

Dylan Carnavale: Welcome to the Why God Why Podcast, brought to you by Browncroft Community Church. My name is Dylan Carnavale and I am the Browncroft's staff and producer of the show. I'm joined today by our hosts Peter Englert, director of Adult Ministries here at Browncroft and John Iamaio, the New York State crew director. Why God Why is a podcast where we ask 21st Century questions about God that you never thought you could. Today's guest is Kevin Maloney, the lead pastor at Grace Road Church.

Dylan Carnavale: Today's topic, why does having more stuff not satisfy me? This is a good one.

Peter Englert: Dylan, thank you, man that is a good question. I think it's a good question, because it's one of those things that we all feel, but we don't talk about. I live on the east side of Rochester. What happens in Rochester is, there's these conversations about, it might be the boat, it might be the lake house, it might be retirement, it might be the other car. We all think that we're just having a fun conversation about our dreams and hopes. Really our dreams and hopes say something about where our heart actually is.

John Iamaio: Yeah, that's so true. This thing is so ingrained in our society, this idea that more stuff is going to satisfy me. It's so ingrained that sometimes we don't even think about it. We are so marketed to in our culture right now. I was just reading something not long ago that, we are exposed to 10,000 advertisements per day. The average person is exposed to, that's unbelievable. Each one of those advertisements is created to make us feel like we need one more thing.

John Iamaio: I don't know if you remember this commercial. Is Value City a sponsor of our podcast, because I don't want to trash talk them if they are.

Peter Englert: They're not.

John Iamaio: They're not.

Peter Englert: We would gladly accept their sponsorships.

John Iamaio: Okay, all right, very good. Well, Value City may not want to sponsor us after this, that's fine, but if they do I'll apologize to them formally on the podcast. Anyway, I remember a commercial of theirs from a couple of years ago. It's this young lady, she is in her apartment and it's so full of stuff that she needs to go to Value City and buy storage for all of her stuff. At the end of the commercial, she has all of her stuff put away. Then she declares, "Great, now I have room for more stuff."

John Iamaio: I just remember looking at that commercial, going like, "Oh my goodness, this is America. This is what our society really values," Value City. Anyway, but that's why I am so glad that we're talking about this topic today. So thankful to have Pastor Kevin Maloney here with us of Grace Road Church. He has just been a

really, really big influence in Rochester. It's exciting to have him as a part of our podcast, so thanks for coming in and talking to us about this Kevin.

Kevin Maloney: Thanks for having me.

John Iamaio: Yeah.

Kevin Maloney: Glad to be here.

Peter Englert: Well, let's just get started with this. Kevin from your experience as a pastor, a church planner, a leader in the community, why is this quest for stuff so real?

Kevin Maloney: We just believe fundamental lies about stuff. Like we believe this is what will give me comfort, this'll give me peace, this'll give me enough security going forward into the future. That if I just pile up enough, that somewhere at the top of that pile there's peace. That I can work my way there, and find the peace that I'm after, if I just get enough. It lies to us all the time. It's like this mirage that's always out there, and so it's that thing that we can always be pursuing. That's where the real draw of it comes from, that we're really believing that lie. That somehow, what my heart is after can be found with something that I stick in my garage or my bank account.

Peter Englert: You know, you said that so clearly, it sounds like you have some experience with that.

Kevin Maloney: Personal experience, yes. I believed these lies.

Peter Englert: Let's go there. What does that look like in your life?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, I mean it changes as you age a little bit. When you're a kid, you believe it's just this next... I still remember as a kid wanting the first Nintendo video game system.

John Iamaio: Oh yeah.

Kevin Maloney: Thinking, "When I have that, that'll be enough." Then I got it on Christmas morning.

John Iamaio: With Duck Hunter?

Kevin Maloney: Duck Hunter, Super Mario Brothers, yup.

John Iamaio: Yeah, dude.

Kevin Maloney: We had the one with the power pad, where you can run on it.

John Iamaio: Oh dude.

Kevin Maloney: That was way too much moving.

John Iamaio: That's the finest, yeah.

