

## “What’s going on?”

+ Please pray for the team in Guatemala

+ Backpack Blessing! Sunday, August 11th we will be celebrating our children and teachers as they return to school. Make sure to join us as we lift them up in prayer!

+ Thursday & Friday, August 8th & 9th our offices will be closed as the staff attends the Global Leadership Summit simulcast at the Crossing. Please pray for their time there!

+ Back 2 School Bash - August 18th 5pm-8pm at LifePoint, all families with children preschool through high school age, come join us as we kick off the school year right!! Tons of games and activities to enjoy!

## SIMPLICITY

*“The discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle.”*

*-Richard Foster*

## ICE BREAKER

**Question:** What is the opposite of simplicity?

**Question:** What material possession of yours are you most proud of or invest the most time/money in? (ex: car/truck, yard, house, clothes, etc.)

**Question:** Are there any ads or propaganda that have “gotten you” lately? What was it about it that made you feel like you had to have it? (cost, deal, met need, convenience, etc)

## CENTERING FOCUS

Begin your group time by spending 3-5 minutes in silence.

Our thoughts are loud.  
Our feelings are loud.  
Our worries are loud.  
Our fears are loud.

Take some time to be quiet and still before God and allow him to calm the noise in your heart and mind, so you can focus in this time together.

## LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Last month we practiced the discipline of submission.

**Question:** What was it like practicing submission? What did you learn about yourself? How did you grow closer to Jesus through this discipline?

## THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

**Question:** What are things in your life that you thought would make you happy if you had them, but haven't lived up to your expectations?

**Question:** If the opposite of simplicity is chaos, clutter, worry, and anxiety, in what area of your life are you experiencing these feelings the most?

## ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)**

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

**Question:** What two things does Jesus compare in this passage?

**Question:** The phrase "*lay up*" means to collect, heap up or accumulate, to reserve or keep in store. What are some examples of treasures that people tend to store up on earth?

**Question:** Looking into your own life, what are some of the treasures that you store on earth? What are the important things you are trying to accumulate or keep?

**Question:** What do you think Jesus means when he talks about the treasures of heaven? What are things that cannot be destroyed or taken from you?

Jesus equates our treasure to our heart. Jesus uses the Greek word “kardia” for heart, which means the seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire, intellect and conscience.

**Question:** To help pinpoint what treasures you may be storing up, think about the things that consume your thoughts and feelings. What are the things you buy on impulse? What are things that have your affections and desires? What are the things that keep you up at night? When you have a free moment, what comes to mind?

**Matthew 6:33 (ESV)-**

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

Simplicity is an inward focus on the first thing: the Kingdom of God, which is demonstrated in outward actions. Simplicity comes from keeping the “first thing first.” We might say that God is our first priority, but how we live will tell if that is true.

**Question:** According to your outward expressions, what do your words, actions, and priorities say is most important to you?

**Mark 10:17-22 (ESV)**

*“And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” 20 And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”*

**Question:** What information or guidance was the man seeking from Jesus? And, how did Jesus initially respond to him?

**Question:** The man responded that he had followed all of the commandments since childhood. How, then, did Jesus respond to him?

**Question:** Why was the man sorrowful when he left? What was getting in the way of inheriting eternal life? What did Jesus reveal about his heart?

**Question:** Verse 21 says, “Jesus, looking at him, **loved** him...” It is because Jesus loves us so much that he wants to expose the treasures in our hearts that are not of him. What are the things in your life that would cause you heartbreak and sorrow if Jesus asked you to give up?

**Question:** After studying this together, what are the things that God is convicting you to change or let go of? What is hindering you from living a simple life? How can you begin to seek *first* the kingdom of God?

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**Personal Reflection:** (spend 10 minutes in personal reflection, reading and answering the questions below)

*“Simplicity creates margins and spaces and openness in our lives. It honors the resources of our small planet. It offers us the leisure of tasting the present moment. 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.”*

*-Adele Ahlberg Calhoun*

### Reflection Questions:

- In what ways are you susceptible to the entitlement mentality of our age? What things in your life do you think you “deserve”?
- How has the “more is better” mentality shaped you? What do you want more of? Why do you think it’ll make you happier?
- Do you envy those who have more things or more opportunities than you? Explain.
- How much of your identity is wrapped up in what you own and where you go? Who are you without all these acquisitions and opportunities?
- Are there things you like and want that you know you need to give away? How does that feel?
- Do you need to downsize? Home? Vehicle? Clothes? TV channels? How does that make you feel?

## **NEW CHALLENGE**

As we begin practicing the discipline of simplicity, the challenge this week is to 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 restful vacation. Eat more simply. Do whatever it looks like in your life to clear the chaos and clutter and seek first the kingdom of God.

Discipline of Simplicity resources:

- Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster
- Freedom of Simplicity by Richard Foster
- Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun