



# Slower Living

## Week 2: Clearing the Clutter

Lori Lampert - 06/07/2026

Don't raise your hand unless you need to get this off your chest, but how many of you have had a speeding ticket in this life? This year? Today? How many of you keep a traffic ticket attorney on retainer?

Slow down. The other day I was apparently driving too fast through a neighborhood. I thought I was going the speed limit, but when a person raised his fist and shouted out "Slow Down," it really didn't matter what I thought. All I knew was that I better slow down. Whatever speed I had been traveling felt threatening to him. It was unsafe.

P.S.: I am notorious for telling others to slow down. Well, maybe one person in particular. Maybe that was why it was such a shock to my system. I had that moment of "Oh no, not me!" I'm not used to people shouting at me.

And yet it was an important reminder. Slowing down is something that we need to do not just for ourselves. Slowing down from this hectic hurryup pace is something that will benefit the people around us. Sometimes we are not the best judge of whether or not we are going too fast.

This series of messages that began last week are not meant as a shouted "slow down". Nor are we saying "hurry up and slow down." We are not wanting to stress you out, you probably could do that yourself.

Instead, it is an invitation to consider how to engage with this life so that we can create margin for the many things that happen unexpectedly. So that we are able to give our mind, body, and spirit room to strengthen, and at times to heal. So that we are open-hearted enough to find the joy and peace that the Holy Spirit gives to us in the midst of it all.

Heather began the series last week with the reminder that it is God-ordained that we rest. From the beginning of creation God set aside a day for rest.

I want to remember these words Heather shared from an important person in her life.

**Rest is not a reward for faithfulness. Rest is a prerequisite for fruitfulness.**

**- Alicia Chole**

Let's start from there as we talk today about clearing the clutter.

When I think about clearing the clutter, the first thing that comes to mind is clearing the accumulated stuff around me. If you walked into my house today, you may think I've done a great job of that already. I mean, before I go to bed or even leave the premises, my house is straightened up, dishes done, counters wiped down, things put away.

But please don't open that drawer or that drawer or maybe even that drawer. Stay away from the linen closet. Please don't look too hard at the unfinished room in the basement where years and years of photos and books are hanging out. Maybe we don't qualify to be on a reality show, but clutter has accumulated once again in the home we have lived in since 2012.

I googled "How do I declutter a home?" And here is a smidgen of the titles that came up:

- How to declutter your house in one day.
- Declutter Your Home - 55 things you can get rid of without missing
- Whole House Decluttering Checklist: A simple 10-day reset.

On and on and on goes Google. AI had a jillion suggestions too. And guess what? It all became overwhelming. Cluttering my mind.

And that is where I landed. Maybe the place we need to start decluttering isn't the stuff around us, although for me I find it incredibly hard to function with a cluttered home. Maybe where we need to start is within ourselves.

Maybe in this world of chaos and challenges. With the ongoing worry we carry about the people we love and those we struggle to love. With the bombardment of a 24-hour news cycle, the waging of wars around the world. With the noise in our heads we have carried from our childhood, or the trauma we have endured in adulthood. The place we need to declutter is within our own minds. Slowing down our thoughts.

Listen to these words of Jesus found in Matthew 6. Jesus is speaking to a crowd of people living under the oppression of the Roman Empire. He is speaking to those who know what it means to be afraid. Those for whom the next meal is not guaranteed. Greater than that, they know the struggles of a high infant mortality rate and the raising of a child to adulthood. To them, to us, Jesus speaks these words:

**<sup>25</sup> 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>[k]</sup>**

**<sup>28</sup> And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and**

**tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?**

**<sup>31</sup> Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” <sup>32</sup> For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

**<sup>34</sup> So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.**

**- Matthew 6:25-34**

When Ben and I moved from our last house in 2012 to our current house, the simple way of deciding what was going to go with us, of decluttering, involved making three piles. Toss. Share. Keep. Keep what was important to us. Share what was still usable, but we weren’t using it. Toss what was no longer of use to anyone.

Let me offer this strategy to you today as a way to declutter our minds. As a way to worry less. Toss. Share. Keep.

The first step in this strategy is: toss. Easier said than done, I know. There are things that are rattling around in our thoughts that just are not true. There are thoughts that are damaging. Some come from words we heard growing up that have imprinted on our minds. Words that came from a significant adult in our life that we have held on to and let define us. Words that labeled us, or put us in categories that are just wrong. Words that we told ourselves as a child when we were trying to understand our place in a family, a school, a community. Words that we were indoctrinated into from a religious group that taught us we were never going to be enough. Thus is the power of words.