Kevin Maloney: We never played that game, but a lot of Super Mario Brothers, and so got that and just played the heck out of it. Beat the game, and there is just that subtle feeling that that wasn't quite it. That it's fun for a little while, and then it's not it anymore. Then as I've gotten older, I think it comes more in the forms of what money lies to me about as far as the future goes. That, if I can pay off just this next debt, if I can get to where I'm living debt free, where I have enough in the emergency fund, then I'll have peace. Then I'll have more security for the future.

Kevin Maloney: Believing those lies leads you to pursue those things. Then you pay off the debt, you get enough in the emergency fund and you realize, "Wow, I'm still kind of insecure." There's still more to be had out there. It's the lies that we believe. Then on top of that, the fact that stuff actually is good. Material things aren't bad, and so any one of those things we might be able to look at and say, "Well it's not a bad pursuit to save a three to six month emergency fund." Getting a video game system is not a bad thing to desire, and so because those things are good, we can over pursue them. Put them in the wrong place of our lives, but not necessarily notice it. I mean, who's going to say we've done something wrong by building a modest savings account?

John Iamaio: Right, you know what's interesting as I've thought about this a little in my own life, is just how much... All of our upbringings really influence the way that we view money and we view stuff, like just whether we had a lot, didn't have a lot. For me, I didn't grow up in an environment where we had a lot. I always had to save for every little thing that I had, that became my way to cope with that, was to save, save, save. If I finally have spent my money on something, it had to be something really special.

John Iamaio: How about you? In your life, like what was your relationship with stuff growing up? I mean, you kind of hinted at that a little bit with the Nintendo. How did your growing up shape the way that you view your stuff?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, I grew up in a wealthy community, I grew up in Orchard Park outside of Buffalo.

Peter Englert: Go Bills.

Kevin Maloney: Go Bills.

John Iamaio: Go Bills, yeah.

Kevin Maloney: Go Bills, five and two a good start. My family was kind of probably on the lower end of Orchard Park, which is still very comfortable. We weren't the richest kids in town, because we weren't Buffalo Bills. I was in a town where most people had more than me, but everybody had plenty, it was pretty comfortable. Then from my family in particular, it seemed like the finances were very seasonal. My dad owned a small car dealership in Hamburg, New York and so sold a lot of cars in the summer and none in the winter. There were lots of ups and downs and he was the owner, so there was really no steady number.

Kevin Maloney: Then through teenage years, my parents went through a divorce, and that was a very difficult season and a difficult divorce. Lots of ups and downs financially during that time. I still remember those days like having a car and then losing the car, and having the car and then the car had to be taken away. Just all those ups and downs I think it left a lasting impression, where I say, "I don't want that to be me, that I want to be the one who has enough. That nothing's going to get taken away from me. I don't want that to be my kids."

Kevin Maloney: I can almost preach to myself that that was actually worse for me than it was. In reality that lack of stability is a good thing to get you to cling to Christ. If nothing else in your life is stable, then you cling to the one who is. In a lot of ways those were really formative and good years for me in my walk with Christ. For some reason it's almost like I'm afraid of that for my kids, and I really shouldn't be. That God is a good provider and I don't want Him to spare them anything that they need to walk through to know Jesus.

Peter Englert: You know it's so interesting that you say that, because I feel like the people that I talk to are on two total spectrums. The one is, if you have \$20 million in your bank account, there's still anxiety of if there's a catastrophic event, that something can go wrong. Then there's the other people that, forgive my 1980s reference carpe diem like seize the day, spend the money.

Peter Englert: Number one, are you saying you lean more towards there's never enough money in the bank account? Then, I think for both of those it'd be interesting for you to kind of play out the lies that both of those, the carpe diem and then the not enough sides are. Like the lies that they're telling yourself, so I'll let you go from there.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah. I'm definitely in that \$20 million in the account category without the \$20 million. I think that's the, where...

Peter Englert: Just to be clear [inaudible 00:09:39].

Kevin Maloney: Where, yeah, there could always be a little more saved or another category of saving. Believing the lie that I can somehow secure my future on my own. That's the lie that I believe. Or that if I do that, if I have enough saved for the next car

for example, then I'll feel even an extra amount of peace and not feel like I have to pursue these things anymore. It's just a Nintendo all over again.

Kevin Maloney: You climb that mountain, you get there and you realize, "No, this actually isn't it. It's actually not enough." Then there's the covetous heart that looks around and sees other people and what they have. You think, "Yeah. I guess I just need to get a little bit more, so I could be in their category." Those are the lies on my side of things.

