



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Discipline of Simplicity (Matthew 6:25-33)

FEBRUARY 17, 2016

Dave DePue / PO Box 1775, Topeka, KS 66603 / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

*Our culture uses lust to drive us into bondage. Simplicity is freedom. Bondage produces anxiety and fear. Simplicity brings joy and balance¹. “God made man simple; man’s complex problems are of his own devising” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Simplicity is an inward discipline that results in an outward life style: A lifestyle that is out of step with what is modeled by mass media. **What poor choices are driven by ambition, fashion, or to impress others?***

INTRODUCTION

A shallow belief is little defense against the force of culture empowered by modern media. We covet in the name of ambition; we hoard and call it prudence, are greedy and call it industry. Those in the counterculture merely reverse outward appearances with no inner transformation. Their folly leads in death (Proverbs 1:32). **Have you observed some caught up in their act?**

COMMANDMENTS ONE AND TWO

Deuteronomy 5:7-9 **You shall have no other gods before Me.⁸ ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol...’** *’You shall not worship them or serve them;’*

Jesus taught against covetousness, the materialism of His day. It is condemned as a rival god. **“No servant can serve two masters....”** (Luke 16:13). Yet God did not prescribe an austere life. Moses was told to lead the Israelites to **“...a land flowing with milk and honey”** (Exodus 3:8). Contrast the living standard of the USA with a neighbor to the south or of Israel and their neighbor, Jordan. The Discipline of Simplicity sets us free to receive God’s abundant provision and, as a steward, share our excess. **Have you seen some consume their excess, sharing little or some with little, bitter that others have more?**

CONTENTMENT

Philippians 4:12a **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....**

Simplicity is radically different than asceticism. The ascetic renounces possessions, striving for intellectual perfection or purer contemplation. No room for God!

FIRST THINGS

Matthew 6:25 & 33 **“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on....³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”**

Our focus must be on God first. This removes our anxiety, and other things can be given their proper attention. God owns it all, and we are stewards for a season (Matthew 25:14-28). We are accountable for management, He brings the increase. A good worker seeks favor from the owner, not the crowd. **Consider how God would evaluate your use of time, talent, and material resources?**

Tips for the outward expression of simplicity:²

1. Buy things for their usefulness rather than to impress others. Do you have things in excess?
2. Reject things that are addictive, things which control you. What would be difficult for you to forgo?
3. Develop a habit of giving; de-accumulate! Have you experienced the joy of sharing abundance with another?
4. Refuse to update or add new stuff! Will you practice your inner strength by rejecting the next marketing pitch?
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning, possessing them. Can you find the joy of sharing, borrowing, visiting?
6. Appreciate God’s creation. How often do you walk, listen to the birds, and marvel in the rich Kansas colors?
7. Avoid paying interest/usury (Romans 13:8). Can you envision the freedom of being completely out of debt?
8. Talk plainly and don’t tell half-truths. Is your “Yes,” “Yes” and your “No,” “No” (Matthew 5:37)?
9. Don’t participate in the oppression of others. Do you avoid business, association, policies that enslave?
10. Avoid settling for “good” rather than “best”. Can distractions divert your focus from God and His kingdom?

A PRAYER

Father God: Help me keep life simple and uncluttered. Let me hear your still, small, voice as You whisper wisdom for the hour and the day (1Samuel 3:10). I pray in Your Son’s Name. Amen.

¹ Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline. (Harper) 1998. p79.

² Ibid pgs 91-94.