

DEPENDING ON GOD

SIMPLICITY

MATTHEW 6

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (19-21)

SIMPLICITY BORN OUT OF DEPENDENCE

LAYING UP TREASURES

When we think of treasure, we often have visions of pirates or kings, laying up their gold in buried chests or locked storehouses. They hoard wealth because they think it will bring them security and satisfaction, both now and for the future.

The problem is that earthly treasures are only temporary. They rust and break down, or are easily stolen and lost. And so there's a constant need to strive to amass more and more wealth to keep secure and satisfied.

Here in 21st century Wheaton Illinois, what do we depend on for our security and satisfaction, both now and for the future? Our 401k? Our house or car? Our book collection? Our clothing and jewelry? What if that was all taken away?

DEPENDING ON GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

A PERSONAL STORY

There's a misunderstanding of the minimalist movement, that you should somehow have almost nothing, fewer than 100 things, or a house that's empty and white. This can feel oppressive to some, and privileged to others.

But that's not what minimalism is all about, at least not to me.

It's not about telling people they can't have clutter, or they should own next to nothing. It's not even about possessions, really.

It's about asking a simple question: what is important to you?

If you don't have much money, and you need to put food on the table, then it's obvious the answer to that question is food, rent, utilities and other basic necessities. In that case, asking the question "what is important to you" is a good idea, so you can focus on what's needed for survival and not let yourself get distracted. I've been poor, and I know that distracting myself was something I did often, because I didn't want to think about poor. I got into deep debt because I spent money on distractions instead of taking care of my basic bills.

If you have too much stuff, maybe you don't need to worry about the survival basics. In fact, maybe your problem is that you don't have any financial constraints, and can order whatever you want, whenever you want it. In that case, asking the question "what is important to you" is a good idea, because it forces you to understand what's essential to you. I've been in this position too, and it's easy to get distracted by luxuries, by too many choices, and fritter your life away ordering things and being distracted. Life is too short and precious to waste like this.

The question isn't even about possessions or spending. It might be about figuring out what you want to focus on in life: is it better to focus on doing as many things as possible, or about making an impact with one or two things.

It might be about figuring out who you want in your life: do you want to make as many friends as possible, or pick a handful that give you meaning, people who lift you up?

It might be about deciding how you want to fill your day: do you want to try to do everything, or are there a handful of things that matter most to you? It's possible that if you cleared away all the other choices you have, you will have more space for what matters and for what makes you happy.

It might be about what gives you meaning. What gives you contentment. What has an impact on the lives of those around you, or your community.

My answers, the answer of other minimalist writers ... they don't really matter. What really matters is asking yourself the question, and exploring what you find. You don't even need definitive answers: even exploring the question is a profound shift for most of us. It's going from the usual way of doing things to one that is more conscious, more curious, more interested in the stuff that makes life alive.

-Leo Babauta

OUR HOPE

JESUS

The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is our only hope to turn from laying up treasures on earth to laying up treasures in heaven. He's the only good master, who gave us the perfect example of total devotion to his Father, paving the way for us.