Peter Englert: Well what about the carpe diem side?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah. There can be with that a real irresponsibility that isn't good. That doesn't anticipate things that you should anticipate. I mean, your car is going to fall apart, and so you should make a plan for that. Christmas is coming and you need to buy those gifts. All the things that Dave Ramsey says, he says a lot of really true things for people in that category to hear. That you do need to think a little bit about the future. You do need to make a plan.

Kevin Maloney: Scripture says, "If you don't provide for your family, you're worse than an unbeliever," it says, that, that's the category you're in if you don't do some basic responsible things. There are some lies on that side too. There can also just be a lie that stuff is bad. That it would be wrong for me to have things or to save or to plan. That, that's somehow a lack of faith.

John lamaio: Yeah, just having, that stuff is intrinsically bad.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah.

John lamaio: I need to get rid of stuff, that makes me inherently more righteous than if I were to have stuff.

Kevin Maloney: Exactly.

John lamaio: Yeah. That's an interesting side to that same thought too. Where do you think that comes from? Is that just a reaction from our society, like we want to distance ourselves from it? Like not being able to live in that attention, or where do you think that comes from?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, that can just be the contrarian kind of person, who sees everybody pursuing materialism and says, "Not me." I mean, we see that there are real sins connected to materialism. There are really wrong things that people do, and they can very much become just like the thing they're pursuing. Just very shallow, because of their pursuit of wealth and things. We look at that and we say, "Well the problem isn't the things."

Kevin Maloney: When the problem really is in the heart, but we can say, "It's the things, so I need to get rid of all the things. That way if there are no things, then I'll have real peace. I'll have real happiness and I won't be like those other people."

Peter Englert: I'm going to have a little fun with you and again you can correct me if I'm wrong.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah.

Peter Englert: I think Grace Road has this reputation of being a hipster younger church. Tell my Grace Road friends I love you, that's a compliment. If I'm wrong about that let me know.

Kevin Maloney: We're aging a little bit.

Peter Englert: You're aging a little bit, okay.

Kevin Maloney: We're a little less hipster.

Peter Englert: A little less hipster.

John lamaio: Day by day.

Peter Englert: Day by day.

John lamaio: Day by day. Yeah.

Kevin Maloney: We have some guts with those beards now.

Peter Englert: I love it, there you go. That's twittable. As I'm listening to you, I just hear you've processed this. I want to give you an opportunity for Grace Road, for Browncroft, living in Rochester. It seems like you've really brought, and like if you had two to three minutes to just say what you really wanted to say about stuff. I don't think our listeners know this. You picked this question, and it just seems like this is something that's on your heart and mind. You want something better for Grace Road, Browncrofters and anybody else. Go ahead, it's your shot.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, I mean I forgot what he was talking about specifically, but there was a time where Martin Luther said that, society is like a drunk peasant who gets on one side of the horse and then falls off the other. I think that we can be like that. There are two sides of this horse. On one side there's the prosperity gospel that says, "If I follow Jesus, then I'm going to prosper financially. I'm going to have plenty of money. I'm going to be the one who's got the \$20 million in the bank because God's going to bless me, because I'm one of his kids." Which just isn't

true, because that isn't what happened to Jesus, that's technically not following his footsteps.

Kevin Maloney: Then on the other side there's the poverty gospel that says, "I'm only righteous if I am absolute minimalist, where I don't have things. I don't pursue things, where I just have the basics." Neither one of them is true, like your righteousness isn't in the amount of stuff you have. Jesus said, "A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of things that he possesses." Your righteousness doesn't come from your things, and it doesn't come from not having your things. It comes from somewhere else. When we think getting rid of things or getting things is going to give me peace and make me feel like enough, we're believing lies on both sides of that.

Kevin Maloney: The lie on the side of I'm getting rid of things therefore I'm righteous, it can feel a lot more righteous. I mean we know about the poverty of Jesus, we know that God certainly has a heart for the poor, and so we want to be in that category. We can still be substituting our Savior with the things that we do, and that's a real danger over there. We can't believe that the material world is a bad place, because God made it, and Jesus incarnated in it. He came here in stuff, He had a body

Kevin Maloney: There have been a lot of big eras throughout church history, where people have said, "Because the material world is bad, therefore Jesus must not have come in a body." It's like a lot of the New Testament is written as a response to that. If anyone says that, then he's not even a Christian. You don't believe in Jesus if you believe in some Jesus that came as like a phantom or just seemed to come.

