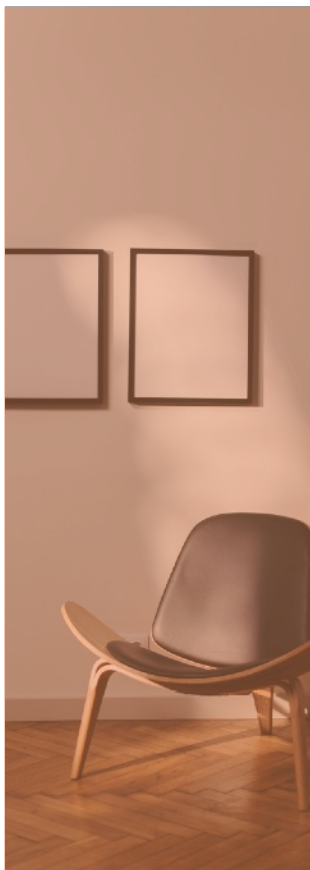


SIMPLICITY

#7

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICES DEVOTIONAL

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“וַיֹּאמֶר עֲרִים יֵצְתִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרִם אָשׁוּב שְׁמָה יְהוָה נָתַן
וַיְהִי לִקְחַ יְהִי שְׁסִי הַיְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ:”

(Job 1:21, LHB)

“And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord
has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.””

(Job 1:21, ESV)

“Like a good servant, Job regarded his Lord’s will as his greatest
wealth. Following Him, he grew rich in spirit, and was not saddened
by having to abandon in life those things which he would shortly
have to abandon in death.”

Augustine of Hippo *The City of God. 1.10*

SIMPLICITY

The Christian practice of simplicity is rooted in the recognition that our ultimate source of contentment and fulfillment comes from God alone. It involves intentionally living with a focus on the eternal rather than the temporal, and embracing a lifestyle of detachment from excessive material possessions and worldly distractions. Simplicity calls believers to prioritize spiritual values over materialism, trusting that God's providence is sufficient to meet their needs. By living with simplicity, Christians seek to reduce the burden of materialism and consumerism, freeing themselves to fully devote their time, energy, and resources to loving God and serving others. This practice fosters a deeper reliance on God's grace, cultivates gratitude for what is truly essential, and invites believers to align their lives with the life and teachings of Jesus, who exemplified living humble and simply.

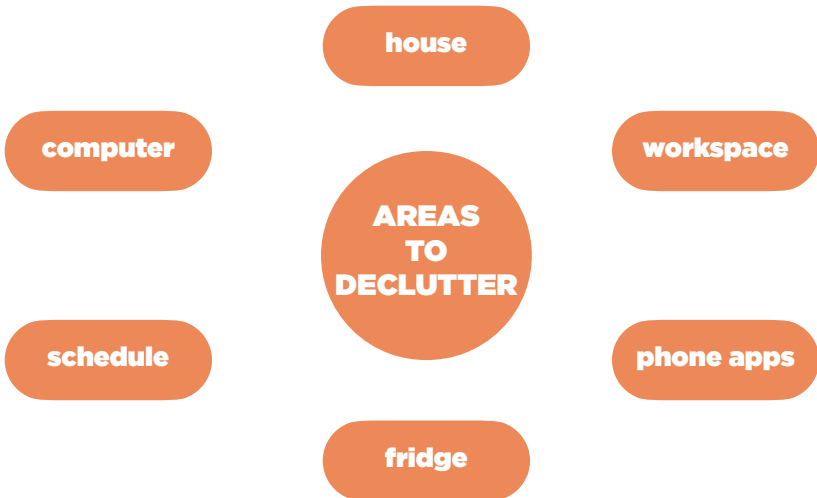
In embracing simplicity, Christians are called to be mindful stewards of God's creation, using resources responsibly and being aware of the impact their choices have on others and the environment. Practicing simplicity also involves extending compassion to the poor as Jesus taught that true riches are found in generosity and selfless giving. Through a simple lifestyle, Christians seek to create space for deeper spiritual connection, leading to a greater awareness of God's presence and a life characterized by peace and contentment. Simplicity becomes a counter-cultural witness in a world that often values possessions and achievements above all else, reminding us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Day 31: The Beauty of Simplicity

READ: **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

THINK: In a world filled with distractions, the call to simplicity can seem counter-cultural and even challenging. However, when we prioritize God's kingdom and righteousness above all else, we open ourselves to a life of true abundance and contentment. Simplicity is not just about decluttering our physical spaces but also about decluttering our hearts and minds. It's about finding joy in the simple pleasures of life and trusting God to provide for our needs. When we seek first the things of God, we let go of the unnecessary burdens that weigh us down and embrace the freedom that comes from living with a focused and God-centered perspective.

