

## Talk It Over

## Travel Light (Week 1) Letting Go Of Stuff

### SMALL TALK

1. What's something you want that you don't need? What's something you have that you don't need?
2. Do you feel like you have way too much stuff, a little too much, about right, not enough, or not nearly enough?

### VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Ecclesiastes 4:6.** How would you describe some specific examples of chasing after the wind?
4. **READ Psalm 119:37.** How might this prayer help you let go of stuff that does not matter in order to add more of what does matter? Anything you need to let go so that you can have more of the right stuff?
5. **READ 1 Timothy 6:17-19.** Which part of these commands are you doing well at? Which part do you want to grow in?
6. **READ Matthew 19:22.** What steps would you have to take in order not to walk away from this message sad like the rich young man?

### GETTING PERSONAL

7. Can you think of somebody who needs something you have that you don't need? How could you give it to them?
8. Have you ever believed that a thing, or an amount of money, or a job would make you happy? How'd that pan out?

### MAKING PROGRESS

9. Making progress is one step at a time. Thank God for who he is and what he has done for you. Ask God to fill you with His presence and peace. Ask Him to show you a step that helps your heart "Travel light" this season. Write down what he

shows you. Is it a few things you don't buy? Or something you decide to "let go" of? Is it a change in your "gifting" plan this Christmas? Is there a way you can choose to elevate meaningful experiences and meaningful relationships over stuff this season? What step can you take this week?

December 1, 2019

## **Travel Light**

### **Week 1: Letting Go Of Stuff**

Today, we're beginning a new series called Travel Light. Let's remind ourselves again that this world is not our home. As a church our purpose is to help people take steps from wherever they are...to where God wants them to be. These steps are for all of us. Everyone has a next step.

When we are moving from wherever we are to where God wants us to be, we are faced with important decisions. We have to decide to let go of some things...in favor of adding some other things.

I don't know about you, but as I travel in my life's journey ... it's amazing how much of the wrong kind of stuff I carry!

#### **TRAVEL LIGHT**

- 1 Letting go of Stuff,
- 2 Letting go of Distractions
- 3 Letting go of Bitterness
- 4 Letting go of Control
- 5 Letting go of Your Past

Life is like a journey while carrying a backpack. I really enjoy backpacking because you can go places you cannot go with a vehicle. You can go to places that are beautiful, and very few other people are there. But to backpack you need to travel light. So many times before a trip you lay everything out before packing to inventory what you are taking and deciding what you intentionally decide not to take. Sometimes I've loaded my pack, and dropped a number of things back into the car before hitting the trail. Why? If your pack is too full, it can be problematic. Usually you learn this the hard way. I blew out my knee on one trip with a

heavy pack. I did a stupid thing, I jogged downhill to catch up to the group and I was carrying a 70 lbs. pack. I tore the meniscus in my knee. I should have packed lighter.

**I. It's better to have LESS of what doesn't matter and MORE of what does.**

I don't know where you are at with that statement. Some of you may be thinking, "In the context of backpacking, I agree!" "Or, I hate backpacking, that's why we have a trailer?" Or perhaps, "Are you kidding, I hate trailers, its only going to be a 5 start hotel for me?" Or perhaps, you need more...5 start RESORT!

Ok, what about the Christmas season? **Does it make sense to go for less of what doesn't matter, and more of what does?**

Now if you are thinking. Oh great! NOW you give this message. You should have given this one last week. It's too late. Black Friday was 2 days ago!

Well if that's you. Don't worry. I'm not too late. Tomorrow is Cyber Monday! Seriously, this subject is an all year subject, but it seems particularly sensitive at this season doesn't it?

REFLECT

Doesn't it seem like everywhere you look there is a message that goes something like this: **More is better?**

\$1 good—\$2 better. 1 car good—2 is better. 1 day off is good—2 is better. 1 trip is good—2 is better. 1 scoop of ice-cream is good, 2 scoops is better. 1 bowl of ice-cream is good, 2 is better. Is more better?

## Corndogs

I like food. My list for foods I don't like is very short. Corndogs got on the list when I was in Jr. Hi. Why? 1 corn dog was good, so 2 was better....; 2 was good so... 3 was better... Do you see where this story is going? To my great surprise, more was not better. I vomited corn dogs. It has been nearly 50 years now. I might be able to do 1 corn dog again.

