
Simplicity

“God made man simple; man’s complex problems are of his own devising.” – Ecclesiastes 7:29 (Jerusalem Bible)

Simplicity is one of the most beautiful disciplines, because it helps us to make space in our lives for other disciplines and graces of God. Richard Foster has summarized it well: “Simplicity is freedom.”¹ Dallas Willard says simplicity is “the arrangement of life around a few consistent purposes, explicitly excluding what is not necessary to human well-being.”² Simplicity goes far beyond the concept of money or material possessions to our attitudes and perspectives about everything we “own” and all we do.

So how does one practice simplicity in the daily decisions of life? Decisions like: Where do we eat dinner? What do we do with our free time? Where do I buy new clothes? What do I have that I do not need? What activities am I involved in that I could say “no” to? Two of the best places to start practicing simplicity are our *closets* and our *calendars*. So you might want to try cleaning out your closet (or house for that matter). Enjoy the feeling of giving things away (or throwing things away!). Feel deeply the freedom that comes from having less stuff to be responsible for. Then attack your calendar with an eraser (or the “delete” key). Eliminate all unnecessary appointments and obligations, and make a commitment to only add the most important priorities in your life to your calendar.

- Consider having a “Simplicity Garage Sale.” Go through your home with the mindset of practicing simplicity. Sell anything that will help your life to be less complicated and more simple. Call a local charity to donate whatever is left over from the garage sale.
- As you go through an average day, ask yourself the question: “What can I change that will make my life more simple? Think about the places you go, the transportation you use, the way you eat, what you watch, what you buy, how you spend your free time, and anything else that comes to mind. Whenever you can eliminate something that will make your life more simple . . . give it a try.
- Spend a day without using any modern technological devices. See if this helps you live more simply. You might want to journal your thoughts and experiences.
- Review your financial budget with a priority of assisting poor and needy people around the world.

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 69.

² Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 170.