

# DEEPER

## THE DISCIPLINE OF SIMPLICITY



### ACCOUNTABILITY

- How did you choose to make prayer a lifestyle in the past week?

### INTRODUCTION

- Ask group members if they had heard of minimalism prior to this sermon, and what they thought of the movement.

### SERMON REVIEW

- God created us within time and space. Let's see how the discipline of simplicity can help us create time and space to meet with him.
- A particular form of simplicity is very trendy in mainstream culture! According to *The Minimalists*, "Minimalism is a tool to rid yourself of life's excess in favor of focusing on what's important—so you can find happiness, fulfillment, and freedom." But what *is* important? What is it that we should focus on instead of life's excess?
- The book of Ecclesiastes provides an initial answer to that question.
- We're free to find fulfillment and purpose, but tend to become exhausted in that search! That's because we look to things – such as pleasure, possessions, academics, and work – which ultimately prove meaningless (Ecclesiastes 1:12-14).
- The only thing that doesn't prove to be meaningless is the pursuit of God; in Solomon's estimation, it must be the only pursuit worth making (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
- Simplicity, according to Jesus, is to serve one purpose (Matthew 6:25-33).
- We are to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. Any other pursuit only brings stress and disappointment.
- In response to this command, the Church has practiced simplicity in various ways over thousands of years – from the first believers (e.g., Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32), through the middle ages (e.g., Francis of Assisi), to our own time.
- "Simplified living requires more than just organizing your closets or cleaning out your desk drawer; it requires uncluttering your soul." (*Simplify*, Bill Hybels) It is so much more than rejecting consumerism, and that is why it has looked different in different times and places.
- The biblical discipline of simplicity liberates us from *anything* that would distract our attention away from the pursuit of God.

### DISCUSSION

- Read Matthew 6:25-33. What stands out to you from these verses?
- Jesus borrowed images from nature to explain his point. How do these images help you understand that point?
- Based on his words here, what happens to your life when you choose to concern yourself solely with food and clothes? What happens when you seek God first?

- Are things such as work, wealth, or status inherently bad? Why or why not?
- List some pursuits/distractions other than wealth, possessions, and status. For example, as mentioned in the sermon, an agenda that leaves no room for God.
- How could you simplify your life, in order to pursue God without distraction?

### CHALLENGE

- Create time and space to seek God by abandoning meaningless pursuits and by eliminating distractions.
- Here are few practices that Richard J. Foster suggests for living simply. These are just ideas to get you thinking!

*Buy for usefulness, not prestige.*

*Reject anything that produces addiction in you.*

*Give things away.*

*Don't be lured in by every gadget.*

*Enjoy without owning.*

*Develop an appreciation for creation.*

*Don't buy now and pay later.*

*Plain, honest speech (avoid flattery and half-truths).*

*Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.*

*Get rid of anything that distracts you from seeking first the Kingdom of God.*

### CLOSING PRAYER