

Are You Willing to Leave Your Baggage Behind?

When I got saved I became a hardcore student of the Word. But when stressful situations arose it seemed I couldn't remember the Scriptural principles until after I'd stumbled over my own flesh.

As a young Christian, it was frustrating to know the right thing to do and somehow miss the mark anyway. Maybe you can relate.

I held on to verses like 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord," and Philippians 1:6, which says, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

One key to walking in the Word is leaving your baggage behind. Over the years, I've unpacked quite a few drawers of flesh and emptied a number of soulish closets, so to speak. But an incident last week reminded me of the power of the Word to transform our hearts.

Through a **prophetic lesson**, I learned this: I need to do more than leave my baggage behind. I need to be willing to let someone else throw it away if it means showing lost souls the love of Christ. So bear with me while I share the highlights of my prophetic lesson.

A Prophetic Annoyance?

The maintenance crew at my condo removed all baggage from the baggage room and put it into a large storage room during a recent painting project. I went to claim my baggage—about \$500 worth—on several occasions. Each time, the maintenance men

told me to come back another day. Instead of complaining or losing my cool, I exercised the fruit of patience.

Last week, as my daughter was preparing to go on a mission trip to Australia, I again tried to retrieve my baggage. The maintenance men, who knew full well that I had requested this baggage several times, had thrown it away. Five-hundred dollars worth of baggage!

What was worse, the condo manager had me running up and down 15 floors looking in baggage closets for my items, only to have me follow this vain chase with a walk through a musky storage garage on the same hunt. Of course, my baggage was nowhere to be found. They threw it away.

All of this was annoying, but it got worse. The condo manager suggested that I was lying about owning baggage and trying to retrieve it. She insisted that I show her photographs of my baggage and produce receipts. This was despite the security guard testifying on my behalf that I requested the baggage several times.

The Devil's Provocation

A blind man was listening to all of this unfold in the lobby. With each affront, he nudged me to raise my voice and fight. He suggested I was being too nice, too kind, too calm ... Playing the devil's advocate, this man continued to cajole me. He suggested I storm down to the manager's office and give her a piece of my mind.

I won't lie. My flesh was tempted. This wasn't the first time the staff has treated me poorly and cost me a lot of time and money in the process. Finally, when it became clear that the condo manager would do nothing but continue to insult my integrity, the blind man said, "You need to raise your voice and fight!"

"Sir, there was a time when I would have," I said. "There was a time when I probably would have gone down there, adrenaline

flowing, and sputtered loudly in her face with all sorts of demands and threats. But I'm not that person anymore. I've changed."

The blind man felt sorry for me. But the security guard, a woman I had led to the Lord some months earlier, marveled. She saw a glimpse of Jesus in that situation. What's funny is that I didn't have to think about keeping my cool or even try. It was just my natural response to the situation. Or, I should say, it was the grace of God working through me. That's growth! Glory to God!

The Lord is Our Warrior

Sure, I was frustrated, but by the grace of God I was salt and light rather than bitter and dark. By the grace of God, I went more than the second mile. I went around the mountain a few times. By the grace of God, I refused to retaliate against the maintenance men or the accusatory condo manager.

Wow, I've changed. How about you?

I didn't share this story with you to pat myself on the back. Believe me, I have other issues to conquer. I wasn't nearly as patient this week as I was last week. But the point is I see fruit. So I didn't share this to puff myself up. I shared it to encourage you because you can probably relate to the struggle.

No matter what traits you see in yourself that you don't like—no matter what the **Holy Ghost** is shining a light on during this season—don't beat yourself up about it. Just see it for what it is and decide in your heart to agree with God and yield to His Spirit. He's changing us all from glory to glory and He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Be willing to leave your baggage behind and God will do a mighty work in you. Amen.

P.S. Just hours before I published this article, I received a phone call from the board of directors at my condo. The security guard interceded on my behalf with the board and the association manager agreed to reimburse me for the loss of my luggage. See, I didn't need to fight. The Lord, My Warrior, fought the battle for me. And He'll fight for you to. Be led by His Spirit. Amen and amen.

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