

John Piper, *Don't Waste Your life*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2003.

(19 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. It Will Cost You Your Life

“There is a warning. The path of God-exalting joy will cost you your life. Jesus said, “Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.” In other words, it is better to lose your life than to waste it. If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full. This is not a book about how to avoid a wounded life, but how to avoid a *wasted* life. Some of you will die in the service of Christ. That will not be a tragedy. Treasuring life above Christ is a tragedy.” (Page 10)

2. The Question

“What is the Point, the Purpose, the Focus, the Essence of this beautiful glimpse of divine Truth?” (Page 27)

3. Our Joyful Duty

“...Edwards was always absolutely convinced that being happy in God was the way we glorify him. This was the reason we were created. Delighting in God was not a mere preference or option in life; it was our joyful duty and should be the single passion of our lives. Therefore to resolve to maximize his happiness in God was to resolve to show him more glorious than all other sources of happiness. Seeking happiness in God and glorifying God were the same.” (Page 30)

4. Don't Live a Wasted Life

“God created me--and you--to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion--namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence on all the spheres of life. Enjoying and displaying are both crucial. If we try to display the excellence of God without joy in it, we will display a shell of hypocrisy

and create scorn or legalism. But if we claim to enjoy his excellence and do not display it for others to see and admire, we deceive ourselves, because the mark of God-enthralled joy is to overflow and expand by extending itself into the hearts of others. The wasted life is the life without a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples.” (Page 31)

5. He Called Us to Make Him Look Like He Really Is

“We waste our lives when we do not pray and think and dream and plan and work toward magnifying God in all spheres of life. God created us for this: to live our lives in a way that makes him look more like the greatness and the beauty and the infinite worth that he really is. In the night sky of this world God appears to most people, if at all, like a pinprick of light in a heaven of darkness. But he created us and called us to make him look like what he really is. This is what it means to be created in the image of God. We are meant to image forth in the world what he is really like.” (Page 31)

6. Love

“Love has to do with showing a dying soul the life-giving beauty of the glory of God, especially his grace. Yes, as we will see, we show God’s glory in a hundred practical ways that include care about food and clothes and shelter and health. That’s what Jesus meant when he said, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your *good works* and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). Every good work should be a revelation of the glory of God. What makes the good deed an act of love is not the raw act, but the passion and the surface to make God himself known as glorious. Not to aim to show God is not to love, because God is what we need most deeply. And to have all else without him is to perish in the end. The Bible says that you can give away all that you have and deliver your body to be burned and have not love (1 Corinthians 13:3). If you don’t point people to God for everlasting joy, you don’t love. You waste your life.” (Page 35)

7. The Gift of Eternal Life

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God loves us by giving us *eternal life* at the cost of his Son, Jesus Christ. But what is eternal life? Is it a heaven full of mirrors? Or snowboards, or golf links, or black-eyed virgins? No. Jesus tells us exactly what he meant: “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). What is eternal life? It is to know God and his son, Jesus Christ. Nothing can satisfy the soul. The soul was made to stand in awe of a Person--the only person worthy of awe.” (Page 35)

8. Display His Supreme Excellence

“God created us to live with a single passion to joyfully display his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life. The wasted life is the life without this passion. God calls us to pray and think and dream and plan and work not to be made much of, but to make much of him in every part of our lives.” (Page 37)

9. The Cost to Rescue Us

“To bring us to the highest and most durable of all pleasures, God made his Son, Jesus Christ, a bloody spectacle of blameless suffering and death. This is what it cost to rescue us from a wasted life. The eternal Son of God “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing.” He took “the form of a servant” and was born “in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8). (Page 38)

10. They Do Not Know God

“There is no point in romanticizing other religions that reject the deity and saving work of Christ. They do not know God. And those who follow them tragically waste their lives.” (Page 39)

