

IS YOUR LIFE CLUTTERED?
(Luke 12:15-21)

Introduction:

1. Many of us today feel our lives are out of control.
 - a. We are always busy, but have little sense of accomplishment.
 - b. We over-eat, over-work, and over-react to problems.
 - c. We are hurried and worried, harried, unhappy, and unhealthy.
 - d. We possess more “stuff” than any other people in history, but are never satisfied with what we have.

2. Our lives are cluttered with “stuff.”
 - a. Our houses virtually have wall to wall furniture.
 - b. Our walk in closets overflow with clothes we never wear.
 - c. Our garages are stacked with stuff we never use, but won't part with.
 - d. Our expensive trucks and cars rust in the weather because our garages are filled with stuff we don't need or use.
 - e. A new business prospers in America - storage rental centers.
 - f. Hoarding has become a recognized psychological disorder.
 - g. Our credit cards are maxed out to pay for the stuff we don't need.

3. Our lives are cluttered with activities we don't need or have time for.

4. Our lives are dominated by electronic gadgets from televisions to computers, from cell phones to mp3 players.
 - a. We text and tweet, email, and talk constantly on our cell phones.
 - b. But we have fewer personal relationships and more loneliness.

5. How can we unclutter our lives?

Discussion:

- I. WE NEED TO DECLARE A FAST!
 - A. Fasting is usually thought of as abstaining from food for a stated purpose and period.

 - B. Fasting is a Biblical practice designed to bring one closer to GOD.
 1. Israel fasted, confessed their sins, and listened to the reading of GOD's Law (Neh. 9:1-3).
 2. Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness (Mt. 4:2).

3. Saul fasted for 3 days after the Lord appeared to him (Acts 9:9).
4. The Antioch church fasted and prayed before sending out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).
5. Fasting is not bound in the N. T. but is left to personal choice.

C. We can fast (abstain from) other things besides food.

II. WE NEED TO FAST FROM SHOPPING!

A. Don't buy anything you don't really need.

1. Count the cost: "Do I really need this?" "Is it worth it?"
2. Ask yourself: "Will I feel the same about this tomorrow?"
3. Jesus warned: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

B. Pay off your credit card; then consider "plastic surgery" if you can't control your spending.

III. WE NEED TO FAST FROM EXCESSIVE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA.

A. Limit your time watching television.

1. Don't sit mindlessly "mesmerized" by anything that comes on.
2. Choose carefully what you watch and hear.

B. Control your use of email, texting, time on Facebook, etc.

1. Interpersonal relationships and civility are declining today because of these things.
2. Don't put anything on Facebook or You-tube that a Christian should not see, hear, do or tell.
3. It should not be necessary to remind people to turn off cell phones in church, at weddings, funerals or other solemn occasions.
4. Do not subject others to your personal cell phone conversations (Matt. 7:12).
5. A preacher left his wife for a woman he "met" on the internet; his wife spent most of her waking hours on the internet and seldom interacted with others in person (1 Thess. 5:22).

IV. WHAT SHALL I DO ABOUT THE THINGS WHICH CLUTTER UP MY LIFE?

A. Have a garage sale.

1. Get rid of everything you don't really need.
2. Use the proceeds to pay off your credit card.
3. Give the money from the sale to the Lord's work.
4. Give what you do not sell to charity.

B. Fill your life with productive things.

1. Jesus told a parable of a man who had an evil spirit cast out of him (Matt. 12:43-45).
 - a. He did not fill the void in his life with good things.
 - b. The evil spirit found "an empty house" and returned with seven other spirits more wicked than he.
 - c. If we get rid of bad habits and do not replace them with good ones, the bad habits will return.
2. Spend more time reading the Bible.

"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure" (Psa. 119:162).
3. Spend more time in prayer.

"Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice" (Psa. 55:17).
4. Get involved in the work of the Lord.

"...be ready for every good work" (Tit. 3:1).
5. Teach another soul about the Savior.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).
6. Do a good deed for someone in need (Acts 10:38).

Conclusion:

1. One Day we will give an account for how we have used our time and possessions (Matt. 25:19; 1 Cor. 4:2).
2. All our material possessions will be left behind when we leave the earth:

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:6,7).

