

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lesson 5

The Discipline of Simplicity

We continue our Christian Living study of the twelve spiritual disciplines by examining the discipline of Simplicity. Simplicity is the first of the four disciplines that Richard Foster classifies as "outward". It is perhaps one of the most difficult for us to practice, primarily because we live in such a material world.

Simplicity is "the blessedness of possessing nothing" (as Richard Foster defines it); it is realizing that all we have is not ours—it is God's. Surrounded by technology, we have instant access to information through the Internet, and we find ourselves living in a world full of social networking tools that allow us to lead a busy and very active life without ever leaving our homes. Driven by the need to build a retirement nest egg, or to save for our children's education, or to build an emergency fund to protect ourselves from the financial uncertainties of this world—we are so focused on our physical and material needs to the point that we feel exhausted, and sometimes even hopeless. Clearly, it is time to simplify our lives and go back to focusing first on Christ and His kingdom.

Using the Bible, complete the assignments below.

1. Read the following passages and describe the insights they provide us in terms of getting simplicity back into our lives:
 - a. Luke 12:15

 - b. Ephesians 5:8-10

 - c. Luke 12:13-21

2. Furthermore, when we simplify our lives, we hold back nothing from God; and that act of withholding nothing allows God to be the central figure in our lives—instead of our possessions and physical needs. Read the following Old Testament account of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:1-18, and note what it tells us about Abraham and how he held nothing back from God. What did Abraham believe God would do once Abraham sacrificed his son Isaac, and why did he believe it?

3. Read Matthew 6:25-34, and note below some of the things that Christ teaches us in this text.

