Devotion: Stash the Trash

Each year in Ames, Iowa, two events help to “clean and green” the community. In April, there’s Stash, a citywide event open to volunteers of all ages who sign up, either as individuals or in groups. These folks improve the community by spending up to an entire day collecting trash in an assigned part of town. Stash just celebrated its twenty-first year.

The second event, now in its fifth year, is called Rummage RAMPage. Ames is a university town, and every year in June hundreds of apartments are vacated and students leave behind various pieces of clothing and furniture. Rummage RAMPage seeks to salvage the still-usable items so they don’t end up in a landfill. It’s basically a giant garage sale and the proceeds go to local charities. In 2018 an estimated 102,550 pounds of “stuff” was sold!

Most years I participate in both events. They’re fun, they protect our environment, and they help people save money. The trash reminds me that we sometimes lose our way. We forget about our neighbors, both human and wildlife, and we fill our lives with too much stuff. By participating in these events, I answer the call to be a faithful disciple, both individually and in community with others. As you reflect on the lessons in this unit, think about ways you can participate in your community to embrace the hope of a new creation.

Add your thoughts about this devotion here:

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

Focal Scripture Verse

“The Lord God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it.”

—Genesis 2:15 (CEB)
LESSON 1

Though we often prefer to follow our own path, Moses reminds us that believers must listen carefully to God’s words and follow God’s commandments and teachings.

LESSON 2

Throughout history God’s people have been tempted to stray from God. The story of the confrontation between Elijah and Baal’s prophets affirms that only God has real power and can offer us salvation and peace.

LESSON 3

When a long-lost scroll is found in the temple, King Josiah realizes the people have lost their way. He repents and works to reform the kingdom. His example reminds us to always search for God’s Word in our lives.

LESSON 4

The story of Hosea and his wife Gomer is symbolic, representing the relationship between God and God’s people. Though spurned and mocked, God still loves the people and offers hope for redemption.
KEY VERSES: Keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him, because the Lord your God is bringing you to a wonderful land, a land with streams of water, springs, and wells that gush up in the valleys and on the hills. — Deuteronomy 8:6-7 (CEB)

To Follow or Not to Follow
Most of us end up doing a lot of things ourselves and a lot of things that others tell us to do. How do you decide whether you’re going to follow your instincts or listen to others?

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<th>Phrases or Sayings About How We Do Things Ourselves</th>
<th>Phrases or Sayings About How We Listen to What Others Tell Us</th>
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DEUTERONOMY 8:1-10 (NRSV)
1 This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors.
2 Remember the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments.
3 He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
4 The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years.

5 Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you.

6 Therefore keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him.

7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper.

8 You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

Deuteronomy literally translates as “second law” in Hebrew, but it is not the second law given to the people. Instead, “second law” means that the law is being repeated or recited to the people.

THE WAY OF THE PEOPLE

Work with a group to answer one of the questions below, noting your answers in the space provided.

● What do the Bible verses say about the Israelites’ experiences?

● How has God acted to help the Israelites?

CAREFUL NOW

Reflect for a moment on the following: How carefully do you think you are following God’s commandments? Circle your answer on the continuum below.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

NOT AT ALL COMPLETELY
What does it mean to you to “carefully perform” God’s commandments?

In what aspects of your life are God’s ways hardest to follow (for example, at home or when I’m with my friends)?

Often, the word carefully makes us think of doing something attentively or delicately. But note that carefully is made up of two words: care fully. How does it change the way you think to say that you should “care fully” as you follow God’s commands?

ARTISTIC INSPIRATION
Before the invention of the printing press, the Bible was copied by hand. As a result, people created Bibles filled with beautiful calligraphy and other illustrations to help them remember the words and message (look up the Book of Kells online). Using some of the art supplies you have on hand (i.e. paper, markers, crayons, etc.), choose a Bible verse from today’s lesson and decorate it in a way that inspires you. Why did you choose this particular verse? Be prepared to explain.

I KNOW IT BY HEART
We talk often about reading Scripture, but we may not think of it as a spiritual discipline unto itself. There are many ways to read and study Scripture, and one method used throughout the centuries is memorization. Write below a verse you will try to memorize. Practice saying the verse from memory a few times every day, preparing to recite the verse again next week.