

Week 5: Simplicity

“The Christian Discipline of simplicity is an *inward* reality that results in an *outward* life-style. Both the inward and the outward aspects of simplicity are essential. We deceive ourselves if we believe we can possess the inward reality without its having a profound effect on how we live. To attempt to arrange an outward life-style of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism” Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, pg 79-80

“Simplicity creates margins and spaces and openness in our lives...Simplicity asks us to let go of the tangle of wants so we can receive the simple gifts of life that cannot be taken away. Sleeping, eating, walking, giving and receiving love, the benefits we take for granted, are amazing gifts. Simplicity invites us into these daily pleasures that can open us to God, who is present in them all.” Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, pg 85.

Try one or more of these (taken/adapted from Foster and Calhoun):

Letting Go

Uncomplicate your life by choosing a few areas in which you wish to practice “letting go.” Clean out the garage, basement, closet or attic. Go on a simple vacation. Eat more simply. What does this look like for you?

Reduce Choices

Intentionally limit your choices. Do you need six different kinds of breakfast cereal, hundreds of TV channels or four tennis rackets? What is it like to limit your choices? Does it feel free, or does want and envy surface? Talk to God about this.

Practice the Presence

Where have you complicated your life with God? Consider what actually brings you into the presence of Christ. Spend time there.

Create Margin

Insert margins of rest and relaxation into your day. Remembering that it is better to be unavailable than inattentive, build some buffer times into your life: shorter appointments, no back-to-back appointments without a break, ask God to make you present in the moment, counter gut reactions.

Avoid Spontaneous Yeses

When you are tempted to say yes, stop yourself and say, “Let me think about this for a moment. I’ll call you back in ten minutes.” Even ten minutes can afford you the time to consider whether you really want or need to say yes.

If you’d like to learn more about spiritual transformation and various ways to invite Holy Spirit to work in and through you, these are great places to start:

[*Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God*](#) by Gary Thomas

[*Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*](#) by Ruth Haley Barton

[*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*](#) by Richard J. Foster

[*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*](#) by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

[*Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become Like Him, Do as He Did*](#) by John Mark Comer