



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

November 3, 2017

CLEARING THE CLUTTER

Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Luke 12:15, NKJV

Have you ever heard it said that three moves are as good as a fire? What that means is that every time you move, you throw out things, good things too, which you would like to keep but there is no room to keep them. Why didn't you toss it out a long time ago? You kept it because you were sure it was too good to throw away, so you put it in the closet or stored it in your garage. Eventually, you have to reckon with it. If you want to label the disorder, call it, "CLUTTER!" It isn't only our closets which eventually suffer from clutter. Clutter is a disease of the brain, even of the heart, as well as the closet.

Long ago Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3), but nobody wants to be poor, either in spirit or in material possessions. It's a universal malady, too. Wherever I've been in the world, and no matter how much or how little people have, when they see or meet people with more, they become dissatisfied with what they have.

Everybody delights in being able to say, "This is mine!" or that house, or those buildings are mine. A spiritual giant of a generation ago, A. W. Tozer, faced the issue squarely when he wrote, "The pronouns, 'my' and 'mine' look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die."

Clutter becomes a disease which is consuming. The more you have, the more you want; and the more you get, the more you become convinced that you must have more. Lost has been the freedom of simplicity that has strength coming from within. Today the issue isn't simply a matter of things, it is an issue of the things which *have you*, the things which consume your time, your interest, and your very life.

When Jesus was here, He often made people uncomfortable because He didn't play games. He cut to the very heart of issues, stripping away the veneers of hypocrisy and superficiality which have always made us comfortable. He said bluntly, "Take heed,



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and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15, *KJV*).

In one of his books Alexander Solzhenitsyn tells how he was arrested, and item by item, his captors took away the things which had been meaningful to him--his home, his books, his papers, his family. Finally, all that he had was what he had within, and Solzhenitsyn said that he was never richer than when he knew they could not take away the treasures within his heart.

In 1978, Solzhenitsyn addressed the graduating class at Harvard University. His sober words were a scathing denouncement of the decadence of a society built upon "things." He concluded, saying, "If the world has not come to its end, it has approached a major turn in history equal in importance to the turn from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It will exact from us a spiritual upsurge, we shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life where our physical nature will not be cursed as in the Middle Ages, but, even more important, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon as in the Modern Era. . . No one on earth has any other way left--but upward."

Resource reading: Luke 12:16-21