DO: Today, take some time to declutter one area of your life. It could be your physical space, your digital devices, or even your schedule. As you do this, reflect on the things that truly matter and the areas in your life where you can simplify. Letting go of unnecessary possessions or commitments can create space for God to work more intentionally in your life. Spend time in prayer, surrendering any attachments or distractions that hinder your simplicity in Christ.



"The more you have, the more you are occupied. The less you have, the more free you are."

- St. Teresa of Calcutta

Day 32: Contentment in God's Provision

READ: Philippians 4:11-12 "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."

THINK: Contentment is a key aspect of the Christian practice of simplicity. When we learn to be content in all circumstances, we release ourselves from the pursuit of material possessions and worldly desires that can never truly satisfy. Like the Apostle Paul, we can find contentment in God's provision, whether we have an abundance or are facing scarcity. Simplicity teaches us to trust in God's faithfulness and know that He will provide for our needs. By embracing contentment, we free ourselves from the constant striving for more and find peace in the sufficiency of God's grace.

DO: Today, practice gratitude and contentment by keeping a gratitude journal. Write down five things you are thankful for, big or small, and reflect on how God has provided for you in various ways. As you develop a habit of thankfulness, you will become more aware of God's abundant provision in your life, leading to a more simplified and content heart.

Also consider reflecting on the concept of contentment and how it relates to simplicity. What ways could living a more simple life actually lead to living a more contented one?

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"Thank God for the things I do not own."

- St. Teresa of Avila

Day 33: Detaching from Materialism

READ: 1 Timothy 6:6-7 "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."

THINK: Material possessions can easily become idols in our lives, pulling our focus away from God and leading us down a path of greed and discontentment. The Christian practice of simplicity calls us to detach ourselves from the grip of materialism and recognize that our true worth and significance come from our relationship with God, not from the things we own.

Embracing simplicity allows us to view our possessions as tools to serve others and build God's kingdom, rather than sources of personal validation.

Letting go of the pursuit of material wealth brings us closer to a life of spiritual abundance and freedom.

DO: Take a moment to assess your relationship with material possessions. Identify one possession or area of material focus that you could part with and commit to using it for a greater purpose.

Is there an object in your possession that if it was lost, damaged, or stolen, it would completely devastate you. If so, why do you think that is? How can you make that object just that - an object, rather than an object of your affection?

"Order your soul. Reduce your wants."

- Saint Augustine

"Money is a great servant but a bad master."


- Francis Bacon

Day 34: Cultivating a Quiet Spirit

READ: **Psalm 46:10** "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'"

THINK: In our fast-paced world, cultivating a quiet and still spirit can be challenging, yet it is an essential aspect of simplicity. When we intentionally create moments of silence and solitude, we allow ourselves to hear God's voice more clearly. In the stillness, we find rest for our souls and gain perspective on what truly matters. By quieting the noise around us and within us, we can let go of unnecessary distractions and embrace a simpler, more centered life in God's presence.

DO: Find a quiet space today to spend time in prayer and reflection. Turn off all distractions, including electronic devices, and simply be still before God. Listen to what He might be speaking to your heart and invite His presence to bring peace and clarity to your soul. In order to quiet our spirit, we first need to silence the distractions. In the box below, write out all the issues that worry you right now so that in this moment of quiet, you won't have to remember the burdens you are carrying.

Place worries here 

"Christian asceticism is not spiritual boot camp, but neither is it effortless. Learning when and how, to what, and to whom to give our yes or our no is a lifelong project."

- M. Shawn Copeland

Day 35: Investing in Eternal Treasures

READ: Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

THINK: The practice of simplicity is not just about minimizing our possessions; it's also about redirecting our hearts toward eternal priorities. Earthly treasures are temporary and can distract us from the greater purpose God has for our lives. By investing in heavenly treasures such as love, kindness, compassion, and sharing the Gospel, we live with an eternal perspective that brings lasting fulfillment and significance. When we align our hearts with God's kingdom, our pursuit of simplicity becomes a means of honouring Him and advancing His purposes on Earth.

