

Week 13

June 27, 2021

Topic: Simplicity

Sermon Text:

Sermon Notes:

My Personal Discipleship Pathway:

What is the most important thing that I learned this week from the personal, spiritual disciplines that I chose to work through?

How will this truth impact my life? What will I do as a result?

What do I need to pray for as a result of my personal studies?

Who do I need to talk to about this for accountability?

Questions for Reflection:

The spiritual discipline of simplicity is not about some type of asceticism.¹ Our attitude toward our possessions is what really impacts the idea of simplicity. Richard Foster defines the Christian discipline of simplicity as “an *inward* reality that results in an *outward* life-style... To attempt to arrange an outward life-style of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism” (*Celebration of Discipline*).

Read Matthew 6:19-24. According to Jesus’ teaching here, what should our attitude be toward our earthly possessions? Why is it important that we do not focus too much on possessions?

Read Matthew 6:25-34. How does Jesus encourage His followers to approach life and the things that are needed to live day by day?

¹ Asceticism is the “severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons” (Oxford English Dictionary). You do not have to live in a monastery or an ‘off-the-grid’ cabin with an outhouse to practice the discipline of simplicity.

Scripture Meditation Journal:

Title:

Date:

Bible Reading: Luke 12

Focus Text:

Consider using either the SOAP Journal or Lectio Divina method.

Questions for Reflection:

“The majority of Christians have never seriously wrestled with the problem of simplicity, conveniently ignoring Jesus’ many words on the subject. The reason is simple: this Discipline directly challenges our vested interests in an affluent life-style. But those who take the biblical teaching on simplicity seriously are faced with severe temptations toward legalism. In the earnest attempt to give concrete expression to Jesus’ economic teaching, it is easy to mistake our particular expression of the teaching for the teaching itself. We wear this attire or buy that kind of house and canonize our choices as the simple life.” (Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*)

When you compare yourself with other people in our culture, do you think that your life would be characterized as simple or extravagant? Please give an example of why you think what you think.

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 Extravagant

When you compare yourself with other people in other cultures or developing countries, do you think that your life would be characterized as simple or extravagant? Please give an example of why you think what you think.

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 Extravagant

When you compare your life with the way that Jesus lived His life, do you think that your life would be characterized as simple or extravagant?

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 Extravagant

In what way is God convicting you of your extravagance today?
 What will you do in response?

Scripture Meditation Journal:

Title:

Date:

Bible Reading: 1 Timothy 6

Focus Text:

Consider using either the SOAP Journal or Lectio Divina method.

Questions for Reflection:

Pastor Wade explained that one of the most effective ways to develop a heart for simplicity (that “*inward*” reality that results in an *outward* life-style”) is by showing gratitude in all things. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. How will giving “thanks in all circumstances” impact your life?

How often do you find yourself griping and complaining instead of thanking God? How often do you find yourself questioning God’s care for you because you do not have what others have? What do you need to do to change these tendencies in your life?

“Freedom from anxiety is characterized by three inner attitudes. If what we have we receive as a gift, and if what we have is to be cared for by God, and if what we have is available to others, then we will possess freedom from anxiety. *This is the inward reality of simplicity...* When we are seeking first the kingdom of God, these three attitudes will characterize our lives... And we can be certain that when we live this way the ‘all these things’ that are necessary to carry on human life adequately will be ours as well” (Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*).

Scripture Meditation Journal:

Title:

Date:

Bible Reading: James 4

Focus Text:

Consider using either the SOAP Journal or Lectio Divina method.

Appendix 7:

LEARNING TO LIVE THE SIMPLE LIFE

Listed below are some outward expressions of the *inward* reality of simplicity, or gratitude. Read each statement and mark the ones that you need to work on personally. Then answer the question at the bottom of the page.

I already
do this:

I need to
work on it:

Buy things for their usefulness rather than for their status.

Reject/eliminate anything that is producing an addiction in you.

Develop a habit of giving things away (and not just your junk)—de-clutter.

Don't be brainwashed into thinking that you need every new gadget available.

Spend more time in nature appreciating God's creation.

Be leery of the "buy now, pay later" plans offered by retailers.

Remove anything in your life that distracts you from seeking first God's kingdom.

What is God calling you to do in the area of simplicity? Will you do it?