11. Make Much of Christ

“If we would make much of God, we must make much of Christ. His bloody death is the blazing center of the glory of God. If God is to be our boast, what he did and what he is in Christ must be our boast.” (Page 49)

12. We Take Everything for Granted

“One of the reasons we are not as Christ-centered and cross-saturated as we should be is that we have not realized that everything--everything good, and everything bad that God turns for the good of his redeemed children--was purchased by the death of Christ for us. We simply take life and breath and health and friends and everything for granted. We think it is ours by right. But the fact is that it is not ours by right. We are doubly undeserving of it.” (Page 51)

13. The Christ-Exalting Paradoxes of Life

“A life devoted to making much of Christ is costly. And the cost is both a consequence and a means of making much of him. If we do not embrace the path of joy-laden, painful love, we will waste our lives. If we do not learn with Paul the Christ-exalting paradoxes of life, we will squander our days pursuing bubbles that burst. He lived “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Corinthians 6:10). The Calvary road is costly and painful, but it is not joyless.” (Page 63)

14. How to Live Well

“Christ has called us to live for his glory and to die for his glory. If we know how to die well, we will know how to live well.” (Page 64)

15. Daily Christian Living is Daily Christian Dying

“Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily* and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Daily Christian living is daily Christian dying. The

dying I have in mind is the dying of comfort and security and reputation and health and family and friends and wealth and homeland. These may be taken from us at any time in the path of Christ-exalting obedience. To die daily the way Paul did, and to take up our cross daily the way Jesus commanded, is to embrace this life of loss for Christ's sake and count it again." (Page 71)

16. The Loss of Our Idols is Really Our Gain

"...the greatest joy in God comes from giving his gifts away, not in hoarding them for ourselves. It is good to work and have. It is better to work and have in order to give. God's glory shines more brightly when he satisfies us in times of loss than when he provides for us in times of plenty. The health, wealth, and prosperity "gospel" swallows up the beauty of Christ in the beauty of his gifts and turns the gifts into idols. The world is not impressed when Christians get rich and say thanks to God. They are impressed when God is so satisfying that we give our riches away for Christ's sake and count it gain." (Page 72)

17. Losing Life isn't Always the Same as Wasting it

"...you can throw your life away in a hundred sinful ways and die as a result. In that case, losing life and wasting it would be the same. But losing life is not always the same as wasting it. What if the circumstances are such that not taking a risk will result in loss and injury? It may not be wise to play it safe. And what if a successful risk would bring harm only to yourself? It may not be loving to choose comfort of security when something great may be achieved for the cause of Christ and for the good of others." (Page 80)

18. To Become a Christian was to Risk Your Life

"The first three centuries of the Christian church set the pattern of growth under threat. Stephen Neill, in his *History of Christian Missions*, wrote, "Undoubtedly, Christians under the Roman Empire had no legal right to existence, and were liable to the utmost

stringency of the law. . . . Every Christian knew that sooner or later he might have to testify his faith at the cost of his life.” Might. There’s the risk. It was always there. Maybe we will be killed for being Christians. Maybe we won’t. It is a risk. That was normal. And to become a Christian under those circumstances was right. In fact, it was the Christ-exalting love that the Christians showed in spite of risk that stunned the pagan world.” (Page 87)

19. He Who Loses His Life in this World Will Save it

“...the power and the motive behind taking risks for the cause of God is no heroism, or the lust for adventure, or the courage of self-reliance, or the need to earn God’s good will, but rather faith in the all-providing, all-ruling, all satisfying Son of God, Jesus Christ. The strength to risk losing face for the sake of Christ is the faith that God’s love will lift up your face for the sake of Christ is the faith that God’s love will lift up your face in the end and vindicate your cause. The strength to risk losing money for the cause of the Gospel is the faith that we have a treasure in the heavens that cannot fail. The strength to risk losing life in this world is faith in the promise that he who loses his life in this world is faith in the promise that he who loses his life in this world will save it for the age to come.” (Page 90)