

The Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity

Part One



An Introduction to Simplicity

Dr. Joshua Fletcher- Founder and Executive Director of Pursue Christian Living

What is a Spiritual Discipline?

1. Finish this from Richard Foster :

“A Spiritual Discipline is something we _____ that allows God to do something in us that we _____”.

2. Name some common Spiritual Disciplines.

3. What are some beneficial reasons for practicing a Spiritual Discipline?

4. What are some unhelpful motivations for engaging in a spiritual discipline?

What is the Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity?

1. Simplicity is a discipline that helps us satisfy the _____ to un-
_____ and _____ our lives.

2. Simplicity allows us to focus on _____ things rather than _____
things.

3. Simplicity is a spiritual discipline that allows us to follow Jesus
_____ by _____.

4. Simplicity gives us _____ and the capacity to be _____.

5. The discipline of simplicity helps us prepare for our _____ with
Jesus by helping us let go of _____ and take ahold of the
_____.

6. We can practice simplicity in _____ of our lives.

7. Key Verses for the Discipline of Simplicity: _____

What Is the Biblical Basis of this Discipline?

I. Simplicity in the Area of Our Material Possessions

A. The Example of Jesus

- Jesus left the _____ to be with us.
- Jesus chose not to accumulate _____.
- Jesus was _____ with less.
- Jesus was oriented toward _____
- Jesus had eternal things to _____.

B. The Teachings of Jesus

1. Matthew 6:19-24 Sermon on the Mount.
2. Luke 12:22-34 Seek First the Kingdom of God
3. Matthew: 19:16-22- (The Rich Man Who Couldn't Follow)
4. Matthew 7:24-27 (A house built on The Rock.)
5. Matthew 22:34-39 (The Great Commandment)
6. Matthew 13:7; 22 (the thorns in the parable of the sower)
7. Luke 11:3 (the daily bread of the Lord's Prayer)
8. Luke 12:13-21 (choose to be rich toward God)
9. Matthew 13:44 (The Pearl of Great Price)

C. The Calling and Practice of the Apostles and the Early Church

1. Matthew 8:18-22 (Jesus's Call)
2. Luke 10:1-11 (lambs among wolves)
3. Acts 2: 44-47 The apostles held all things in common.
4. Philippians 4:10-14 (Paul learned the secret of contentment.)

What Does the Discipline Look Like?

Embrace:

Saying _____ so that you can say _____.

The value of _____.

The value of _____

The _____ and the _____ message.

Avoid:

The _____ of righteousness (Matthew 6:1-40)

Self-Righteous _____ of others

_____ practice for the sake of _____.

Getting Started

1. Simple does not mean easy. Prepare for the challenge to be real.
2. Develop and keep an “open handed” attitude toward life and things.
3. Evaluate the areas of your life.
4. Have a plan. What things does God want you to give-away, sell to be generous, and throw away garbage.
5. It's ok to start small. Rome wasn't built in a day. This is a marathon not a sprint.

How Do We Practice Simplicity Together

1. Simplicity can help us defeat loneliness and depression. Communities that develop around this idea of simplicity experience a high degree of joy. Consider inviting others into this practice.
2. We rationalize our ungodly acquisition of many things as well as the reason for attachments. Find at least one friend who will be ruthlessly

honest with you. It is easy to justify the keeping of a thing or many things. Someone who will ask the right questions as you walk through the process of letting go.

3. Offer to return the favor. Friendships grow when they are mutually beneficial. The discipline of material simplicity exchanges things with relationship. What a great trade!

Small Group Discussion

1.) Philippians 4:13 is a very commonly quoted verse of scripture, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” But it is often quoted out of context. Read verses 10-14 below and discuss the meaning of verse 13 in context.

Philippians 4:10-14

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

- Given our teaching on simplicity and the context of verse 13, what do you think is the meaning and significance of the verse?

2.) After reading 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and answer these questions:

- What do you think godliness with contentment looks like?
- How do you think godliness with contentment can be developed in the life of the believer?
- What kind of griefs does greed bring and how can we avoid these griefs?

1 Timothy 6: 6-10

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.