

## “Traveling Light – Letting Go Of Stuff”

A few weeks ago, we talked about the reality that this world is not our permanent home.

As we travel through this world, we accumulate more and more things that are not really necessary.

- Things that weigh us down, hold us back, make forward progress more difficult.
- I recently got motivated to clean my office desk and work area that after a year I could not even see the top of my desk.
- What was there that I thought was so important that I was holding on to?
- Articles that I thought I should/would read later that were pertinent to situations, notes from people that I thought I should keep, information that needed to be filed away; but I never got around to doing it.

I filled four trashcans full and took it to the dumpster or shredded other information.

I still have a closet to go through and dejunk and Sylvia is saying **I will do the same thing at the office at home!** Exhausting!

**But now I have the reward of knowing that everything left is important and placed where I can find it when I really do need it.**

Thought for today is: **Letting go of stuff that distracts us from the things that matter most!**

It is better to have less of what doesn't matter and more of what does!

- Everything in culture argues against this idea.
- **This lie that we need more**, we need more, we need more; goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God created Adam and Eve and the serpent came to them saying: “Did God really say you can't eat from that one tree in the middle of the Garden?”

The serpent was saying the same lie we hear today:

**“WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE IS WHAT YOU REALLY NEED!”**

- God said you could have all this in the Garden, but what you don't have, that one thing, that one fruit from that one tree is what you are missing to be happy, fulfilled and complete.

Many are controlled by the mindset that more is always better:

- If \$1.00 is good - \$2.00 is better.
- If one car is good – two is better.

Have you ever eaten anything thinking: One was good, two or more must be better and you regretted that you ate more than the one?

Ecclesiastes 4:6 **“Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.”**

It is better to have **less** of what doesn't matter than to have **more** of what does.

**Why?**

**Your life is too valuable and your calling too great and your God is too good to waste your life on things that do not last.**

**We need to learn to travel light and not let things hold us back from advancing in our goal to become like Jesus.**

Luke 15 when two brothers were fighting over what their father left as an inheritance  
v. 15 Jesus said: “Watch out, be on guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions – people do not get life from the many things they own.”

“**Watch out**” a warning that there is danger ahead.

The world tells us life consists of this abundance:

- Advertisement does
- Posts coming to you communicates it does

But God's Word says: **Your life does not consist of stuff!**

- You are not what you **have**.
- You are not what you **own**.
- You are not what you **drive** or what you **wear**.

**Especially before Christmas**, every ad, every post is shouting to you: YOU ARE WHAT YOU HAVE – DRIVE – WEAR – OWN.

**AND WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO BE HAPPY, FULFILLED, COMPLETE, POPULAR, HIP, TO FIT IN, FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF, MEASURE UP.**

**Question:** What if the stuff that you have is robbing you from the life that you really want?

- Robbing you from the true blessings God intends for you to have.

“Better is one handful with tranquility, strength, peace than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

**ONE HANDFUL LIVING:                      THREE THOUGHTS**

If we are not going to let the stuff of life own us, we have to:

## 1. **Throw Out**

- Throw out the stuff and the junk.
- Your life may depend on your cleaning out the stuff and junk and making room for the eternally valuable things the Lord has for you.
- We are not talking about de-cluttering, we are talking about **de-owning**.
- Not just cleaning out the junk drawers, but ridding your life from the things that weigh you down and hinder you the most.
- Many of us have real problems with identifying with too much stuff in our lives.

Jesus addressed the rich young ruler in Matt 19:

- He was a young guy, an up and comer and had a lot of possessions.
- Jesus knew the possessions had a dominant place in his heart.
- He asked Jesus what was missing in his life; he'd ticked all the religious boxes and still didn't find fulfillment in life.
- Jesus said to this guy what He never said to anyone else: “You need to take your money, give it to the poor and then you will have treasures in heaven.”
- You will then have **less** of the stuff that doesn't matter and **more** of the eternal things that do matter.
- The problem was this guy's stuff had him.
- He made a bad choice after Jesus talked to him – v. 22 “When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.”
- Many of you today may make the same bad choice after hearing Jesus' words about your stuff owning your life – you may walk away sad because you choose to keep your stuff and not receive the eternally valuable things the Lord is offering to you.
- **It's not wrong to have stuff and to have nice stuff; it is wrong when the stuff has you!**

Why is it that we have so much stuff and buy things we can't afford to impress people we don't really like and bring it into our full home that is overflowing?  
More stuff to make me happy – because what you don't have is what will make you happy.

