

Travel Lightly

“The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life, I will advise you and watch over you.’” Psalm 32:8NLT

Learning that God had a plan for my life was a relief to me.

I hadn't done such a good job at it myself, making mistakes along the way, living in fear that I'd never get it right. I soon discovered, however, that knowing He had a plan and following it were two different things. I still felt like something was missing. And it was.

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When I was 18, I had the delight of traveling to Germany after high school graduation to meet my relatives. My German grandparents also happened to be there at the same time, returning for a trip to visit the “old country” and their families they had left many years before. At the end of my visit, I was packing when Grandpa slipped a few pouches in my suitcase.



“I don't think I'll have room for these when we leave next week, Janie,” he said as he stuffed them in my suitcase. My cousin Max loaded my suitcase in the car as I searched the house for any forgotten items. At the airport, I waved good-bye to family and grabbed my suitcase to head through the Frankfurt airport. I could barely budge the thing. “What happened to this?!” I thought to myself. I suddenly recalled the bags Grandpa shoved in there, wondering what could possibly be in them.

I dragged that suitcase what seemed like miles to my gate, so encumbered by the weight of it that I wasn't certain I would make it, arms and back aching. I was never so glad to unload something as I was that suitcase at the baggage check.

Extra Baggage

When I got home, I found the bags Grandpa had glibly tossed in. I peeked inside one of them. BB pellets! Each bag was brimming with BB pellets, weighing about 5 pounds. Ugh. My ultra-frugal grandfather had found a deal on pellets, and I had just lugged them halfway around the world for him.



After spending the previous day dragging around my suitcase, I had learned the lesson of traveling lightly. But it wasn't until many years later that I realized this truth applies to much more than our physical travels. Thomas A Kempis said, "They travel lightly whom God's grace carries." I spent too many years of my young adulthood dragging around 30 pounds of my "BB pellet" past. God was guiding me along the best pathway for my life, but I was so bogged down by my past that I was just inching along.

Finally, the Holy Spirit taught me that I was missing **grace** – the grace that rids us of what has come before, freeing us for what is now. I already had the grace that forgives all my sins at the cross of Jesus. But I needed to learn how to accept grace for the journey that each day brings, realizing that each day I can choose to walk in that grace and live it. I learned that **traveling lightly** means I live with open hands that are not full with holding on to the past but are empty, waiting to grasp what God has for me today, now.

And it makes all the difference: **Grace means I can dump the**

baggage of my past, free to run the path God has laid before me. Free to relish His plans. Free to join in His work.

If you're still toting around your past, it's time to permanently check it at God's baggage counter and run with Him down the pathway of grace called Your Life.

Has grace made a difference in your life? Please feel free to share your experience below.

Pray on!

Jane

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