And when those thoughts and ideas are such a part of us, it's hard to just...toss...them. It takes something of us. It takes a willingness to challenge those thoughts. It takes intentionally discarding the weight of words spoken by others that harmed us. It can take speaking to a trusted spiritual leader. It can take working with a therapist. It can take attending a church like ours where the absolute bedrock is that God is Love.

For today, let me offer this as a beginning. Listen to the words of Jesus. He tells us we are of great value. He tells us God is invested in us. He tells us God knows what we need. God. The Creator. The Redeemer. The Sustainer. God so loved the world. God so loves you. Start there this morning. When you begin to feel the thoughts that are harmful cluttering up your mind, speak this truth to them: "I am the beloved child of God." Period. Mic drop. Amen.

The second strategy for decluttering our minds is: share. When I read the news each morning I am overwhelmed by what is going on in this crazy mixed-up world. I don't agree with some things. I become angry at others. I also see beautiful things happening, and I want to support them.

A little more time and my mind moves on to the things I need to do in my own life – the people who need loving, the laundry that needs doing, the people who are struggling with heavy things, my own heavy things.

None of these feel like thoughts I can easily toss. So, my mind gets cluttered with thoughts of what I should be doing – there is just so much though! Where do I even begin?

This is the time to share. To get those thoughts out of our heads. To put them all the way into words, not just flashes of panic and guilt. We can share our list of worries and shoulds with other people and with God.

When the Apostle Paul was in prison, facing a capital charge, he wrote a letter to the people of Philippi. He had begun a movement among them, a church, that was countercultural and put them at risk. Paul's greatest concern from behind bars was that they would continue to grow in Jesus

Christ. He might have also had a worry or two about his own self. So he writes these words found in Philippians 4.

**<sup>6-7</sup> Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.**

Shape our worries into prayers. Into conversations with our friends. It helps pull ourselves out of our heads. It brings our inner dialogue into the light. That gives us a chance to get perspective. It can help us devise an action plan. It might help us put together a team to respond to a need we have all come to recognize. Sharing helps to find the ways that things can come together for good – instead of being a disjointed mess weighing us down.

The third strategy? Keep. These are the thoughts that we will not give up. These are the thoughts that align with a God of love. These are what we need to tell ourselves when other harmful thoughts creep in. These are the things we feel confident we have been called and equipped to *do*. The things we have sorted through with God and our people, that we know are ours to carry. We do have work to do, we do have people to love – but not all the work, not all the people all of the time. We learn to keep what's ours, and let the rest go.

The fuller section of Paul's letter to the people of Philippi says this:

**<sup>4-5</sup> Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, *revel* in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!**

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**concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.**

**<sup>8-9</sup> Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.**

Harmony. That's a good way to put what we're searching for when our thoughts are too cluttered, right? That sense that whatever is going on up here is all working together. For my good. For God's good. For our good. Harmony.

Hear these words as an invitation to slow down. Let's work at letting go of those thoughts that have for far too long caused us harm and resulted in decisions and behaviors that may harm others. Let's hold tightly to ideas that will build up, encourage, strengthen.

That day the neighborhood man yelled at me to slow down? It worked. I slowed down, but my heart rate sped up. My anxiety kicked in. My doubt snuck in the back door.

Slowing down to clear the clutter of our mind is again, an invitation. For me the signal comes through in a variety of ways. My brain becomes "full." I feel like I can't wrap my head around a new idea or thought. I become overwhelmed with thoughts, and sleep evades me. Sometimes I am absolutely sure I feel the prompting of God in my spirit, reminding me with a gentle whisper to slow down.

So I take a deep breath. I take an afternoon, maybe part of my day of rest, and decide it is important to clear my thoughts. Important enough that I will ask myself what needs to go? What are the haunting hurts that are trying to creep in. What are the things that are not mine to do that I need to prayerfully let go? What are the things that I can share? My time with this church, my experiences as I mentor others, my service on the board of APO, an agency that is committed to the health of marginalized people.

What do I keep? The stuff that's mine to do: Love and be loved. and this part for sure: We are so loved. All of us. It starts there, it centers there, it goes forward from there. "It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."

And may God who makes everything work together, work in you God's most excellent harmonies.