Kevin Maloney: Christians believe that the material world is very good, and it was called good when it was made by God. It was incarnated. Jesus came into the material world, but we also believe that that isn't God. That it can't satisfy, that it's not enough. C.S Lewis said, "What doesn't satisfy us when we attain it, is not the thing we were looking for."

Kevin Maloney: This whole life of going through trying to achieve something, gain something, put something in my bank account, connect something to my TV. All this, I'm going to pursue these things and it'll be enough for me. The fact that none of those things satisfy, is evidence that we're hungry for something else.

Peter Englert: John, let's have a little fun with Kevin.

John lamaio: Okay.

Peter Englert: Let's get super specific. I'm just going to say something that in our culture we want, and I'll let you add in. Kevin, just unpack the lie that might be really be here.

Kevin Maloney: I'll try.

John lamaio: I don't even know what I'm saying yet.

Kevin Maloney: Right.

John lamaio: This is great.

Peter Englert: For example, you talked about C.S Lewis, the thing that I want and I realized that, that's not really the thing I want. I want a brand new car and just to have fun, I want a brand new Ferrari. What lie or lies might I believe that makes me want that car?

Kevin Maloney: There could be a number of them. One can be status, that if I get that, I'll be somehow better than other people around me. Or maybe as good as some other people that I know. I think there can be the lie that, the approval that I'll get from people driving that thing down the street and all the heads that will turn, will somehow satisfy me. The pats on the back and the people looking at me and saying, "Yeah, that guy has life figured out," that somehow that'll satisfy.

John lamaio: Okay, how about my forever home, you heard that term?

Kevin Maloney: Yes.

John lamaio: I hear people use that term a lot now, so I'm just going to throw that one out there. How about my forever home?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, I can get this permanent, the sense of permanence and peace and rootedness in a house here. Whereas, we were made for permanence, we were made for peace, we were made for rootedness, but it comes from putting our roots deep down into Christ. The ultimate fulfillment of that comes in eternity. We know how it goes.

Kevin Maloney: You get into the forever home and you're there for a couple years. You think, "Well maybe a forever home with a couple more acres, or with the barn, or the wood shop. Yeah you know this home..." It starts out as forever, and then after a while you're just like, "I don't think I could stay in this place forever. It's just not my home," and it just shows that we're made for another world. We're made for another home. That this doesn't satisfy.

Kevin Maloney: There are certain appetites that do satisfy. Like if you're hungry and then you eat food, and then you're satisfied, then that shows that you were really just hungry for food. There was nothing sinful about that, you weren't like longing for anything else. You needed a meal and you ate the meal, and you're satisfied.

If you get the thing and after a little while you're not satisfied, it's just all screaming to you, your hunger is pointing to something else. You were made for another world. That hunger was meant to be satisfied somewhere else.

Peter Englert: Actually, I have two more John.

John lamaio: Okay, great.

Peter Englert: I think this is super, so I'm going to go with the food thing. Let's talk about our foodies.

Kevin Maloney: Sure.

Peter Englert: I have to go to this certain restaurant, what lies might someone be believing?

Kevin Maloney: I guess there could be a lie on the one side that says, that it will be wrong for me to go to that restaurant. Or that I need to go to that restaurant with a sense of guilt. Jesus was big in removing any sense of guilt from the food that we like. Yeah, if you want to go to that restaurant, go. Enjoy that food, have a good time. God made it and thank Him for it. It's made holy by the word of God and prayer, and so don't believe the lie that there are some guilt in going to that place.

Kevin Maloney: Also, the idea that I would be satisfied if I was always going to the nicest restaurants, not anymore satisfied than someone else. We're all eating food and going to sleep at the end of the day, and we had enough, it doesn't really matter where it came from.

John lamaio: Okay, I'll let you close off since you have one more Peter. How about this one, the newest iPhone.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah.

John lamaio: That's a big one. It happens every year.

Kevin Maloney: Yup, and again there's no guilt in getting the newest iPhone. You can receive that with thanksgiving and that could be a blessing from God, and you don't have to feel guilty about getting that. There can be the idea that somehow that'll make me more connected. That'll give me somehow more community with people, if my phone's just a little bit faster, or if the pictures are just a little bit more three dimensional. Then, it gives me the opportunity to on social media display my awesomeness for the world, and then people will think, "He's pretty awesome," and that'll be enough for me until the iPhone 12 comes out.

John lamaio: Yeah. That's so good man.

- Peter Englert: Last one from me, but John, you can close if you've got one. How about trips or experiences, and actually let's just focus on trips. I need to go to the remote places or even just the places that are like my bucket list or something like that. What lies might I be believing?
- Kevin Maloney: Yeah, I think on the one hand, you could believe the lie that there's guilt in going, trips are good. Experiences are good, like adventure is a good thing and can be received with thanksgiving, as long as it's not your God, as long as it's not your ultimate priority. This isn't an anti vacation rant or anything like that.
- Kevin Maloney: I think sometimes we can believe that you only live once lie. That I have a finite amount of time and it is ticking down. If by the time that I die I haven't gone to the Alps or I haven't gone to Costa Rica or I haven't been to this beach or I haven't had this experience, then I fundamentally miss out on a full life.
- Kevin Maloney: Whereas, as Christians we believe that we don't have a finite amount of time. That those experiences are good and can be received with thanksgiving, but I can always see the Alps a couple thousand years from now. That it'll probably still be a nice thing.
- John lamaio: The new Alps.
- Kevin Maloney: Yeah, and so it's not like I have to cram it all in. There'll be lots of experiences I don't have in this life, but our hope is in the resurrection. Like we're going to resurrect, we're going to see the Savior, we're going to be on a new earth. It's not like our time here is as limited as we might think it is.
- John lamaio: Wow, man there's so many directions I want to go with that. Just you even talking about that, I'm like, "Oh my goodness, holy cow, that reorients life." As you're describing, "Oh maybe I could visit the Alps a couple thousand years from now. Wow, okay." That's mind blowing. Let me get back to this, because I feel like this is underlying everything that you're saying. It seems to me that what you're talking about here is that, our pursuit of stuff fundamentally does something to our souls that we might not be aware of.
- Kevin Maloney: Yeah.
- John lamaio: That fundamentally there's something happening underneath the surface of our lives. You're pointing to all these different lies, these things. What do you think that that pursuit of stuff is really doing to our souls?
- Kevin Maloney: Yeah, and just like a principle for life is that, everybody worships something. That everybody has something that's ultimate to them. Everybody has something that's kind of on the throne, the main thing that they're pursuing. We always become like the things that we worship. There's like a verse in the scripture where God's talking about a time where Israel had strayed. He says,

"They followed vanity and became vain." Or people are curving idols and they're becoming like them.

Kevin Maloney: Whatever it is that's ultimate to us, we become like that thing. We start to take on some of the features of that thing. You'll see it with people who are just obsessed with money, they can get to where all of their friendships are just very transactional. That anytime you get together with them, they're trying to sell you their thing. That they look at you as dollars and cents. They want to know the house you live in, the car you drive. They're sizing you up based on your money. The thing that's ultimate to them, really shapes and makes much more shallow their relationships.

Kevin Maloney: I think when we pursue stuff as ultimate, we just automatically become more shallow. We become less secure, because it can't secure. We look at all the wrong things. We start pursuing all the wrong things. We always become like the gods that we serve. If we are serving stuff, we become more and more like it. That's always for the worst for our souls.

Peter Englert: Our listeners are somewhere in their 20s and I might be mildly transparent, but I just want to hear actually both of your responses to this. It took my wife and I four years to get pregnant and to have a child. It's funny, if I was talking to someone else and they were like, "Well, I'm not going to get married till I have enough money in my bank account. Or I'm not going to have a child till we're here." You hear all these things.

Peter Englert: I can remember in those four years, I won't say they were difficult. They weren't easy, but there was, I mean if I'm truly honest, there was little part of me and I love my daughter Haley, so just hear this out. There was a little part of me that when I found out that Robin wasn't pregnant it was like, I have another 10 months.

Kevin Maloney: Sure.

Peter Englert: I have another 10 months that I have my freedom. Now I look at that and I feel so, I won't say guilty, but just like how shortsighted that was. Yeah, it's hard to have a 20 month old.

