“Do You Have Any Advice to High School Graduates?”

Funny you should ask; after polling some wise people I know on “Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before I Graduated,” I just shared these thoughts with our graduating senior girls in our church.

• **The importance of choosing purity.** This is the biggest area of regret for many people, but especially young women, who pay a greater cost of giving their bodies away. One lady said, “I wish someone had told me that my body is a precious gift from God to give to ONE man. I wish someone had told me that if someone pays attention to you or says nice things, it doesn’t mean they love you and it SURE doesn’t mean you have to give them your body.”

One element of choosing purity is to choose modesty in dress and behavior. Showing skin (especially midriffs, shoulders and backs) is a great temptation to men and it is a statement about oneself that a girl might not want to be making: “I care more about what’s trendy than about honoring God with my body. I want guys to look at me, even if they have to struggle with their flesh over it.”

• **Don’t get into credit card debt.** The credit card companies will throw undeserved credit at you, and it doesn’t take any time at all to be way over your head. One young lady was so desperate for other people’s approval that she got $80,000 into debt to buy friends and impress people. The people aren’t around anymore, but her debt certainly is. Proverbs says that you are in bondage to your debtors, and credit card debt is a terrible kind of prison.

• **If you find yourself wondering, “Should I be doing this?” you probably shouldn’t.** Untold heartache and regret can be

avoided by listening to that internal alarm. You won't wonder "should I be doing this?" about things you should do, like, "Should I brush my teeth today?" "Should I be kind to my friends?" "Should I exercise self-control?"

• **Choose your friends wisely.** You will become like the people you hang out with, so choose people with beliefs and behaviors consistent with godliness.

• **Pursue your relationship with Christ.** Less than half of the students in church youth groups will still be walking with God ten years after they graduate. Pre-decide to be one of those people. Go to church every Sunday. *GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY!* Get plugged into campus Christian groups as soon as you get to college. If you don't go to college, get plugged into some Christian fellowship group where you will be continually encouraged in your walk with God in the context of Christian community. You are like wet cement; you will (probably) determine the shape of your spiritual life for the rest of your adult life by the choices you make and the habits you form during ages 18-24.

• **Pursue wisdom.** Pray for "wisdom beyond your years." God loves to answer that prayer! Pray for your future spouse. Young women tend to be very passionate and full of longings for connection to a husband; turn that emotional energy into something constructive by praying faithfully for your husband. You might consider keeping a journal for him that you can give him when you marry, so he can see how you became the woman you will be. Write down your thoughts and feelings as well as the ways you are praying for him, even before you know him. At the same time, don't go to college for an "MRS degree," looking for a husband. Trust God to take care of that in His time. Getting married is a lousy goal for college.

• **Develop self-confidence.** Forget all the garbage about self-esteem that you were taught in school. It's not bestowed, it's earned. Real self-esteem is self-confidence, and there's only

way to get it: by doing hard things, by rising to a challenge and working until you succeed.

• **PRAY!** Pray for your roommate. Pray for your studies, pray for your work. When you find yourself battling loneliness or homesickness, press hard into Jesus and let those hard feelings drive you to pray in dependence on Him. Trust God to be in control, and rest in Him. He loves you more than you can imagine!

Hope you find this helpful.

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