**Why is it that we don't throw out? Two main reasons:**

1. **Fear** – we're afraid we might need this later on – down the road, so don't get rid of it.
  - My children might want it later on.
  - I want to be a good steward and not waste it.
2. **Sentiment** – “This was my first...whatever.”
  - This was a gift from my nana or papaw.
  - This was my first child's ...?

**Why don't you take what has been a blessing to you and give it away to someone else to bless them?**

- You are blessing someone today and trusting the Lord to provide for you when you have a need!
- Trusting God to be your Provider: this breaks the spirit of poverty that says there will never be enough and trusts our God who is generous and abundant with us.
- If you're holding onto something out of Sentiment: **Thank it for serving you well and give it to someone else so it can serve them.** Set it free!

**“Better is one handful with tranquility, than two handfuls with a chasing after the wind wanting more.”**

**2. Buy Less**

- You may say: “It's too late, I just shopped on Black Friday and Cyber Monday and Christmas is done, wrapped.
- 62% of people admit to shopping to cheer themselves up:
  - It makes me feel better – it is an escape.
  - It's a form of entertainment – I like things new and clean - It gives me a momentary sense of significance and power.
  - Every-time I get a good deal on something I don't really need, I get a temporary high.
  - Stuff makes me feel more important, more significant, life is better.

Psalm 119:36-37 “Cause my heart to bow before Your words of wisdom and not the wealth of this world. Help me turn my eyes away from illusions so that I pursue only that which is true.”

We should be pursuing a relationship with the Lord and be so fulfilled with and in Him that we don't need the stuff of this world to satisfy and fascinate and fulfill us.

- The emptiness you're feeling has been supplied by what the Lord is offering to you through His love and all His blessings.

We should choose to buy less so we're not controlled by the commercialism of this world.

**We should be working on choosing experience over things!**

- Family experiences and relational experiences with people rather than with things.
- The stuff of this world is passing away and will one day perish.

1 Timothy 6:6-7 “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and **it is certain** we can carry nothing out.”

### 3. Give More

Jesus said it: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

1 Timothy 6:17

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

- **Compared to the world at large, you as an American, are rich:**
  - If you arrived here in a vehicle or you are watching a computer; you are rich.
  - If you have the ability to eat three meals today, you are rich.
  - If you can order pizza on your mobile device, you are very rich.
- “We are not to put our hope in wealth, which is uncertain” – “I need this stuff to be happy and fulfilled.”
- “But put your hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” God does want you blessed and fulfilled so you can enjoy life.

v.18-19 “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”

- **Not** command them to “Buy More” or “Hoard it All”, “Not to click – Buy Now.”
- “Do good and be rich in good deeds and be generous and willing to share. **In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**”

**Less** of what doesn’t really matter and **more** of what really does!

**“Better, better is one handful with tranquility, than two handfuls with toil/stress/anxiety and a chasing of the wind-trying to chase down more.”**

What truly brings fulfillment is when we can give to someone else.

The times of getting are not as memorable as the times when we gave something that was valuable to us.

The **getting** and **keeping** stories we have are not as meaningful as the **giving** times we experience.

It’s when we have given what we couldn’t afford that made a difference in someone else’s life that we experience the greatest blessing of fulfillment.

When you do good and are generous, willing to share you are laying up treasures for yourself in eternity.

You have less of the stuff that doesn't matter and you have more of the stuff that really does.

**Question:** Are you accumulating on earth what you cannot keep?  
Or are you investing in Heaven and eternity what you cannot lose?

Probably none of us have this down right yet; but are you **Traveling Light**, are you **Throwing Out**, are you **Buying Less**, are you **Giving More**?

**Are you making more time for intimacy and relationships, are you known for a heart of generosity or selfishness?**

**Your life is too valuable – your calling is too great and your God is too good to waste your one life on stuff that doesn't last.**

**“It's better to have one hand with tranquility-peace- assurance- purpose, than two handfuls with toil – stress – anxiety – tension and a chasing after the wind.”**

**Why is one handful better?**

- With one handful, you can help with the other hand someone who is in need.
- With one handful, you can give to someone to be a blessing.
- With one handful, you can encourage someone who needs encouragement.
- With one handful, you can praise God in heaven.

Every-day the enemy will tell you: **“What you don't have is what you need to make you Happy.”**

**But God tells you: “This world is not your home, it's better to travel light.”  
It's better to have one hand with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and a chasing after the wind.”**

-0-