

BENEFITS OF PACKING LIGHTLY

(Part 2---Luke 10:1-4)

Matthew 10:9-10 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

Luke 9:3 And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

Luke 10:1-7 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. 5 **But whatever house you** enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, **for the laborer is worthy of his wages.** Do not go from house to house.

In Jules Verne's novel *The Mysterious Island*, he tells of five men who escape a Civil War prison camp by hijacking a hot air balloon. As they rise into the air, they realize the wind is carrying them over the ocean. Watching their homeland disappear on the horizon, they wonder how much longer the balloon can stay aloft.

As the hours pass and the surface of the ocean draws closer, the men decide they must cast overboard some of the weight, for they had no way to heat the air in the balloon. Shoes, overcoats, and weapons are reluctantly discarded, and the uncomfortable aviators feel their balloon rise. But only temporarily. Soon they find themselves dangerously close to the waves again, so they toss their food. Better to be high and hungry than drown on a full belly!

Unfortunately, this, too, is only a temporary solution, and the craft again threatens to lower the men into the sea. One man has an idea: they can tie the ropes that hold the passenger car and sit on those ropes. Then they can cut away the basket beneath them. As they sever the very thing they had been standing on, it drops into the ocean, and the balloon rises. Not a minute too soon, they spot land.

Eager to stand on terra firma again, the five jump into the water and swim to the island. **They live because they were able to discern the difference between what was truly needed and what was not.** The "necessities" they once thought they couldn't live without were the very weights that nearly doomed their mission.

As Jesus spoke to the 70 disciples He was sending out to announce the offer of God's kingdom, He said to them in Luke 10:4:

"Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road."

Two Sunday's ago, I spoke about the fact that our Lord asks us to limit some things in our lives---to lay some things aside---in order to bring others to Him.

Let me put it this way---

Many Christians fail to bring people to Christ, not because they have overt sin in their lives,

**but because they're unwilling to part with
those things which are weighing them down.**

Jesus wouldn't let the 70 take certain things with them that would hinder their effectiveness in doing His work.

This morning, allow me to share with you several more of these "weights" that we need to lay aside if we are to become---not only effective in reaching others for Christ---but in leading them on to a life of obedience to Christ.

Weight #1:

1. Poorly chosen methods

The first Bible-believing church I attended after I was born again baptized nearly 10,000 of people every year. The strange thing is that you would have thought that after years and years of doing that the church would have become massive. But for the most part, it stayed the same size. Why?

Because they weren't obeying the great commission. **Many** people were getting saved, but **few** were getting discipled. No time for that. We need to get out there so we can baptize more people next Sunday! (It became a numbers game.)

Illustration---Elmer Towns and Evangelism Conference

(Only about a dozen people out of 300 indicated they were saved through a stranger—96% said they were saved through a friend, neighbor, relative, or co-worker!)

The data that Elmer Towns shared with us forces us to acknowledge that **a lifestyle of personal involvement is the critical factor in becoming a great witness for Christ.**

Poor methods hinder us from being effective for Christ.

Let me give you another weight that we must lay aside if we are going to make a difference in our work for Christ:

2. Thinking that our task is not that important

In the passage we have been studying in Luke 10, what we see is Jesus affirming the value of what **the 70 were setting** out to do. He views it as very important and valuable!

Let's read beginning with verse 5. Jesus is telling the 70 what to do when someone invites them into their home:

Luke 10:5-7 But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to

you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, **for the laborer is worthy of his wages**. Do not go from house to house.

Jesus is saying---“You are laboring for My kingdom. When hospitality is extended to you, accept it. You are worthy of their care, because you are doing **My** work!”

Jesus affirmed the value of what they were doing. He was telling the 70, *“If someone lets you stay with them, remember that you are laboring for Me and their hospitality are wages I am paying you for your work .”*

When I was in Bible college, one class I took was called “Church and School Finance.” And one of my teacher’s favorite sayings (that she quoted many times) was this: **“God’s business is the most important business in the world.”**

Folks, when you do good to someone outside of the family of God in the hope that---some how, some way---you might get an opportunity to bring them to Christ, you are offering them one of the greatest services that you could possibly give them.

