanizing behavior.

Victims are professional blamers and excuse-makers: economy, government, my boss, my wife, my husband..."

Fruitful, successful people say, "I'm responsible."

Victims are attitudinally unqualified to be staff members, board members, or in any kind of leadership.

No. 2: Entitlement mentality

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first." —Mark Twain

If we know God's Word, we know this: "I am responsible for my own life, success, actions, and ministry."

No. 3: Scarcity mentality

Any one of these three attitudinal defects is a disgraceful assault on God's Covenant and his promises...and are a grievous insult to God himself.

13. I LEARNED THAT I MUST MAKE TIMES OF PRIVACY AND REST: THESE TIMES ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE HIGH-POWERED; HIGH-ENERGY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.

Genesis 2:2

² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Fatigue can be very costly—extremely expensive when it causes you to start making permanent decisions based upon temporary circumstances.

Ministry is high pressure work with little privacy and constant demands; you need to rest.

ILLUST: "The devil never takes a vacation." (He's not my role model!)

If Jesus needed to rest, so do you! God himself set the example for us on day seven!

What happens when there are no margins in your life? You work from emotions and feelings instead of the truth. You will fall into traps laid by the enemy. You will become blinded like the Pharisees, or licentious Niccolaitans. Vision fades away—without a vision (revelation) there is failure.

14. I'VE LEARNED THAT I HAVE TO KEEP GETTING BACK UP AGAIN.

Proverbs 24:16

¹⁶For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again...

Life has setbacks

Having done all to stand—stand. Hanging in there—tenacity

Most of the time, the thing you think is going to take you under is the very thing God is going to use to take you over!

“Nothing is ever as bad as it seems; and nothing is ever as good as it looks!” —Dave Williams

15. I'VE LEARNED THAT AT FIRST SUCCESS SOMETIMES LOOKS LIKE FAILURE.

Romans 14:8

ILLUST: The Cross

“Anything that doesn't kill me will make me stronger.”

16. I'VE LEARNED THAT JESUS REALLY DOES MULTIPLY WHAT YOU HAVE IF YOU'LL GIVE IT TO HIM.

Luke 6:38

ILLUST: Little boy gave his fish and bread—Jesus had a need

When you let go of what's in your hand, God will let go of what's in his hand.

The law of the seed is the fundamental law of the Kingdom—when you plant your old burned out crazy life to Jesus, he gives you a brand new life that will last forever.

You give of your resources; God will give of his infinite resources.

When you give you grow—withhold and what you withhold will diminish.

17. I'VE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF MONEY: SPIRITUAL TEMPERATURE CAN BE MEASURED BY OUR ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS TOWARD MONEY.

Luke 16:10–12 NLT

¹⁰“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. ¹¹And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? ¹²And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

Wealth is a mindset—Wealth is a choice

Wealth is something you attract; it's about what you become.

“Pity the man who gets a million dollars but isn't a millionaire inside.” —Jim Rohn

DEUTERONOMY 8:18 (the pantry)

¹⁸But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth...

18. I'VE LEARNED IT'S A SIN TO BE GOOD WHEN GOD HAS CALLED ME TO BE GREAT.

Luke 10:40–42

19. I'VE LEARNED TO BELIEVE GOD'S MERCY ENDURES FOREVER.

Psalms 106:1 and Psalm 107:1

When we go through the fire we feel awful.

Refining silver—dross—fans blow off the scum: 99.99% pure.

We will go through the fire.

Thank you, Lord, for your mercy—God will give you another chance.

20. I'VE LEARNED THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO WILLS IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE: GOD'S WILL AND SOME OTHER WILL.

There are NOT three wills of God: Good one; Acceptable one; and Perfect one.

People have used this as an excuse to ignore the will of God.

Greek structure is referring to the only ONE will. The will of God is GOOD, it's the only will that is ACCEPTABLE, and it's PERFECT for you.

Any other will is some other will—Bad; Unacceptable; and Imperfect and will bring the wrong things into your life.

ILLUST: Lady who sold thread, needles, buttons, etc. She threw the stick up and let it fall over and over. "It keeps pointing that way and I don't want to go that way."

The will of God is reality—every other will is fantasy.

God's plan to bring us into his family—the only plan—is through Jesus Christ!

