

Clutter - Clutter and more Clutter

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Do you remember the good ole days, as they say, when life was simple? I think it was when I was 6 years old, school and play. I remember those wonderfully simple years. Each year it got harder when more responsibility was added to my duty list. Sports, working at my father's store, homework, girls, and the list could go on endlessly. Life just seemed to get more and complex. But have no fear, there are people and companies who realized my dilemma and provided me with the promise of a less complex life.

The first was the computer. It was to make life simpler and more organized. Then someone invented email, so here I am on vacation and answering emails so that I don't miss a day of work. Remember when you could only mail a letter and it took 3 days to get to its destination? The result was I had more time and less worry. In fact, most problems were solved before I got the letter. So the computer did not reduce my work load -- it only enhanced it to 7 days a week without time off, unless I go out into the wilderness camping (which I hate) but I understand that I could take my laptop and get email off the satellite feed.

Second was the cell phone. It was touted as a device to make life easier to stay in touch. Well, "the stay in touch "is the case. Try and take time off and you will get phone calls on a regular basis. Yes, even in the wilderness of Alaska you can get a call on a satellite phone.

John 8: 31:47 is a short discourse on freedom. Jesus says to the Jewish disciples, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." The response of the Jewish disciples was to point out that they have never been a slave to anyone. Jesus then points out how wrong they are. So it is with us. We are slaves to so many things in our lives, things that clutter our faith, relationships, family, and other important parts of our lives. Like the computer and the cell phone we have become hostages like never before. Our lives are cluttered with urgent items from work and friends, so that we have very little time left for the important things of life -- family and faith.

Jesus encouraged the disciples and all who read this passage to clear the clutter by going back to the basics, the Word. Or another way to say it is put the cell phone and computer away and have daily Bible study, prayer, play with the kids, go on a date with your spouse, take a two day trip with the family, and visit the grandchildren or grandparents. Get back to the basics of relationship, of worship, of family. This is what Jesus was saying to the Jewish disciples, let go of the law that has cluttered your faith, let go of the tradition that has cluttered your faith, get back to the basics - like Abraham did.

Notes on the text:

Verse 31-32 lays the ground work for how we are slaves without even knowing it. This was spoken to Jewish disciples - followers who still saw the 613 parts of the law as way to salvation.

Verse 38: "Do what you have heard from the Father" is Jesus' challenge to have them get back to the basics of faith and not to rely on their traditions that have developed over the centuries in the law. This is why Jesus refers to verse 39: "You would be doing what Abraham did" -- having faith in God not traditions or law, getting back to the basic covenant which is found in Genesis 12: 1-3.

Verse 41: Notice the reference to father with a small "f". This is following the culture and not the Father (God). Getting back to the basics is noted again in verse 47, "Whoever is from God hears the words of God.", instead of the words of our society.