Thinking that what we have to offer is not that important is definitely a weight we must lay aside because:

- God’s business is the most important business in the world and
- His gift is the most important gift a person could ever receive.

So if you meet resistance, or things just don’t go well for you as you set out to love others and share Christ---don’t despair, **you are doing the most important thing that a human being can possibly do for another human.**

---So first, inappropriate **methods** need to be laid aside.

---Also, inappropriate **thinking** needs to be laid aside.

What else?

Notice the end of verse 4. Jesus tells the 70:

“...and greet no one along the road.”

What Jesus means here is this:

Don’t get involved in **anything** that might detract from the mission, good as that thing may be.

Let me give you number 3.

We need to lay aside...

3. The “good” things in life that keep us from the “best”

If you have ever taken time out of your schedule to help someone in some way, or even to share the gospel, don't you agree that it brings amazing joy and satisfaction afterwards.

If I ever get a chance to see **the Rangers, or the Stars**, or the Mavericks in person, I really enjoy that. But I can also tell you, that, after all these years of telling lost people how to be saved and saved people how to lay up treasure in heaven, no sporting event can compare.

We can call this *the principle of priority*.

- **It's laying** aside the **good** things in life that we might engage in the **best** things in life.
- **It's putting** top value on **God's agenda** for our lives.
- **It's valuing** the lives and eternal destinies of **others** above our own comforts and desires.

There's nothing wrong with stopping to chat with someone along the road unless that uses up all your time and now you have no time to chat with those who really need what you have got —those who are without God.

The “good things” in life can keep us from the “best things”---the most important things.

In the early 2000's, **actor Ben Stein** wrote a blog that was published by E!Online for nearly eight years. It was titled “**Monday Night at Morton's**.” It was all about his encounters in Hollywood with the rich and famous.

He's not writing it anymore.

Stein explained why in his final column on December 20, 2003:

Real stars are not riding around in the backs of limousines or in Porsches or getting trained in yoga or Pilates and eating raw fruit while they have Vietnamese girls do their nails.... A real star, the kind who haunts my memory night and day, is the U.S. soldier in Baghdad who saw a little girl playing with a piece of unexploded ordinance. He pushed her aside and threw himself on it just as it exploded....

I am no longer comfortable being a part of the system that has such poor values, and I do not want to perpetuate those values by pretending that who is eating at Morton's is [an important] subject....

Last column, I told you a few of the rules I had learned to keep my sanity. Well, here is a final one to help you keep your sanity and keep you in the running for stardom: We are puny, insignificant creatures.

We are not responsible for the operation of the universe, and what happens to us is not terribly important. God is real, not a fiction, and when we turn over our lives to him, he takes far better care of us than we could ever do for ourselves. In a word, we make ourselves sane when we fire ourselves as the directors of the movie of our lives and turn the power over to him.

I can put it another way. Years ago, I realized I could never be as great an actor as Olivier or as good a comic as Steve Martin—or Martin Mull or Fred Willard—or as good an economist as Samuelson or Friedman or as good a writer as Fitzgerald. Or even remotely close to any of them.

But I could be a devoted father to my son, husband to my wife and, above all, a good son to the parents who had done so much for me. This came to be my main task in life....

I came to realize, that life lived to help others is the only one that matters and that it is my duty, in return for the lavish life God has [given] me, to help others he has placed in my path.

Ben Stein was a Hollywood actor who laid aside “writing about rich people,” so he could focus on what is best!

Please allow me to close by asking you the same question I asked you two weeks ago:

“What hinders you?”

“What weights do **YOU** need to lay aside?”

- Do you still think that reaching others with God’s love is only for pastors and missionaries? Lay it aside.
- Do you feel that getting out of your comfort zone for God and people without Him is not that important? That’s something you need to lay aside.
- Are you holding on to things that are **good** (things that you love) that are keeping you from **the best** (things that God loves)?

Maybe there are things that you can, for God’s sake, lay aside in order to find time to make a difference.

If we are not willing to do that, we will never really become the kind of disciples God wants us to be.