

## Talk It Over

## Travel Light (Week 4) Letting Go Of Control

### SMALL TALK

1. What do you try to control that is outside of your control?
2. What was your last difficult decision to make? How'd you make it?

### VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Luke 1:26-38.** If you were Mary of Joseph in this situation, how do you think you would have responded? When Mary "surrendered" her will to God's will (1:38), how aware do you think she was to the potential "downsides" of her decision? What "upsides" do you think she focused on? What past "dreams" about what her life would have been like did she have to "let go" to embrace this new destiny?
4. **READ Matthew 10:39; 16:25.** What do these teachings of Jesus mean? Can you think of examples that demonstrate how this works?
5. **READ Philippians 2:5-11; and Luke 22:42.** How did Jesus model "letting go of control" by surrendering" to God's will?

### GETTING PERSONAL

6. When was the last time you surrendered control and trusted God with something you cared deeply about? What happened?
7. What would it look like for you to exercise more trust and less control in a specific matter you typically try to control?
8. Write down the areas where you are intentionally surrendering control to God: Marriage, past, relationships, school, finances, future, job, health, kids, what people think of you....
9. Do one thing each day this week that forces you to rely on God and others for the outcome.

December 22, 2019

## Letting Go Of Control

Series: Travel Light (Week 4)

If you are honest, how many of you would say that there's at least one area of your life that you love to control. Raise your hands. If you find yourself tempted to reach over and lift the hand of the person sitting next to you, just please understand, God is about to speak to you today about letting go of control.

Please don't be thinking this: Yahoo, this is the perfect message for my spouse, or parents, or for so and so. I hope they listen good today... because THEY are so controlling and THEY need to hear this one. If you are thinking this, you will let yourself off the hook. None of us are off the hook on this one. . You may be thinking...

I'm not controlling. I'm just aggressively helpful.  
I'm not controlling, I'm just thoroughly organized.

I think every one of us has a tendency to take control in unhealthy ways. And the plain reality is that taking control in unhealthy ways is one of those bad habits that are very difficult for us to see in ourselves. But today let's look into the mirror of God's Word and see if we can see ourselves better and learn to let some unhealthy stuff go.

### QUESTION

What do you do when your life story takes a turn you can't control?

This happened to Mary the mother of Jesus with just one encounter. We can learn something amazing from her.

*Luke 1:26-32 (NLT) {26} In the sixth month of Elizabeth's*

*pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, {27} to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. {28} Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!” {29} Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. {30} “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! {31} You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. {32} He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.*

***Luke 1:34-35 (NLT)*** *Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”*

[literally, I’ve never “known a man”, meaning I’ve never been with a man]

*{35} The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.*

[Why must this child be born of a virgin? 1. Prophecy. 2. Theologically, he must be fully man to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> ADAM reversing the curse, but he must be the SON of GOD, untainted by that curse in his human nature. So, he is FULLY GOD and FULLY MAN.]

***Luke 1:38 (NLT)*** *Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.*

Consider the magnitude of this encounter. Everything in Mary’s life suddenly changed. Before this day, typical routines, the usual teenage girl dreams about life, hopes and expectations. Before this life seemed mostly under control.

*Luke 1:29 (NLT) Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.*

Sometimes we get stuck in the confused and disturbed stage.

Mary moved from there to a whole different place. A place where she was ok about letting go of control.

Maybe she never had a control problem. If not, why not?

Me! I have a control problem.

- I'm still trying to learn to curb how often I interrupt...
- I'm still trying to learn how to not finish her sentences...
- That's like so bad...
- I'm still trying to learn how to let her tell a story rather than take control because I want to tell the story...
- I just realized this week, I'm so used to trying to control what people see in me, I even control what I see in myself. Everytime I look in a mirror I don't even let myself see the real unguarded me. I only let myself see the guarded and controlled me. I have patterned myself to suck in my gut to make it look as flat as possible. I don't let myself see what is the normal slouching pouching posture! Oh, brother. What an ingrained habit to present the carefully controlled image managed me.
- Here's another one I totally relate to!!!

