



practicing the way
simplicity

The Heart

Overview

As we begin to explore the Biblical concept of simplicity and its implications, we'll be naturally led to the question, how do we know what to keep? (In our home and in our schedule!)

Without intention, paring things down may feel random and even a bit senseless. It is not enough to just minimize our home or schedule; we have to simplify around something. So we must ask what we prioritize. Or put another way: What do we value?

In order to discover what to eliminate—what to say no to—we have to first know what we value enough to say yes to. A good way to think about what we value is to think about our “center”. Our center, our integrated soul, is the fulcrum point of our whole being. It is the space within us that houses what we most want, will, and long for.

Many of us have a vague idea of what values make up our center, but it might be difficult to put your finger on it or verbalize your values. Or, more than that, there may be some space between what you value in theory and what your life demonstrates you value (through how you spend your time, your money, or your energy). That kind of dis-integration can leave us feeling torn, tense, and tired.

Our Practice this week is to spend some time identifying our guiding values for living, as well as whether there are any values we hold dear but by which we do not currently live. As we move forward in our practice of Simplicity, these values will help guide us forward.

Values

Our Practice for this week is to identify our values — both those by which we currently live, and those by which we want to. There are many ways to identify your values. Choose one or a few of the options offered below and pray or journal through the reflection questions at the end.

Example Values

This is a non-exhaustive list—these examples are just a jumping off point. Do any of these values resonate with you? What else would you add?

- Beauty
- Efficiency
- Honesty
- Family
- Prayer
- Physical fitness
- Learning
- Adventure

- Care for environment
- Silence & solitude
- Hospitality
- Generosity
- Sabbath
- Practicality

Ask someone close to you

Ask a close friend or your spouse what they would say your core values are, based on how you live. This can be a vulnerable thing to ask, so choose someone you trust to be honest and kind!

Examine your budget

Take a look at your spending in your banking app or any budgeting tool you might use, such as *Mint*. What does your spending tell you that you value most? Examples might be charitable giving, travel, convenience (eating out, Uber, etc.), high quality food, or something entirely different.

Examine your schedule

How we spend our time is a major indicator of what we value. Look back in your calendar or memory (or, keep track for a few days!) and consider where you are investing your time. That will point to what you are placing value on.

Practice

1. Using one or a few of the options above, make a list of the values your life currently demonstrates. Any that surprise you? Are there any not on the list you wish were there?
2. As you work through this Practice, you may discover a gap between what you say or think you really value most, and what your money or time demonstrates you value most. Where do you see the biggest discrepancy? (Example: "I want to value family time with dinners at home, but my schedule tells me I value work most.")

Based on what you've discovered, make up a list of 5 or so core values you want to be living into. Some may be currently supported by your lifestyle, and some may be "in progress." That's okay! Our goal is to get some clarity around what our "center" is, so we can keep coming back to it. As you review your list, spend some time in prayer before God, asking what He might add or subtract.

Closing Questions

As you look over the list of values included above, are there any that resonate with you?

1. Did your family have values they lived by as you were growing up? Have you carried any of those values into your adult life? (Examples might be: being prepared for financial disasters, extreme hospitality, family time, hard work, etc.)
2. How do you imagine your values might (or might not) impact what stays and what goes in your life? (Whether that be possessions, time commitments, etc.)
3. As you look forward, is there any one area you most look forward to simplifying or most want to simplify? Such as your schedule, your home, etc.

Close in prayer