

Carrying Extra Baggage? Why Holy Spirit Says, 'Let It Go'

We recently went on a trip. Like normal, I took way too much in my luggage. I always do! Stuff I didn't need, never used, unnecessary weight. I pack it—just in case I might need it. Anyone else like me?

I have learned that there are two types of people:

Type 1— **The Underpacker**: This person just throws whatever in their bag and just wants to spend as little time as possible on the task. They will just worry about what they didn't bring when they get there. This person causes me great anxiety! Lol.

Type 2— **The Overpacker**: This person will pack every single thing that will make the trip seem as if they never left home at all. They will never lack or be in need of anything because they brought everything. They are prepared for every type of weather/event/or unexpected disaster! And on top of it all, they must completely clean/organize the house before leaving as if they might never make it back and someone would see their house unkempt. In case you haven't guessed, I am this type of packer.

Did you know there is another type of baggage we tend to overpack with, unnecessary items and things we hold onto that weigh us down in life? Sometimes I have to just take a deep breath and unpack and restart to lighten the load. Why do we hang on to the emotional and spiritual baggage? So many times we hold on to hurt, pain, doubt, guilt, shame, fear, anger, insecurities and all kinds of issues that weigh us down. It is unnecessary. In all of these situations, the Bible tells us that we can let it go, clean it out and move on and leave it behind.

Recently, while cleaning out closets, I noticed I had held on

to items that were of no use and of no value to our lives anymore. Why did we keep them? We paid too much for them? We didn't want to admit we never needed them to begin with? Or we fought so hard to get something we didn't need? Just as we can become hoarders of all sorts of stuff, many times, we can become spiritual and emotional hoarders. Maybe sometimes we use the extra baggage to hide behind because we feel inadequate and insecure. We find it so difficult to let go of old habits and old mindsets. All The while, the Holy Spirit is trying to get us to unclench our tight-knuckled fists to let go of the things that are holding us back and weighing us down, but so often, we just can't let go, because we need them ... just in case. In case what?

In case God doesn't do what He says He will do?

In case that person hurts us again?

In case we get disappointed again or mistreated again?

In case we need to use our anger/bitterness to get revenge?

In case we don't get that job or opportunity?

In case we need to blame when things don't work out the way we want?

In case we get sick again?

In case we get an unexpected bill in the mail?

Doesn't it really boil down to lack of trust? Do we really trust God? In times of stress and pain, when we should be relying on God, these old mindsets rear their ugly heads and cause us more pain, grief and fear in our lives. How can we reach the place God has for us when we are so burdened down by all the load of baggage we have collected over the years? Baggage like fear, anger, bitterness, jealousy and confusion? What good can ever come from holding on to it? This baggage blatantly stands between us and our real, tangible spiritual

growth and freedom.

We have all picked up baggage along the way in life; odds are, you picked up a few bags already today. Somewhere between the first steps out of the bed and reaching the front door, you grabbed a few bags. You stepped up to the baggage claim carousel and loaded up. Maybe you don't remember doing it, or it has become a daily habit you're unaware of.

Today, your baggage carousel is not at the airport; it's in your mind. Maybe you have a suitcase of resentment or discontentment. A duffel bag of exhaustion and weariness. A carry-on of grief and lost dreams. Or maybe a backpack of doubt. A beautifully decorated overnight bag of loneliness or a whole trunkload of fear.

We carry the same emotional baggage with us into each new day and each new year. Pretty soon, we're pulling more luggage than we can carry and wondering why we're so tired, exhausted and mentally worn out by the end of the day.

How about we unpack the luggage today and clean it out? When our Spirits are so dry, weary and run down from carrying so much baggage, we can't be who we need to be and do all that we are called to do. We have no joy, hope or life to give to others. But the Bible tells us this:

"Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Then come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear" (Matt. 11:28-30, TPT).

Throughout the Bible, there were those who carried heavy baggage. Their baggage could have hindered them from moving into their now-moment and their destiny. Some did allow their baggage to hinder their destiny, In 1 Samuel 9-10, we learn about Saul. Saul was chosen by God after the Israelites

decided they wanted a king. Saul had a lot of baggage, even though God chose him. He still battled with holding onto baggage and even hid among the baggage. He battled insecurity and inferiority even though he was tall in stature and a head taller than all the others. He battled with trusting God and did everything his own way and in his own strength. These issues would eventually lead to his demise. He never laid down the baggage to step forward in what God had for him.

In Genesis 19, we are told of Lot's wife, who turned into a pillar of salt because she could not let go of the baggage in her life. She held on to bitterness and familiarity, and she did not trust God for something better. She could not let go of what seemed comfortable to receive her freedom. I don't know about you, but I don't want any excess baggage slowing me down or hindering my freedom and victory and purpose.