Kevin Maloney: Absolutely.

Peter Englert: There's nothing that I could have experienced in those four years that I think would have... Again, I'm very thankful that God gave us those four years, because you don't want to go to the other side too that you're worshipping your kids. I want you to speak on the stuff side, because I do feel like we meet a lot of people. They're delaying marriage, they're delaying having kids, and it's not that all of that is bad. I do think that there's an unhealthy lie. I mean what do you see?

Kevin Maloney: Yeah. We rightly acknowledge that when you have kids, you're making sacrifices. Something in you dies when you get a minivan.

John Iamaio: Oh yeah, believe me. Oh man.

Peter Englert: Tweet that.

Kevin Maloney: It's not a good day.

John Iamaio: No.

Kevin Maloney: I mean Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit." It's a death for a harvest. It's a death for something better. It's true that it's a sacrifice to have a kid, and it can mean sacrifice possibly in career. It means that your money is not yours. We have four kids and they have more disposable income than I do, because mine goes to them and it goes to their college accounts. There's a lot of new responsibility, but we wouldn't trade it for the world.

Kevin Maloney: Then I think sometimes we'll also say like, "I'm going to delay having kids until I have a certain amount of wealth and a certain amount of comfort." Believing that same lie on behalf of the kids, that they'll be happy if I have all this stuff. What do people universally say who go on missions, trips to impoverished areas? They always come back saying, "Those people have nothing and they're so content." We believe that for people in other countries. What if our kids have seasons where they have very little? They can be really content. They can be very, very happy.

Kevin Maloney: The idea that my kids won't be happy unless we have a two year old Siena, the belief that they need a certain amount of stuff so that they can have joy, is just us believing a lie on their behalf. We need to just turn from that. There are good reasons to make plans, there are good reasons to at times delay having a family and stuff. It's not that all of the reasoning that goes into that is always bad. It's really not. There are also a lot of bad reasons that are just fundamentally believing those same lies of materialism.

Peter Englert: Well I want to come back, talk to us about the marriage part. I've met people that they've dated for seven years, and my question to them is, "What are you going to find out two years from now that you already haven't found out?" It's complicated for every couple.

Kevin Maloney: Sure.

Peter Englert: I do think that this touches on that issue. How would you walk with someone through that?

- Kevin Maloney: Yeah, responsibility is good. Getting to really know a person is good, get good pre-marriage counseling, spend sometime getting to know them. Don't marry him two weeks after you've met him. Make sure that you are getting a good assessment of that person. You're never going to have mathematical certainty with a decision like that. That this is going to be I know 100% that without any doubt in my mind, that I should absolutely be getting married to this person right now. I think it's very rare that someone gets married with that kind of mathematical certainty.
- Kevin Maloney: Because we want to be in control, because we want to know the future, and know all possibilities and think through all the different pitfalls and directions this could go. We can actually overthink that decision and wait seven years with a fiance and not get married and get to tragic.
- Peter Englert: Well if I misinterpret the Bible, I can just say Jacob and Rachel, it took him 14 years.
- Kevin Maloney: Sure.
- Peter Englert: We won't go there.
- Kevin Maloney: Kind of unique situation.
- John lamaio: You know. I think what's interesting as I hear you talking Kevin is, you're saying essentially I don't want to put words in your mouth here. Life just takes faith. Whether we are people of "faith" or not, we are exercising faith on a daily basis. It's just what we're choosing to place our faith in.
- Kevin Maloney: Right, there's no future for me without Jesus as a Christian. That means that, all other decisions, even the really huge ones, I can make decisions without the 100% mathematical certainty. Trusting that He'll be there for me in the future. That I don't need to discern His will in every situation. For example, there might be three good options in front of us. I got accepted to three different colleges, I could go to any of those three, glorify the Lord. Everything just seems equal in those three. I don't have to wait for lightning to strike or for a voice to come from heaven and tell me to go to, back now.
- Kevin Maloney: I can have those three options in front of me, pray about it, talk to wise people, think it through. Ask the Lord for discernment and then ultimately make a call. Make a call, go to one of those places and the guarantee I have is that Jesus will be there. I don't know how it'll go, and I may go there in a year and say, "I think I've got to transfer colleges. This isn't working," but Jesus is there.
- Kevin Maloney: Action ends up being better than inaction when it comes to situations like that. Give it enough time and enough thought, but then make a call. We can't control the future anyway, and we can't anticipate everything. It's very few situations

for most Christians I know, where God reveals to them ahead of time, "Here's exactly what you should do." We can look back and we can see the ways He's directed our steps. We can have confidence that He's directing our steps going forward into the future.

