

January 2012 R&R

Letting Go

By David Longley

How hard is it to let go? Isn't letting go of stuff hard to do? My family is living in our ninth home in the past 20 years, and the longest we have ever lived in one place is 6 years. As we move, things get packed in boxes that somehow don't seem to ever get opened even after we are settled in. In our most recent move we found stuff that hadn't been touched in 10 years. The funny thing is that we still have a hard time throwing those things away.

Men, you know how hard it is to let go of that baseball glove or gun you have had for decades that is simply collecting dust. Or ladies, what about letting go of your favorite doll you played with all the time or some outfit you simply loved as a teenager? Is it hard for us to part with the letter jacket we worked so hard for in high school (and will never be able to fit into it again)?

We joke about such things, but what about letting go of much bigger things? For example, parental authority and passing that role onto our children where they take ownership of their own behaviors? When is the "age of accountability" that is discussed so much in the church when a child is to going to be held accountable for his sins? What about letting go and allowing our teenage children to get those driver's licenses? Is it hard to let them go, knowing that they will make mistakes and suffer the consequences of poor decisions?

What about letting go of a wife or husband when terrible illness robs them of hope and they slip from our embrace? Our parents age and we let them go. What about letting go of a child due to physical or, dare I say, spiritual illness?

Letting go of our stuff, family, friends, and our immaturities is a task that many find hard to undertake. Most of the time the reason we cannot let go is due to the fact that our "treasures" are not laid up where they are supposed to be. Jesus taught us in Matthew

6:19-20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Our stuff, friends, and family are our most treasured possessions on earth.

Don’t you suppose we have a hard time letting go because our treasures are not “stored” in the proper place? If our hopes are fixed on Heaven and our priorities straight, then the difficulty to let go of the earthly treasures is minimized. Let’s face it, that baseball glove or letter jacket doesn’t really matter, does it?

If we as parents have successfully taught our children to take hold of the heavenly treasures, then their bad decisions which led to hardship, can evaporate into nothing compared to what they have in Heaven.

A family member who is fighting a losing battle against disease is more capable of letting go when he knows his loved one will have an eternal heavenly home. That’s not to say it is easy to let them go. But let us not forget Abraham letting go of Isaac, knowing all the while that God had promised Abraham all the nations would be blessed through Isaac. Abraham was able to place his son on that altar because he trusted in the Lord with all his heart and did not lean on his own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). His priorities, his hope, and his treasure were laid up in Heaven.