



# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLES •

SIMPLICITY MATTHEW 6:19-21, 24 • 8/20/2023

## MAIN POINT

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The spiritual discipline of simplicity can help us as followers of Christ to keep first things first - Jesus and His Kingdom.

## INTRODUCTION

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When you think of the spiritual disciplines, is simplicity one that comes to mind readily? Why or why not?

What's an area of your life that is complex or cluttered right now? How could simplifying this part of your life change your whole life for the better?

**How do you think Jesus modeled the discipline of simplicity for us?**

*“To be simple is to fix one’s eye solely on the simple truth of God at a time when all concepts are being confused, distorted, and turned upside-down.”*

*-Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

## **UNDERSTANDING**

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**Read Matthew 6:19–21 and v.24.**

Why do you think Jesus discourages us from accumulating treasures on earth? Does v. 24 provide an answer?

Does this mean we aren't to have any possessions at all, or do you think Jesus means something else for us, His followers?

What are heavenly riches, and how do we store them up?

**Read 1 Timothy 6:6–8**

How does simplicity as a way of life apply to more than just possessions and wealth?

What do you think Paul means by "godliness with contentment?"

PLEASE REFER TO THE COMMENTARY SECTION FOR A DEEPER LOOK AT THESE VERSES AND THEIR MEANINGS.

## APPLICATION

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If you were to take a step towards simplifying your life, what might be a simple first step for you?

What do you think might be some of the gifts or benefits of practicing the discipline of simplicity?

Richard Foster describes the discipline of simplicity this way:

*"Always remember that simplicity is both a discipline and a grace. It is a discipline because we are called to do something. Simplicity does not just fall on our heads. We are to take up a consciously chosen course of action that involves both group and individual life. It is also a grace: a grace because the life that comes from our efforts is given to us by God. We know this by experience, for the results are always far in excess of the effort we put in. The life which simplicity brings is a supernatural gift to be graciously received. "*

Simplicity creates margins and space and openness in our lives. It shows good stewardship of our limited resources. It offers us the opportunity to celebrate the present moment. Simplicity asks us to let go of the tangle of wants so we can receive the simple gifts of life in Christ that cannot be taken away.

Freedom is not found in having and doing, but in keeping God and his will first in our heart.

Jesus wants us to know that we don't need all the things or experiences we think we do. What we really need is to keep first things first—Jesus and his kingdom. Life becomes much simpler when one thing matters most.

As you seek to grow in the spiritual practice of simplicity, the following is a list that Adele Calhoun recommends. She says that the practice of simplicity includes:

- 1) assessing the things and activities that keep life convoluted, complicated, and confusing; working to simplify these things
- 2) setting priorities that flow from loving God above all else
- 3) downsizing possessions
- 4) cutting back on shopping and discretionary spending
- 5) eating simple foods
- 6) enjoying simple pleasures that require no expense
- 7) removing distractions and preoccupation with things

*And here are some of the resulting God-given fruits:*

- 1) living an uncluttered life
- 2) becoming clearer, more distilled as a person
- 3) creating more space in your life for loving and serving God
- 4) using simple, honest speech without dissembling and double meanings
- 5) experiencing freedom from envy and entitlement
- 6) being able to let go
- 7) staking your identity in God's love, not accumulations and possessions

## PRAYER

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Dear Jesus, help us to live an uncomplicated, uncluttered life like You did. A life with plenty of margin to enjoy being fully present with others and with You because we are not preoccupied with accumulating, accomplishing, or collecting accolades. Show us this week, Holy Spirit what we can do as individuals to unclutter our lives to make more room for You. Help us to grow less and less dependent on the things of this world to define us and more and more reliant upon You and Your Spirit.

## COMMENTARY

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**Matthew 6:19–21, 24** *From the Believer's Bible Commentary Copyright © 1989, 1990, 1992, 1995, 2016 by William MacDonald.*

6:19, 20 In verses 19–21 Jesus contravenes all human advice to provide for a financially secure future. When He says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,” He is indicating that there is no security in material things. Any type of material treasure on earth can be either destroyed by elements of nature (moth or rust) or stolen by thieves. Jesus says that the only investments not subject to loss are treasures in heaven.

6:21 This radical financial policy is based on the underlying principle that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. If your money is in a safe-deposit box, then your heart and desire are also there. If your treasures are in heaven, your interests will be centered there. This teaching forces us to decide whether Jesus meant what He said. If He did, then we face the question, “What are we going to do with our earthly treasures?” If He didn’t, then we face the question, “What are we going to do with our Bible?”

### P. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON (6:24)

The impossibility of living for God and for money is stated here in terms of masters and slaves. No one can serve two masters. One will inevitably take precedence in his loyalty and obedience. So it is with God and mammon. They present rival claims and a choice must be made. Either we must put God first and reject the rule of materialism, or we must live for temporal things and refuse God’s claim on our lives.

## 1 Timothy 6:6-8

6:6 Just as the previous verse gave a false definition of gain, so this verse gives the true meaning of the word. The combination of godliness with contentment is great gain. Godliness without contentment would give a one-sided testimony. Contentment without godliness would not be distinctively Christian at all. But to have real godliness and at the same time to be satisfied with one's personal circumstances is more than money can buy.

6:7 This chapter bears a close resemblance to the teachings of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Verse 7 reminds us of His instruction that we should trust our heavenly Father for the supply of our needs.

There are three times in life when we have empty hands—at birth, at the time we come to Jesus, and at death. This verse reminds us of the first and the last. We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.

Before Alexander the Great died, he said: “When I am dead, carry me forth on my bier, with my hands not wrapped in cloth, but laid outside, so that all may see that they are empty.” Bates comments on this:

Yes, those hands which once wielded the proudest scepter in the world; which once held the most victorious sword; which once were filled with silver and gold; which once had power to save or to sign away life, were now EMPTY.<sup>21</sup>

6:8 Contentment consists of satisfaction with the basic necessities of life. Our heavenly Father knows that we need food and covering and has promised to supply these. Most of an unbeliever's life revolves around food and clothing. The Christian should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and God will see that he does not lack the essentials of life.

The word translated clothing here means covering and can include a place to live as well as clothes to wear. We should be content with food, clothing, and a place to live.