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SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Simplicity

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[TITLE SLIDE:]

Spiritual Disciplines are things that WE DO.... In order to grow in our life with God
They don't work if we don't do them!!

- S.D. help to break the hold that various idols of the world have on us
 - Like the Children of Israel just out of Egypt.....
- S.D. draw us closer into the mind and heart of God
- There is a wonderful, practical result that pursuing S.D. has

Last week we talked about the Disciplines of PRAYER & FASTING



TODAY: **SIMPLICITY**

- Maybe you never thought of Simplicity as a Discipline.... it is!
- Great passage from Paul to the Philippians



[Philippians 4.10-13 NIV]

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

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.

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

- Paul is acknowledging the Gift the Philippians gave him..... AND is Grateful

- BUT he wants to make clear.... The Joy in his heart is **NOT** from **Getting Stuff**

There's Contentment and Joy in Paul's heart just knowing.....

Who Jesus is and Who Owns his life

"....Getting gifts is fine and ok..."

But the Joy in my heart doesn't come from STUFF"

- Paul is living out before the Philippians what Jesus taught.....



[Matthew 6.21, 31-33 NLT]

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be

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

Neither Paul nor Jesus is saying....

- "I want you to learn to live on Nothing...."
- "You can never have anything nice...."
- "You can never enjoy anything....." Not the point they're trying to make

- We must not OBSESS over THINGS

Things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers

- **Paul said.....** "I can be content with a Lot, with a Little, with Nothing"
- **BUT Society says.....** "Oh, no you can't"
 - You can only be content with a lot / more and more / ever better
 - Keep collecting.... Keep stuffing your life
 - Pepsi "Drink Pepsi and Get Stuff!"

We now live in the age of Hoarder

You and I live in a culture called:

Designer Dissatisfaction... (Advertisers make us dissatisfied by design)

- *Your life is worth nothing if you JUST have PlayStation 1*
- *48" TV is great, BUT...*

Or built in Planned Obsolete

- *That computer is no longer supported...*
- *Gadgets wears out intentionally*

Matthew 19 Young Rich man came to Jesus..... *"What must I do to be saved?"*



[Matthew 19.21-22 NLT]

Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

- Possessions were his god
- He was unable to obey the command, *"Go and sell ... come and follow."*
- He thought STUFF is path to Contentment / Happiness / Peace

Think about this....

- How many have been called
- BUT because we won't let go of stuff....

We LOSS OUT on God's Best!

All through scripture there's a sense that the more Cluttered your life is....

- Harder it is to make your way to God

- Harder it is to see what the God is up to

AGAIN.... Jesus IS NOT saying

- *"I want you to learn to live on Nothing...."*
 - *Cut the Electric and phone Lines!!!*
 - *Through out your plumbing!*
 - *OR.... Give away all your money! (He has asked that of some)*
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Ever hear saying: *"He who has the most Stuff, WINS?"*

There're things WE LOSE when we collect more and more Stuff

We Lose:

- **Relationships and Closeness with our fellow human beings**
 - We rarely talk Neighbors
 - We drive car into my garage; Go into our house
 - Because we have built up so many things around us.
- **We have all these lovely houses, but how many people come and visit them?**

We lose:

- **Relationship and Closeness with God**
- God has called some into missions or Ministry....

Minister from Uganda visiting America:

WAS ASKED: *"You are an outsider; you are a preacher; what would you critique about our society as you look at it?"*

"You are too busy, and you do not have enough room for God in your life. You have not allowed space for that."

- Our STUFF won't make room for God

**We need to de-clutter our lives...
For the sake of relationships with People and God**



[TITLE SLIDE:]

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR EVALUATION:

(Not thinking of ANYONE when making this list!)

- Are the Hobbies in your life taking you out of relationships?
- Is the business of your life take you away from people or church?
- The pursuit of trophies or
- Has TV viewing pushed out time with God /
 - Prayer life nothing / Never read God's Letter to you (Bible)
- Do Electronics call out to you to give them attention at expense of those around you?
- Is internet Social Media your major source of human interaction?
- Does the upkeep of your toys rob you of Money and Time?
- Is your lifestyle causing deeper debt?
- Do your Toys have time more than your Family?
- Are you completely present when:
 - Playing with your kids?
 - Loving your spouse?
 - Talking with you friends?
 - The work you do?
- Are you a "Giver" or do you just Accumulate?
- Are you addicted to Amazon?
- Do all your clothes fit in your closet?
- What's on your dining room table right now? Can you FIND your dinning Table?
- Do you get tired just thinking about what it will take to unclutter your home

I cannot make rules or lay down principles

- Everybody has to find their own way
- What do you give up and how much do you give up

Just getting rid of things does NOT make us MORE SPIRITUAL

Just Living “Simple” will NOT draw us CLOSER TO GOD

- It's when we Seek God and His Kingdom First

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

Won't happen over night... We LEARN as Paul did

“I have learned the secret of how to be content.”

- There's a Process to it / A learning curve

There're some things you have to do, AND it takes practice...



#1 One simple step to take **Stop envying what other people have**

- If you want to be content with what you have, stop complaining about what you lack

(Ad. Make your garage the envy of your neighborhood.)



#2 Get in the Habit of **Giving stuff away on a regular basis**

- Not just the stuff that is broken, outdated, or the clothing that is torn for the rummage sale

- Give away something you still need. Maybe you'll replace it eventually

- Give away something you need to somebody who needs it more, and who does not have a chance to get it on his or her own



#3 **Before you Buy anything** (especially something big) **Ask yourself:**

“Am I buying this for its utility or for the sake of my own status?”

- That is such a powerful one because the clothes we wear, the car that we drive, the kind of phone, we go for the expensive and the

flashy because we really want to tell people, or show people, how important we are, or how successful.



#4 When you see Ads making ridiculous claims about what this product will do for you **Get into the habit of laughing out loud at Certain Ads**

- Let our children hear their parents laugh at what a silly claim this is
- This is not where happiness or where our hearts should be
- So, Laugh those Ads into derision

Last



#5 Straight from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

“Consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. Look at the creation around you”

Look at the beauty that God has built into the world

- Recognize that beauty is greater than any Stuff you might accumulate
- Creation properly puts us in our place and lets us realize what is really important and what really is not.

What is really important, is being after the heart of God!

[Matthew 6.21 NLT]

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be

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[Matthew 6.31-33 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. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”

PRAYER / FASTING / SIMPLICITY