Kevin Maloney: Outside of what He gives us in scripture where there's the clear, moral, rights and wrongs, pretty often there's not a roadmap. There are multiple good options in front of us, and we use all the biblical principles we know to try to make the wisest decision we can. Sometimes we mess that up, but then we look back and we say, "God directed those steps."

Peter Englert: I think sometimes we think that freedom is having the whole city of Rochester. We think that the Bible is a five by five square. Really, following Jesus and especially with stuff, is actually a soccer field of space. That's a ton of space.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, like He says there's the narrow way that leads to life. It's a narrow way that actually leads to the broad valley. There's a broad life, there are the broad boundaries. There are boundaries that are there that are for our good, and that God wouldn't command us to do anything that's not for our good. We know He's good because He sent His son to die. The same God who sent His son to die, is the same God who gives us commands. Within the boundaries to those commands, there is a broad valley and a broad life and a lot of decisions to be made. A lot of joy to be had, risks to take, at least they're risks from our perspective. There can be just a lot of fun in the middle there.

John Iamaio: Yeah, I feel like a lot of people who are listening who might not say, "Hey, I'm really following Jesus with my life." That might actually shock them. They might think to themselves, "That doesn't sound really Christian to me. I've never heard a pastor talk about Jesus in that way. There's actually freedom in Jesus? That doesn't make sense to me."

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, and we have to acknowledge. There are commands and some of those commands are hard to follow. There are things that we do and don't do in following Jesus that we would rather go against what those commands say. I wouldn't want to make it sound like there aren't commands, there are hard things in the Christian life. It is not all about the commands. It's all about the Savior, it's about the God who sent His son to give us life. To forgive us, to bring us into the relationship that we were made for.

Kevin Maloney: I mean, circling back around, all of those hungers we have that we can't satisfy anywhere in this world, they are satisfied in Christ. We don't fully experience all of that till we get to the other side. The fact that I'm looking for security shows that I'm looking for the only one who can secure me. The fact that I want a future that is known, just shows that I'm hungry for the one who knows the future and who can control things.

Kevin Maloney: The desire for control, the desire for approval, the status symbols keep lying to us and saying, "If you drive the Ferrari, then you'll get enough approval from people." What we're after is the well done my good and faithful servant from our Father. The heads turn when we're driving the Ferrari down the street I assume don't satisfy. There is a desire underneath those that's meant to be satisfied. I think that's the desire to hear that well done from our Father.

Kevin Maloney: While there are commands and there are restrictions and there are limits that are given by God, those things are given for our good. Ultimately we get to hear that thing that our heart is after. We get the well done my good and faithful servant. We get the permanent acceptance. We get the permanent place. We get the forever home. Those are all appetites that we have, that we should have, we're just trying to satisfy them in the wrong places.

Peter Englert: If we talk about the other side of that, so I found it fascinating. There's articles about Charlie Sheen and his show Two and a Half Men. When you have a show on that long, I think it was like 11 or 12 years, they finally ran out of material of him being this playboy, rich, living on Laguna Beach, womanizer. That like finally towards the end of his time there, before all that stuff happened, it was him reflecting on like, "I've really wasted my life. I've slept with all the women, I've had all the money."

Peter Englert: I don't think that we talk about that, and I actually I appreciate the show's honesty. I think we all have met people that on one hand we would say, "I totally want that." On the other hand you look at their life and they're looking at our life and they're saying, "Man, I would love to know what it's like to go through the pain of being faithful to my wife, being faithful to my kids." Whereas like in the world we talk about freedom that's not really freedom, it's really conformity. Then you find out, this isn't what it's all cracked up to be.

Kevin Maloney: Right, yeah. I mean, I think the Charlie Sheen thing is just the book of Ecclesiastes being played out over and over again. I mean Solomon did that like whoever wrote it. He said, "I've tried everything in the world." He built the palaces, he had the wives, he had the wealth. He had the status, he had the wisdom, he had everything that there was that we think satisfies. When he got it he said, "I was chasing after the wind. None of it is doing it for me."

