

# Simplicity

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See the sermon notes below to guide your LIFEgroup discussion:

## QUESTIONS:

***Where have you experienced the negative elements of the culture of comparison and consumerism?***

***Do you resonate with the Richard Foster Quote - in what way?***

*"Furthermore, the pace of the modern world accentuates our sense of being fractured and fragmented. We feel strained, hurried, breathless. The complexity of rushing to achieve and accumulate more and more frequently threatens to overwhelm us; it seems there is no escape from the rat race."*

Richard Foster (Freedom of Simplicity)

***Look at the Bible references in the sermon notes - what do they tell you about God's nature, his provision and his promise to us?***

***Where do you feel encouraged?***

***Where do you feel challenged?***

Take some time to pray for one another.

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## SERMON NOTES:

- *Have you ever thought 24 hours is not enough in a day?*
- *Have you ever thought if I just get a little bit more money things will be simpler?*
- *Have you ever seen an advert and thought if I can just get that new.... My life would be better? (New iPhone)*

We fill our lives with activities and possessions. It's part of our culture. Complicated busy lives.... Detrimental to our health.... It's ingrained in our culture.

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### **The culture of of 'comparison':**

- Through advertizing, social media etc we are constantly encouraged to compare ourselves with others. When we do we inevitably fall into these traps
- Firstly we conclude that 'I'm poor, I'm lacking, I'm ugly, I'm not as good' - its a poverty spirit - we fundamentally believe we are lacking.
- Pride - 'I have earned this, I'm better, I can look down on others because of my position, others are worth less than me'. We fundamentally have a sense of entitlement / pride. This robs us of the freedom of generosity.

### **The culture of 'consumerism':**

- Who I am is defined by what I own, how much I earn, where I live, the brands I adopt.
- We are conditioned to think that we need more. (Latest and the best)
- This drive is unquenchable - and at its extremes its obscene - never satisfied
- But the truth is that Contentment is NOT having what you want vs. wanting what you have.
- *We buy things we don't need, to impress people we don't like, with money we don't have.*

**FOMO - fear of missing out!** - And it feels like no one is immune to this!

### **The Cultural Kickback**

So when I look on social media, there is this trend to **Declutter. Minimalism. Simplify**

This is not just a current kick back trend - but ingrained in the very heart of how God desires our relationship with Him and others.

As we read through the bible we see time and time again rhythms and practices that combat the detrimental affects of comparison, consumerism and the drive to accumulate.

**Simple Steps: The Principle. The Practice. The Priority. The Promise**

### 1. Manna in the desert (Exodus 16:4, 17 & 18)

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day... The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.”*

**The Principle** - God provides

**The Practice** - collect enough for today, don't accumulate. When they did, it became rotten.

### 2. Jesus Teaching (Matt 6:11, 19-21; 25; 33)

*“Give us today our daily bread...”*

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...*

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

**The Principle** - God provides, he knows what we need - ask him to provide!

**The Practice** - don't accumulate - why? Because it doesn't last

**The Priority** - Seek God first & then all the other things flow

**The Promise** - we don't need to worry. Easier said than done... but it begins when we take a step of faith, asking for 'our daily bread'.

### 3. Jesus' Promise (Matt 11:28-30)

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” (The Message)*

**The Promise** - coming to Jesus, learning his rhythms, will give us rest.

### ***How does this impact me? And others?***

Learning to live simply brings freedom... Freedom breeds generosity.... Generosity enables mission.... Mission releases God's blessings to others...

### **Practical Steps:** *(Taken from the Ruthless Elimination of Hurry - John Mark Comer)*

1. Before you buy something, ask yourself, what is the true cost of this item? (Money, time, will it distract or add value to my life?)
2. Before you buy, ask yourself by buying this, am I oppressing the poor or harming the Earth?
3. Never impulse buy!
4. When you do buy opt for fewer better things - but still ask, do I actually need this?
5. When you can share
6. Get into the habit of giving things away
7. Live by a budget
8. Learn to enjoy things without owning them
9. Cultivate a deep appreciation for creation
10. Cultivate a deep appreciation for the simple pleasures
11. Recognise advertising for what it is - propaganda - call out the lie.