

What do you carry? What are you dragging? What do you leave behind?

Baggage Check

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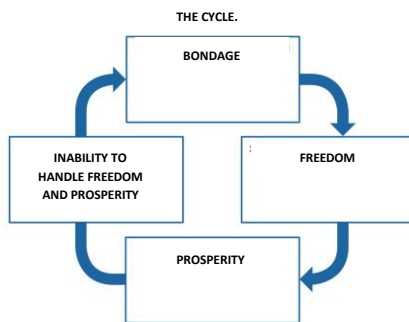
Stay Free (Week 5)

OPENING: What has been the most important learning that you got from the series?

STOP THE CYCLE. Let's understand the behavior of our baggage. We learned that most baggage we have picked up and carry are spiritual and emotional in nature. As beings composed of spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23) our baggage initially affects our spirit and the soul, which eventually affects our body. (Psalm 32:3-5).

Read Luke 11:24-26. Jesus here is teaching how evil spirits behave. While Jesus is talking about literal demons, angels of darkness, malignant spiritual entities, in a general sense, Jesus is also referring to every negative spirit that does not come from God or oppose Him. Pastor Jon gave us examples of these spirits: the spirit of fear, the spirit of greed, the spirit of envy, the spirit of bitterness, the spirit of hate, the spirit of racism, the spirit of unbelief—any spirit that opposes God. How do spirits behave according to these verses? Have you ever experienced the spirit of unnecessary baggage come around to oppress you?

STAY FREE. Can you recap in your own words how Pastor explained the cycle of Freedom, Prosperity and Bondage?



How do we stop the cycle and stay free?

1. Holy Spirit. We need to invite the Holy Spirit to live inside of us and have full control of the house (1 Thessalonians 5:19). When we give Him full control of the House the “ghosts” from our past baggage will see that there is a Spirit—a power, that is far stronger than us inhabits us. They won't have the guts to oppress you. We need the Holy Spirit to stay free (2 Corinthians 3:17). By the Spirit's help, we can stay free and stop harping back to the past (Galatians 5:1).

2. Humility. Who we are and what we have come from God—the freedom and prosperity. It's not a result of what we did. We are free because of God's grace. If we always remember the magnitude of His grace we will never forget to stay humble. To be forgiven of our past and to be free from its power over us should cause us to always give thanks and praise to Jesus, who, according to the Bible, always leads us into victory! Read Psalm 51:1-2, 17 and 1 Peter 5:6.

3. Honesty. Even though we have already been set free, there will be times when we will make mistake; we have the propensity to pick up unnecessary baggage in our journey; but when mistakes or pick up unnecessary baggage, we must be willing and honest both to ourselves and to others about it. We learned that God will not bless who you pretend to be; God cannot free you from that which you try to hide. *To God and with yourself* (1 John 1:9-10) This verse teaches that the very second we mess up and the past tries to come back, immediately go to God, confess it and receive His grace. That means, deal with the problem before it takes root. That why confession is a gift of grace. *To our community* (James 5:16) We recognize the power of accountability—being answerable to someone—not as a boss, but as a brother or sister who can come along side you and help you grow! That's the power of community—knowing that there are people you can trust (and can trust you), people who can pray for you (and you can pray for); having people in your life who will not judge me but lift you up!

FRESH ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD. In the Bible, every time an individual encounters God, they are changed. We know and believe the value of having fresh encounters with the Lord. That's why, here in our worship, we always encourage ourselves to come with a sense of expectation, a sense of excitement. If you come to church and you don't have that sense of excitement, it's time to ask God for a fresh encounter with Him—so keep coming, keep inviting people, keep serving, keep giving—don't stop. One of the best ways to see God at work in your life is by leading others to Him; inviting and bringing others to Jesus, coming alongside them to help them grow. When we regularly seek fresh encounters with God, we find:

New identity (2 Corinthians 5:17). *New strength.* (1 Corinthians 2:3-5). *New joy.* (Psalm 16:11)

Fresh vision. A new sense of purpose, calling and direction based on person and promises of God, which give us stability and focus – a stable perspective and clear direction will help us to stay on track. That's why we need to keep listening to God (Psalm 143:10).

A visionary person understands that there is a calling and purpose in his life that he needs to pursue. What is God's vision for your life? Until we get a clear vision of a God who wants to bless us in far greater ways than we can imagine, we will be tempted to do things our own way (Proverbs 29:18). As we enter into God's vision for our lives, we find him transforming our view of ourselves, our past experiences, our career, our family and goals. We learn to pick up the right baggage for the journey. As you close, plan for a time when you can get together and lay out a VISION for your DGroup and our Church for the next 12 months. Call it a *VisionCast* event. How do you see yourself serving God and accomplishing His purpose for you in the next 12 months?

ANNOUNCEMENT:

SUMMER BAPTISM BASH – AUGUST 7.

If you have received Jesus as Lord and Savior and you want to take your next step of faith, SIGN UP FOR BAPTISM!