

# DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

May 30, 2021  
Week 7: Simplicity  
Scripture: Matthew 6:30–33

When we discipline our heart, soul, and mind, we grow in God's grace. This transformational process takes practice. When we work at these spiritual disciplines, we can experience peace, joy, and freedom through Christ. This week, Michelle Andrews, Pastor of Children's Ministry, talked about the spiritual discipline of simplicity.

## **Definitions:**

Jesus often instructed his disciples on how they should think about money, possessions, and time. What we value most will be evident in our relationships with these things. They can either be a means to freedom and joy, helping us to build the kingdom of God, or they can be the very things that control us.

## **Introduction Questions**

1. Silly Question: If there was a fire in your house, what would be the one thing you would grab?
2. Follow-up from last week: How did confession shape your week last week?
3. If you could have a screen-free 24 hours, how would you spend it?

## **Scripture Study Questions: Someone read Hebrews 12:1–13**

1. What comes up when you read this?
2. What feels like it is hindering or entangling you? Why?
3. What does it mean to live intentionally with our eyes fixed on Jesus? How might that change how we related to stuff, schedules, and screen time?
4. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to consider Jesus "so that you might not grow weary and lose heart." How do you think Jesus would live simply now? How does that encourage you to not grow weary and lose heart?

## **Simplicity Questions**

1. What do you think it means to steep yourself in God? What does it look like?
2. How might a simple life reflect an inward gospel-reality outwards?
3. Do you think intentionally pursuing simplicity is going to be easy or hard? Why or why not?
4. Do you get caught up in retail therapy? Why or why not?
5. Is it harder for you say "no" or "yes" when people invite you to do things during the week?
6. What does your relationship with screens look like? Do you have any intentionally "tech-free spaces" in your house?

## **Challenge:**

1. Ask God to show you where you have been overly complicating, busy, and/or distracted from life with him. Bring those to him, and pray for his help to live more simply in relationship with him.
2. Choose one thing you can do this week to simplify your life. Do it.
3. Break your day up into three eight-hour chunks—list out what you do and categorize it within the three categories (things, time, and technology). Look for anything you can cut out, reduce, or reconsider.

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## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Below are some curated resources from the Renaissance Church staff that have been helpful in our journey through studying and growing in spiritual disciplines. These are just a few of the resources out there! To find more, check the bibliography and endnotes of each resource. That is where the true gold is found!

### Spiritual Disciplines:

- *Celebration of Discipline*, by Richard J. Foster
- *Sacred Rhythms*, by Ruth Haley Barton
- *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

### Prayer:

- *Discovering How to Pray*, by Hope MacDonald
- *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, by Richard J. Foster

### Study:

- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- *How to Read the Bible Book-by-Book*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- The BibleProject: This has great scripture study resources and is produced by a great scholar and pastor in Portland, OR. Helpful for setting the context, diving into specific passages, and providing personal encouragement.  
[bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com)

### Solitude:

- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, by John Mark Comer
- *Silence and Solitude* by Ruth Haley Barton

### Guidance:

- *Soul Friend*, Kenneth Leech— provides a great overview of Spiritual Direction and the links to psychology
- *The Dark Night of the Soul*, St. John of the Cross—a classic on the spiritual life showing God's guidance and teaching in the experience of stillness and quiet

### Worship

- *Wholeness in Worship*, Thomas and Sharon Neuffer Emswiler
- *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Eugene H. Peterson presents the core tenants of a life of a Christian disciple.

### Confession

- *Celebration of Discipline*, chapter 10, by Richard Foster
- *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* by Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert.