



Week 4: Distractions

1. Do you think God has called you to do something special? If so, what? If not, why?
2. What distraction do you wrestle with most?
3. Pastor Dan shared he has learned that; If you are always available to everyone, eventually, you'll have nothing to give to anyone. How does a lack of boundaries derail us from the thing God is calling us to?
4. Read Nehemiah 6:9. Intimidation and discouragement only served to fuel Nehemiah's determination. What can you learn from his example?
5. How can you as a Grace Group encourage each other to remain focused on the burden God has given them to engage?
6. Identify the distractions you face, what needs to stop for you to step into God's calling on your life?
7. As you think about the burden God is birthing in you through this series, what is God calling you to start? What is the next step?

**If the opposition doesn't defeat you,
LIFE will distract you.**

Father, thank You that, even in the face of distractions, You're with us. Help us to learn to keep our eyes on You as we pursue the work You've given us, to engage broken places, and to see our distractions for what they are. Give us the strength and perseverance we need to see Your work through to the end. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

This week's Spiritual Practice: Simplicity

For Christians, that goal is to seek God's kingdom. Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, 'seek *first* his kingdom and his righteousness,' and that comes before everything else Jesus mentions in his most famous sermon. The moment we make our lives focused on anything other than God's kingdom – no matter how worthy that thing might be – we turn it into an idol. But when the kingdom of God is genuinely placed first, God's mission for our life can become first.

The discipline of simplicity is an inward reality resulting in an outward lifestyle. What goes on inside our hearts impacts the world around us and who we are in it. Foster writes: 'Of all the disciplines, simplicity is the most visible and therefore the most open to corruption.'

But what does this look like? In his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster lists 10 outward expressions of Christian simplicity in this chapter – but for the sake of "trying" this practice, let's start with one: rejecting anything that produces a dependence rather than Christ. For me, that's my phone, I look at it and rely on it more than I wish I did. I often pick it up more than I pick up my Bible, and I have many more minutes of "screen time" a day than I do have in prayer. What about you?

What is it that you could do to simplify your life? Here are three easy steps you could follow to make it possible:

Step 1: Find something that needs simplifying. It could be going through your house and decluttering, or limiting your time-consuming TV, radio, Social Media, or gaming. It's whatever you feel is getting in the way of making the kingdom of God your first priority.

Step 2: Take time to reflect and write down how you will embrace simplicity in that area. For me, I'm going to stop using my phone one hour before bed and read scripture and pray before picking it up in the morning.

Step 3: Ask for someone to keep you accountable. This is hard, I know, but it will help. The things that are particularly attached to us will be harder to shift so we may need some assistance.

Remember – the idea of simplicity is *more freedom not less*. God is calling us to live a simple life as Jesus lived simply. I want to create more space and the mental capacity to allow the Holy Spirit to move in all areas of my life, for God to be present, and for me to listen from the beginning of each day to the end.