I think I'll ask Santa for this plaque for Christmas.



Maybe you are like me and you recognize that you need to loosen your grip a little. Maybe you need to let go of control just a little.

What does that look like? How exactly does one let go of control in a healthy helpful way?

## **I. Recognize what you can't CONTROL**

- The weather.
- Your heartbeat.
- Whether your heart will keep beating.
- What people think of you.
- Aging
- Unforeseen circumstances
- People.
- God.

### **Driver's Permit**

I remember one scary day long ago, when I handed the car keys over to my firstborn who just got her learner's permit. That was a big day for letting go of control. That was a scary moment. I moved from driver's seat to passenger seat. Have you noticed there is no brake on the passenger side? There is no steering wheel either. Scary!

I think we all kind of look at our own life like a vehicle we are in control of. But are we really? Our life story is not the sum total of events we navigate around with perfect control. We'd like to think we are pretty good drivers. We'd like to think we have good control. But doesn't every life deliver surprise reminders that we are not in control of how our own story goes. It only takes one moment that makes our lives feel like they are spinning out of control.

Life has scary moments. Today we are looking at a scary moment for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Life was going routinely, everything seemingly under predictable control, until everything changed. It only took one announcement to start Mary on the ride

of her life that she never expected or could have made happen if she tried.

If you want to become healthy as it relates to “control issues”. **Then I. Recognize What You Can’t Control, and ...**

## **II. TRUST the one who is in CONTROL**

I think our control problems are really trust problems.

Even though Mary was troubled and confused by what the supernatural and surprising angelic announcement might mean, Mary’s trust was so big, she willingly handed over the keys. Okay God you take the driver’s seat. I’ll ride with you where you want me to go. I’ll do what you want me to do. You are inviting me into a covenant partnership with you. I trust you, and I accept. You lead the way. I’ll go with you wherever this leads. Did she know that she was in for the ride of her life? At least in some ways, YES.

### **The Mantel Message**

A college student in the nineteenth century wrote 6 large letters on postcards:

**L-E-T-G-O-D**

Then he placed them as a visual reminder on a mantel in his room. One day while the window was open a breeze knocked the “D” off the mantel. As he picked it up to put it back he felt like the visual now spoke more clearly. Let Go! That was his problem.

Some people think Letting go of control, means praying about the matter then God will make it happen the way they want. NO. Sometimes letting go in prayer means letting go of the way you want it, and trusting God to work out what he wants.

*Luke 22:42 (NIV) “Father, if you are willing, take this cup*

*from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

Do you see how TRUST trumps CONTROL?

A lot of people find Jesus handy to have in the car as long as he's in the passenger seat, because something may come up where they require his services. Jesus, I have a health problem, and I need some help.... I want you in my life, but I'm not so sure I want you driving.

**And Yet TRUST is not passive.**

Trust is actively cooperating. Trust is actively depending. Trust is actively connecting, and conversing, and choosing life with God, as directed by God.

Mary was in for the Ride of Her Life but we don't have time for those later details this morning. Read the rest of the story by reading the rest of Luke. Her trust went through incredible tests.

The TESTING of our TRUST is often confusing...  
for a time...  
but it leads to resurrection and life!

**YOUR TRUST WILL BE TESTED TOO**

Everything in our world says you have to make it happen. You have to take control, and make it happen. But Jesus says something completely different.

*John 15:5 (NIV) “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

*Matthew 10:39 (NLT) If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.*

### III. What are you trying to CONTROL that you need to SURRENDER?

God can do way more through your surrender than you could ever do through your control.

That which is on your heart is always better in his hand.

She is but a humble ordinary woman.  
Life did not feel like God was “with Her”.  
Who was she that an Angel would visit her?

Then the message was even more confusing and troubling.

She seems to understand the implications, weighs them, things are no longer going to be normal. Pregnant? What would Joseph think, Her Parents, Her friends, her close knit community? Nevertheless, she surrenders. She places herself under, God’s authority, God’s promises, God’s Word.

Where are you... trusting your control? Your own understanding...or God’s Word, God’s promises?