Check out this equation.

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

One is better than two in this equation.

*Luke 12:15 (NIV) ... "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*

There is a limitation of capacity, a limitation of heart space, a limitation of time...you can't pack it ALL in. We have some decisions to make.

## II. One HANDFUL Living

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

The implication here is that it is quite possible to ruin your sense of peace and balance by going for MORE.

### REFLECT

Having stuff is not bad—God provides good stuff for us to enjoy (see 1 Timothy 6:17-19), but the hold that stuff has on you can be bad.

Don't make the mistake of putting your hope in wealth, or the stuff wealth can provide. Put your hope in God, he is the source of every good gift, and provides us everything for our enjoyment. More stuff never brings meaningful fulfillment... Only God can *fully* satisfy that longing.

Often going for more stuff to gain meaningful fulfillment leads to a downward spiral of less peace, more stress, more pressures, less joy, and wanting more stuff to fix it. We want more stuff and enjoy it less. Always wanting more means you are a discontented person. Contentment is being truly happy with what you already have. Speaking of backpacking, which tent do you carry? Discontent or content, which tent do you live in?

So how does a double fisted I want more than I have now kind of guy live a more peace filled life?

### **A. THROW Out**

And by "Throw Out" I do not necessarily mean throw it in the dumpster. I mean **Throw it out** of the position it currently has in your life.

*Matthew 19:21-22 (NIV) "...go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

**The lie:** Having more makes me happy.

**The truth:** This guy had MORE he walked away SAD!

WEALTH had a death grip on him. **THROW OFF THAT HOLD!**

Stuff can never fill you and fully satisfy you. That emptiness you feel inside that you are trying to fill by stuff actually needs to be filled by the goodness of God and His grace.

## QUESTION?

Do you have stuff you never use? Could you bless someone else with it?

*Why would I do that? I might need it later. I want to be a wise steward of what I have.*

**A Higher Wisdom:** *“God you are always faithful. I don’t need this right now. He or she does. By faith I’m giving it away, trusting that you will provide for me as you always have when I need something.”*

Does that sound radical? Why would I want to do that?  
Because...

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

## **B. BUY Less**

Do you ever buy stuff just because it feels good to buy stuff? Is shopping a form of entertainment for you? Are you buying with money you have or money you don’t have? If you are buying with money you don’t have, are you going to feel good later? When you feel bad then, are you going to buy more stuff to cheer yourself up?

***Psalm 119:37 (NIV)** Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.*

## WHAT IF WE TURNED OUR EYES (AIM)

- What if we aimed to be so filled with the goodness of God, that we don't need meaningless things to feel better about ourselves?

- What if we didn't need "Stuff" to define who we are, because Jesus defines who we are?
- What if we were to elevate meaningful experiences and meaningful relationships over stuff?

What if we didn't depend on stuff to entertain us?

Examples:

- I enjoyed cutting a hole in the deadened base of a large natural sage bush in my back yard to make a den like hiding place for our grandchildren. The cost? 0. The memory...priceless.
- It reminded me of the wonder of my childhood when my dad made a fort out of branches he cut from our old mulberry tree. The cost? 0. The memory..priceless. The memory is now nearly 50 years old, but still paying off to the third generation.
- We enjoyed playing hide and go seek when our kids were teenagers. We played inside the house with all the lights off. Cost 0. The fun and laughter...priceless.
- Now with our grandchildren, we still enjoy playing hide and go seek. But at their ages they want the lights on, which makes it just right for them.
- We are leveraging experiences and memories. These are low cost, high impact powerful investments.

It really doesn't take stuff to elevate life to a higher level of fulfillment. Today don't walk away sad. Figure out how you are going to live for a higher fulfillment.



**C. LIVE  
GIVE  
LOVE  
LAUGH More.**

Write them all if you want, but pick one of those that you know God wants you to work on this week.

**REFLECT**

Are you accumulating on Earth what you cannot keep? Or are you investing in Heaven what you cannot lose?

Dear God,

You are more than enough. Thank You for Your love. Thank You for Jesus. Holy Spirit, we need Your strength to let go of all the distracting junk we have added to our lives. Show us and help us with our next step toward a “one-handful” life that is full of Your presence and peace. Amen!