

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR LIFE

## SIMPLICITY

**John 10:10b (ERV)**

“ I came to give life—life that is full and good.”

### WHAT IS SIMPLICITY?

**Luke 12:13-15 (NIV)**

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

**Exodus 20:17 (NIV)**

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

“Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption.”

“The measure of social status, of acceptance, of prestige, is now to be found in our consumptive patterns. The very meaning and significance of our lives today expressed in consumptive terms.”

Retail analyst Victor Lebow – 1955

- Simplicity is the spiritual practice of recognizing and controlling our natural impulse to pursue and find our security and satisfaction in possessions or status and, instead, finding it in the Lord through a single-hearted focus on Him and His Kingdom

**Matthew 13:22 (NIV)**

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but *the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word*, making it unfruitful.

- Complexity is the opposite of simplicity. Clutter never produces peace.

### PRACTICING SIMPLICITY

**Luke 12:13-14 (NIV)**

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?”

### Luke 12:15a

Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed...”

### Luke 12:15b

...life does not consist in an **abundance** of possessions.”

- Practicing Simplicity is not about accepting poverty; Practicing Simplicity is about renouncing greed.

### Luke 12:16

16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

17 **He** thought to **himself**, ‘What shall **I** do? **I** have no place to store **my** crops.’

18 “Then **he** said, ‘This is what **I’ll** do. **I** will tear down **my** barns and build bigger ones, and there **I** will store **my surplus** grain. 19 And **I’ll** say to **myself**, “You have **plenty** of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up **things** for **themselves** but is **not rich toward God**.”

- God isn’t interested in how much stuff we have; He’s interested in how much of our heart He has.

### Luke 16:13 (NIV)

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

NLT – “You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”

- If our heart is set on consuming things, things will eventually consume our hearts.
- Self is the greatest hindrance to 100% devotion to God, often revealed in the sin of covetousness.

### 1 Timothy 6:5b-10 (NLT)

5b To them, a show of godliness is just a way to become wealthy. 6 Yet true godliness with **contentment** is itself great wealth.

7 After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. 8 So **if we have enough** food and clothing, **let us be content**.

9 But people who **long** to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful **desires** that plunge them into ruin and destruction.

10 For the **love** of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, **craving** money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

**Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)**

Keep your lives **free** from the **love** of money and **be content** with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

- Simplicity is practiced through a lifestyle of uncluttered living, radical generosity, gratefulness, joy in the ordinary pleasures of life, and most of all, finding our satisfaction and contentment in the one true God.
  - Uncluttered living: limiting, not just our possessions, but our non-kingdom activities and obligations.

**Deuteronomy 14:23 (LB)**

The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.

- Whatever keeps us from a single-hearted focus on God and His Kingdom keeps us from the simplicity of the Good Life; make the necessary changes.

**Matthew 6:31-34 (NLT)**

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things **dominate the thoughts** of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.

33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”