Look at those who *did* let go of the baggage in order to move on and get to the promises of God. Look at Noah. He was laughed at and mocked and made to feel stupid, but He trusted God's will and God's plan, and he and his family were saved. Look at Moses. He had a lot of baggage. He was abandoned as a baby. Rejected by his own people. He was a murderer, left on the back side of the desert for years. He had a stuttering issue and was lied to over and over, yet he did not let any of these things keep him from doing what God had called him to do and bringing deliverance to God's people. However, the one bag he could not let go of, his anger, caused him to not get to enter into the promise land. Look at David in 1 Samuel 17. David was illegitimate. He was mocked by his brothers and could have held on to the baggage of loneliness while being stuck out in a pasture with a bunch of sheep. He wasn't even invited to be counted when all the brothers were called in for one to be anointed as king, yet he would become king and be called a man after God's own heart.

Look at the book of Esther. Esther was an orphan who was a nobody. She was poor. She had to deal with racism and

ridicule. She had every reason to carry around the baggage of despair, depression, anger, bitterness, doubt, low self-esteem and insecurity. Yet she laid all the baggage down in order to step into her now-moment and rescue an entire generation of people for God. What if she had not laid down the weight of her past and pain? An entire people group would have been erased from history.

No matter what baggage you are holding onto today, let it go! You could be the very one to bring deliverance to a generation that has lost hope. The enemy wants to keep you weighed down by all the baggage life has burdened you with. Stop carrying things that were not intended for you and let God lighten your load.

Believe it or not, God gives us a word for every bag we have collected and what to do to let it go. If you don't know what to do with that extra baggage, let's start here. If you are struggling with:

1. Bag of sin: 1 John 1:9 (MEV) says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How about letting go of sin today and picking up freedom?

2. Bag of anxiety: 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV) says, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Philippians 4:6 (MEV) says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God." Psalm 94:19 (NIV) says, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy."

3. Bag of anger and bitterness: Ephesians 4:26 (MEV) says, "Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger." Proverbs 29:11 (NIV) says, "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end." Ephesians 4:31 says, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind

and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

4. Bag of worry: Isaiah 26:3 (MEV) says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you.”

5. Bag of uncertainty in the future: “For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11). “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

6. Bag of narcissism and “No one else knows what I’m facing”: “Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1).

7. Bag of doubt and distrust: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6). “Jesus answered them, ‘Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also, if you say to this mountain, “Be removed, and be thrown into the sea,” it will be done’” (Matt. 21:21).

8. Bag of Fear: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control” (2 Tim. 1:7). Isaiah 41:13-14, “‘For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, “Do not fear; I will help you.” Do not fear, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel. I will help you, says the Lord and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 41:13-14).

9. Bag of insecurity and inadequacy: “I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

10. Bag of fear of failure: 1 Chronicles 22:13 tells us that if we follow God's commands, He will give us success; do not be afraid. Proverbs 2:6-8 tells us that He plans success for the decent and honorable; He guards the course and protects the way of His faithful ones.

So I ask you this today, as you are reading, "What baggage are you holding onto today, and what baggage do you continually pick up every morning?" Isn't it time to unpack the bags and let go of the unnecessary, unfruitful, burdensome baggage that has so weighed you down for such a long time? Aren't you ready for the weight to be lifted so that you can run your race strong, free, full of joy and life and passion? *Let it go!*

Make a quick list of all of your bags and how much time and energy you spend lugging them around. Think about how your physical, emotional and spiritual health and growth has been hindered by them. Take a few moments in prayer today as you finally lay them out one by one and put them in the discard pile for God to carry off to the dump.

As you unpack each area, ask God to fill that space and void with His love, joy, purpose, freedom and spirit. This time, don't pick them back up. Turn around and walk away and leave them at His feet! God is saying to you, "Set that baggage down! You are carrying burdens you don't need to bear. Come to Me, *everyone*."

He invites you and says, "'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly'" (Matt. 11:28-30, MSG).

Listen to more of Karen's teaching on letting go of your baggage by watching the video below:

Karen Schatzline is an international Christian evangelist and author who, with her husband Pat, founded Remnant Ministries International in 1997. Karen ministers with passion and fire; her messages always deliver hope, freedom and a call to intimacy with the Father. Karen is the author of the powerful book, *Dehydrated* (Charisma House), which will lead you into a deeper encounter and intimacy with God. Together, Karen and Pat authored *Rebuilding the Altar* (Charisma House), a wake-up call to the church and believers to rebuild the place of encounter, and their new book, *Restore the Roar* (Charisma House), which will release in August 2019. Karen also hosts a biweekly video blog called "The Breathing Room," which has an online audience of tens of thousands and can be seen live on Facebook or through archived episodes on YouTube.

Karen makes her home in Fort Worth, Texas, along with her husband, evangelist and author Pat Schatzline and their daughter, Abigail. Their son, Nate, and daughter-in-love, Adrienne, live in California, where they are youth pastors and have made Pat and Karen grandparents with their two sons, Jackson and Anderson.

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