

IF I WERE YOU

For at least four years the members of the class of 1952 have looked forward to this happy occasion with great anticipation. Now that this goal has been reached, it is my delightful privilege to commend the parents, to complement the faculty, and to congratulate the graduates for the degree of proficiency which they have attained.

For you, commencement has been a goal; now, it is a starting point. The opportunities and the responsibility of these four years are gone, and you are just at the beginning of your journey. You have reached this goal by the grace of God, some work on your part, the generosity of the faculty, and the sacrifices of your parents. They have sacrificed for you in order that you might be where you are tonight. I hope that you will appreciate the sacrifices which they have made for you. Your parents and your teachers have worked for you, believed in you, counted on you, and are expecting you to make good. I hope that you will live victoriously, and have your lives to count for that which is noblest and best, for their sakes. They have a right to expect you to make good. They will rejoice with you in case you do. If you fail, they will be sadly disappointed, greatly humiliated, and sorely grieved. Doubtless each of you expects to be a happy, useful, and successful citizen.

I offer you my most cordial felicitations upon your graduation, which certainly marks a distinct epoch in your lives. With a sincere desire to help you toward living a well-rounded, full, and complete life, I come to bring this message. I shall not make any attempt to entertain, to give a scholarly exposition of a text, to roll the thunders of eloquence, to dart the coruscations of genius, to scatter the flowers of poetry, to defuse the light of science, or to enforce the precepts of morality. Instead, as a fellow-student, I hope to bring a simple and helpful message based on study, observation, and experience. To that end, I shall speak on some things which I would do, IF I WERE YOU.

If I were you, I would: --

I. Have a Guiding Purpose.

Many are living aimless lives. But any life without a guiding purpose is doomed to a failure. Purpose determines success and victory in any department of labor. A guiding purpose will economize time and energy. Tremendous inspiration, power, and courage are derived from the guiding purpose in life. Your purpose in life should be to live life at its fullest; to be the best, to get the best, and to do the best possible.

II. Continue My Education.

Education will widen your vision, teach you to think along independent lines, bring you in touch with great personalities, broaden your sympathies, furnish you with higher ideals, enable you to do more and better work, and make you more useful. Education is no longer a luxury, but it is a necessity. Patient preparation will mean permanent power. You can get it as you want it. People admire an iron determination, and will always help you the way you are going; if you are going up, they will give you a boost; if you are going down, they will give you a kick. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn more.

III. Have a Governing Principle.

This principle in every life should be to live within the circle of God's will. His will is the biggest and best thing for any life. The greatest discovery that you will ever make is that of the will of God, for your life. Life should be simply a question of the will of God--discovering it and doing it.

No matter who one may be, he can never build a happy, useful, and successful life without God. This world can never satisfy. One recalls Napoleon's efforts to cross the desert with his troops on a great expedition. The hot sun was fairly consuming them as they cried out in their agony for water. In their overwhelming thirst, they looked ahead and cried, "Lo, yonder is a lake!" They rushed to what they thought was a lake, only to be disappointed. It was only a mirage in the desert. Life without God is like that, a mirage in the desert, a delusion.

IV. Have a Charitable Attitude.

Your attitude is exceedingly important. It will have much to do with your happiness or unhappiness. It will be a major factor in determining the esteem in which others will hold you. It will either attract others to you or it will drive them from you. He gets the most out of life whose attitude is that of appreciation instead of criticism. Cultivate the habit of looking for the best instead of the worst. "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured unto you again."

It is utterly impossible for one to escape the harvest which springs from the seeds which his own deeds have sown. Make no mistake. A man reaps just what he sows. No attitude, no word, and no deed ever dies. The sower shall be the reaper. You reap just what you sow, except more of it.

V. Choose My Vocation Early.

You are interested in what you are going to do. Choose your vocation wisely. There are over 9,000 vocations to choose between. You can be more successful in one than in any other. Get information about ones in which you are interested from reading, observation, and interviews. Then, analyze yourself without overestimation or underestimation, and choose the vocation for which you are best suited. Choose early, carefully, and wisely. Know where you want to go, discover God's plan for your life, and then conform to that plan.

VI. Carefully select My Companion.

A happy married life is the greatest career of the world. Nothing will help you more than to be married to one who loves you and is in conformity with your ideals and work. A mistake here will marr your future happiness. The choice of a companion is a matter of paramount importance. "Do you believe in love at first sight?" "Yes, but I also believe in taking a second look." Use discrimination in your choice of making friends. "Puppy love--dog's life."

1. Qualifications of a good husband.

- (1) Moral cleanliness
- (2) A real man
One whom men respect and admire.
- (3) Capable of providing for a wife.
Living on love is all right to joke about, but as a diet for fifty years is very unsatisfactory.
- (4) A genuine love for you.

2. Qualifications of a good wife.

- (1) A lady
- (2) Moral cleanliness
- (3) Compatability
- (4) Domestic habits
- (5) Love for children
- (6) Not quarrelsome or nagging.

Nobody ever admits nagging. Only human cure is absence (rest in peace, Freddy, till I come.)

(7) A burden-sharer.

VII. Cultivate the Art of Making Friends.

Friendship makes life rich and full, bright and joyous, tender and sweet, Cicero said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed." Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning said to Charles Kingsley, "Tell me the secret of your life that I may make mine beautiful too." He replied, "I have a friend." Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great, said, "Many treasures are my friends." Every person needs faithful friends. A wise observer said, "a man that hath friends must show himself freely." The expression you wear on your face is more important than the clothes you wear on your back." If you want friends, be complimentary. Lincoln began a letter, "everybody likes a compliment." William James said, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." It is so much better to look for the good and commend it than to search for the bad and criticize it. Will Rogers said, "I never met a man whom I could not like." Make all the friends you can. You will never have too many. Make friends of older people--they know the meaning of life, would like to help you, will boost you, will glory in your success, and will boast of your achievements.

VIII. Do My Best In Every Undertaking.

Nothing good is gained or retained by an easy means. Nothing worth-while is accomplished without work. Edison said, "Genius of 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." You will succeed in proportion to your willingness to work. Any degree of success is attainable if you are willing to pay the price. If you do your work better than others, people will find it out and seek your services. There is always room at the top. If you will do your best, the world will give you an honorable and useful place. There is no unrecognized talent or unappreciated genius -- illustration -- barber worth a dollar.

Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. Give your very best in the service of others. The way to be great is to be great in service. The service you render will tell the story of your life. So live and serve that when your life comes to a close you will leave more than an obituary notice in the newspaper and an epitaph on a tombstone. Whatever you do, don't ignore the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do, you are doomed to failure. Accept Him as your Saviour and give Him His rightful place as the Lord of your life. Only in Christ can you measure up to the fullness of your possibilities. What marvelous possibilities in you, through you, with you, and for you under the mastery of Christ. Yield your will to Him and obey Him, and you will find that youth will be opportunity, manhood will be achievement, and old age will be a holy memory. "Give of your best to the Master."