Kevin Maloney: He did us that service of essentially driving the Ferrari we'll never drive to go there before us and report back and say, "That's not it. That's not what life is after." The book ends in the Bible, where you have the book of Job, where Job loses absolutely everything. Loses his wealth, loses his family. Loses his status. He loses everything, but still has God. Solomon, go ahead and pursues everything without God and says he's chasing after the wind. Then has to look outside of this world under the sun and say, "No, we've got to look above the sun to find the meaning here."

Peter Englert: Yeah, that's amazing. That's a great point for us to close up on our final questions. Kevin, here's the deal, we answer this question John and I, and you basically clean it up for us. The final question is, what does Jesus teach us about having more stuff and it not satisfying us? John, why don't you kick it off and then if there's any heresy or anything, Kevin will take care of that.

John lamaio: Yeah, I'm sure, I probably will commit at least one form of heresy during this time. No, I really appreciate everything you've brought up here, Kevin, and Peter, as you're talking about this too. I just feel like this is something that we need to talk about just because it's such a major thing in our society. It's not a new thing. Jesus talks more about money and stuff than he talks about heaven and hell combined in the Bible, which is I think a pretty significant thing. If we look at that and we go, "Wow, Jesus actually has a lot to say about this topic."

John lamaio: Since I get to lead off on this one, I'll just use one of his more popular ones, which is, no one can serve two masters. You're going to love the one and hate the other. You can't serve both God and money at the same time. The word money is really stuff. You can't serve God and stuff at the same time. I like to think in my life that it's possible sometimes. I like to think will that next thing can satisfy me, but ultimately what Jesus is telling me is that, there's really nothing in this world that's going to bring me as you were talking about Kevin, what I really crave. Which is that affirmation of a loving God saying to me, "Well done, I love you, you're my son."

John lamaio: That's what I crave deep down in my life, and there's nothing that any stuff can bring me in this life that will compare to that.

Peter Englert: Man, that's really good. This whole conversation reminds me of the story, where Jesus is talking to this rich, young ruler. I think if you read that story fast, this young ruler says, "I followed all the commandments, what else do I need to do?" By the way, the passage leaves out covetousness when he says that. Jesus comes to him and says, He says, "Sell everything you have and give it to the poor."

Peter Englert: If you read that just as a surface reading, I think what you end up doing is, you think like, "Well, if Jesus asked me that, I would do it." I mean there's a whole other problem with that, because would you really do it? The power of what Jesus did was, it wasn't that Jesus asked for the money. It was, Jesus identified the most important in that man's life. He said, "Will you give this up?" I think about that for me as stuff.

Peter Englert: I'm I willing to give up my car if Jesus asked me to? I'm I willing to give up my career and dream, ambitions if Jesus asked me to? I'm I willing to give up my forever house?

Peter Englert: Again, money is not evil, it's the love of money that's evil. Stuff's not evil, it's an unhealthy relationship with stuff. I think that, that's a story for us, whether you follow Jesus or not, I think the realization of this young ruler walking away was, either Jesus was going to be the Savior of his soul or money was going to own him. As you were talking about Kevin, the money and the stuff, it owns you more than we realize. I hope that everybody is leaving this podcast with this idea that, Jesus doesn't want to take away the stuff you have. He wants that stuff not to take hold of you.

Kevin Maloney: Yeah, seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. I like how 1st Timothy six says, this is 1st Timothy 6:17, he says, "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy." He doesn't say that stuff is bad, he says, God provides it. He says, but don't set your hopes on it, don't set your heart on that. Don't let that define you. Don't let that be who you are. Set your hope on God, because He's the one who provides all those other things. Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Peter Englert: Folks, I know that this podcast, I want to thank you for making this far, because this is a podcast... I mean I'm leaving convicted in some ways. I hope that all of you are leaving in some way wondering about your unhealthy relationship with stuff or healthy relationship. I want to close with we are at whygodwhypodcast.com. Just remember sharing is caring, we are on SoundCloud, Stitcher and Apple and Google Play. We'd ask you to subscribe and also to share that. What really helps if you could leave a review, that'd be helpful for us. We're also on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. We thank you so much for being part of the Why God Why Podcast. We hope you have a wonderful day.