DO: Identify one way you can invest in eternal treasures today. It could be reaching out to someone in need, sharing the hope of Christ with a friend, or serving in a ministry that aligns with God's heart. As you actively seek to build heavenly treasures, you will find greater joy and fulfillment, knowing that your life is contributing to something far more significant than temporal possessions.

"Distractions must be conquered or they will conquer us. So let us cultivate simplicity; let us walk in the Spirit."

A PRAYER FOR SIMPLICITY

Dear Heavenly Father,

In a world filled with complexity and distractions, I come before you seeking simplicity. Help me, Lord, to embrace a life that is uncomplicated, where my focus is solely on You and Your will for me.

Grant me the wisdom to discern what truly matters in life, and the courage to let go of the unnecessary burdens and desires that weigh me down. May I find contentment in Your presence alone, knowing that You are my source of true joy and fulfillment.

Teach me to be grateful for the simple blessings that surround me daily—a warm smile, a kind word, the beauty of your creation, and the love of family and friends. Open my eyes to the richness of a life lived in gratitude.

Lord, help me to surrender my desire for material wealth, status, and worldly success. Instead, fill me with a desire for spiritual riches and a heart that seeks first Your kingdom and righteousness.

Help me to be a good steward of the resources You have entrusted to me, using them to bless others and further Your kingdom on Earth.

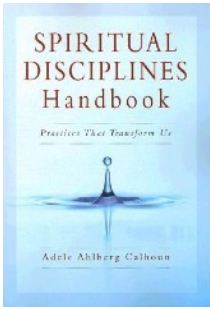
In moments of chaos and busyness, remind me to pause and find comfort in Your presence. May I learn to rest in Your peace and trust in Your provision.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of simplicity. May it bring me closer to You and help me live a life that reflects Your love, grace, and truth.

In Jesus' name, I pray.

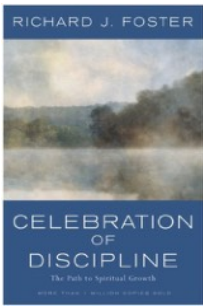
Amen.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES READING



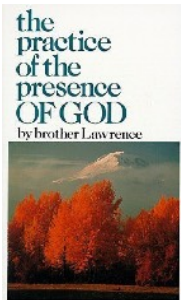
Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun provides a comprehensive guide to various spiritual disciplines, offering practical ways to deepen your spiritual life and draw closer to God.



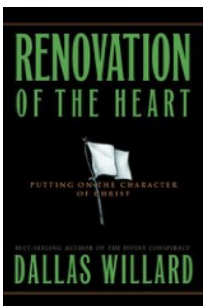
Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth by Richard J. Foster

Richard J. Foster explores twelve classic spiritual disciplines, from meditation to fasting, providing a roadmap for personal spiritual growth and transformation.



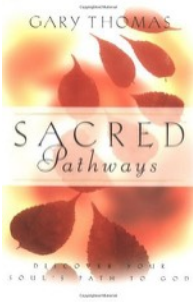
The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

Brother Lawrence's timeless classic reveals how simple, everyday activities can become acts of worship when practiced with a constant awareness of God's presence.



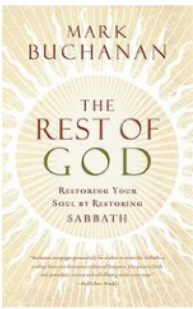
Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ by Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard delves into the transformation of the heart and mind, guiding readers towards becoming more like Christ through spiritual growth and character development.



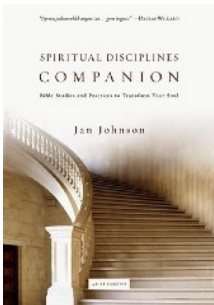
Sacred Pathways by Gary L. Thomas

Gary L. Thomas explores different spiritual temperaments and how individuals can connect with God through various unique pathways, helping readers discover their own spiritual preferences.



The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath by Mark Buchanan

Mark Buchanan emphasizes the importance of Sabbath rest in the fast-paced modern world, demonstrating how observing Sabbath can restore and rejuvenate the soul.



Spiritual Disciplines Companion: Bible Studies and Practices to Transform Your Soul by Jan Johnson*

Jan Johnson's companion offers practical Bible studies and exercises that complement the spiritual disciplines, helping readers engage with these practices on a deeper level.



The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer

John Mark Comer explores the detrimental effects of busyness and hurry on our spiritual lives and offers practical steps to slow down, find rest, and grow spiritually in a frantic world.

