

Outline

Clutter Clatter Celebration – Good Will to Goodwill Day!

We made it! It's February 8, and the end of our Clutter Clatter Challenge as a church! For those who do not know, today marks the celebratory end to a neat time in the history of our church and to a series that we started in early January – *Clutter Clatter – Living Rich With Less*. And during this time we have challenged ourselves as a nation and as individuals to re-think our thoughts about “Stuff” defining us and the spending of our money to acquire Stuff to make ourselves feel better about our lives. Quick Review of the challenge one last time and if you did not join us in the challenge, maybe you will consider the next 30 days as a way to try this little experiment in your own homes.

Clutter Clatter Challenge Part 1 – For 30 days buy no Stuff (new or used), except that which is a necessity to live! (Calculate what you have saved in \$s!)

Clutter Clatter Challenge Part 2 – Over that 30 days, do a Stuff Purge in your home, choosing either to throw out or give to charity that which you have not used in 1 year! (Calculate the \$s you have donated!)

Good Will to Goodwill Party – Today we will bring all that Good Stuff to Give Away to church and to give with good will to Goodwill!

Take a couple of minutes and meet some new folks or old folks around where you are sitting and have a little jam session about this challenge with these guiding questions:

Clutter Clatter – Live Rich With Less Stuff – Jam Session

- Did you take the challenges and, if so, how did they impact your homes?
- How do you think this kind of challenge would impact your home?

Ahhhhhhhh. Ok. We have had our Oprah moment and shared and purged our thoughts with one another. Don't you feel better? I know I do. Now, we got that little challenge behind us and we can go on. We can get back to business as usual – spend to our hearts content and re-stock on stuff and begin anew our clutter clatter – **NOT!!!!!!**

Hopefully, we can be the start of a trend in America today to de-clutter our lifestyles that have brought us to the brink of financial ruin in this great country. We are the generation that must change our thinking and rid ourselves of a **SPEND and STUFF Mentality**. As Peter Walsh says in the series that inspired this series, *Clean Sweep*, “We have become a nation of out-of-control consumers – we spend too much, we buy too much, and we eat too much.” (Peter Walsh *It's All Too Much*). It is our responsibility to individually change our spending habits and that begins with maintaining some of the principles that we have put to good use over the last few weeks on a consistent basis in our lives. Today, for just a moment let me reiterate a couple of those principles I believe God desires for us to maintain in a De-Cluttered Lifestyle.

De-Clutter Lifestyle Principle #1 – Don't let Stuff Define Your Happiness!

Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ...Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:31,32 NIV

These are the words of Jesus to those who would follow Him. Quit letting stuff define your life. Quit worrying that you don't have enough or that someone has more than you or that you are missing out. The cost of the stuff and the Clutter it brings to your stress level and your lifestyle within your home is more costly than the pleasure it may bring you. The harder you try in your human efforts to make yourself happy through “Retail Therapy,” the less happy you will be. As a matter of fact, this principle urges us to follow the “Fleeting Thoughts” that God places in our hearts as to what will make us happy. With that in mind, follow these simple principles when thinking about spending your hard-earned money on things you want to bring into your home to add to its clutter:

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De-Clutter Strategies for Purchases:

Refuse to Recreationally Shop. Only go shop for what you know you want or need.

Put a 30-Day Delay on all Impulse purchases. (It gives you **time to think** if this is a wise purchase as you think about your bills and it gives you the **opportunity to get bored** with the idea!)

Buy from Savings not Credit. –Embrace the Pain, Baby! (Delay your gratification, not your pain.)

Manage Inflow by Creating an Equal Volume of Outflow. When you buy something that you already have in the home, throw out or donate that which is identical.

De-Clutter Principle #2 – Don't Let Stuff Dominate You!

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to **do good**, to be rich in **good deeds**, and to **be generous** and **willing to share**. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. | Timothy 6:17-19 NIV

You know the problem with our nation or with us individually is not a clutter problem, really. Nor is it a spending problem. The problem in our lives is that we as Americans have allowed our lives to hinge on what we own instead of who we are and who God created us to be. As Walsh says in his book, "At some point, we started to believe that the more we own, the better off we are. In times past and in other cultures, people believed that one of the worst things that can happen is for someone to be possessed, to have demon exercise power over you. Isn't that what being inundated with possessions is – being possessed?" (Peter Walsh – *It's All Too Much*)

God wants you to live a full life and gives you everything you need for enjoyment. God is not a Happiness Hacker. As a matter of fact as you look at the verse on the screen, He is confident that if you put your hope in Him, He will richly provide you with all you need to enjoy life! It is only when we don't trust him and try to manipulate life through artificial means like abusing credit, buying happiness through things, and living greedy that we begin to live stressful lives that sap us of happiness and fulfillment.

You see, according to God, life is a paradox. Our twisted human thinking logically says that if I buy more, I will be happy; or if I hold onto all my money, I will be happy. God, the one that created all the rules that make the universe tick, says that we should think the opposite, and He says it over and over and over throughout the Bible. Don't treasure things, but value relationships. An enjoyable, fulfilled life is not lived in greed or stinginess, but in generosity and a willingness to share. And as you look at the last line of that verse on the screen, this foundation for your life will result in a life that is truly life! Do you want to live abundantly? Then establish a life that is based on generosity not greed on sharing not stinginess. With that in mind, follow these simple principles when thinking about spending your hard-earned money on things you want to bring into your home to add to its clutter:

De-Clutter Strategies for Owning Stuff Rather than Stuff Owning You:

Make a short list of the 4-5 Essentials in your life. Then make room for them in your life by eliminating the nonessentials. What are the things you value most, people you love or things you're passionate about, things that you want in your life? Do this in your spending of money and your time.

Use the 10-10-80 Principle for living. **Pay God with your first 10 Percent. Pay yourself second** by having an account for savings (build first into an emergency plan, second into a retirement plan).

Pay your bills last (pay your most overdue debts first from smallest to biggest – this will allow you a sense of accomplishment as you get rid of some of those and it will get your biggest creditors off your back).

Volunteer Generously with your time. The quickest way to bring joy back into your life is to give of yourself to others. Find a way to give back to this community in a big way. Too often we fight depression through spending of money on ourselves on stuff that we do not need. Even the psychiatric community will tell you that one of the best ways to fight depression is to focus on someone else. Instead of concentrating on your portfolio, concentrate on your Spiritual Gifts God has given you so that you can find out what kind of ministry He has impassioned you for and then do it passionately. We make it easy for you to figure that out at Ni River by offering a class that helps

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you define just that in your life, and it is going to be offered on February 20,21. Enroll in the lobby today.

At this time, I would like to surrender the stage to an organization in our community that is just the kind of organization that Ni River loves to partner with in our community, for they are all about utilizing the entire community to lift up and support the whole community. [We love to build community in our church here and then marshal our community together to lift up and support our greater community of Fredericksburg as well](#) – We call that “**Communistry**” around here. And one way we do that is to partner with an organization like Goodwill Industries, who not only give us great ways to donate our gently used Stuff, but who uses that Stuff to make industry happen for many who might not have jobs otherwise in our community. But I want them to tell you a little more about themselves and I think you will figure out why we at Ni River love them so much! I would like to invite [Woody Van Valkenburgh, the President and CEO of Rappahannock Goodwill Industries.](#)

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