

A Biblical Pursuit of the Simplified Life

A Life of Simplicity Requires Less Internal Complexity

Opening thoughts

- We are spring cleaning our lives.

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

- If you are a complex person you won't experience a life of simplicity.
- Complexity begins within.
- Psalmist wrote, "Be still and know that I am God" [Ps. 46:10]
- This speaks of an inner stillness – inner peace, inner content-ness, the content-ness of your soul.
- It begins with freedom – "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom".

Ephesians 4 [Internal house cleaning]

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Testimony – Scott Barrett Video clip plumblin - Men's healing conf. May 20th

Acts 2

37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

KEY TEXT

James 4 - The battle within [NLT]

1What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you? 2You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't

have what you want is that you don't ask God for it. 3And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong--you want only what will give you pleasure.

4You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can't be a friend of God. 5What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, jealously longs for us to be faithful? 6He gives us more and more strength to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble."

7So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. 8Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. 9Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. 10When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.

1. Don't confuse simplicity with easy. The human condition has suffering and adversity.
 - James begins with the issue of undergoing trials.
 - Rick Warren's interview:
2. Admit that you are in a "battle within". It is a battle over your soul. [Vs. 1]
 - Evaluate the motives of your heart. [3When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.]
 - What is driving your thoughts, attitudes, anger, and resentments?
3. Make a choice for freedom and ask God for help. - "Get rid of all bitterness, rage & anger" [7Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Come near to God and he will come near to you.]
 - Sin cycles – "Ground Hog Day" – It keeps repeating itself until it leads to death – homicide or suicide.
 - Romans 6: ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - 2 Peter 2: ²² "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."
4. Recognize that you have captive to the world's way of dealing with pain. (i.e. self medication, over eating, over shopping, over stimulation, unrighteous sexual gratification) [4b...don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.]
 - Romans 12 - Don't conform, but be transformed...
 - John 15:19 [We are in it but not of it] – "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."
5. Repentance begins with humility and brokenness – A contrite heart.

7Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- Make the choice to submit your sorrow to God – “Get rid of all bitterness, rage & anger” – Sin by you and against you.
 - Difference between regret, remorse and true repentance. They all begin with sorrow and are often accompanied by tears.

2 Corinthians 7

9yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

- A broken and contrite heart – The broken soil.
 - Laughing off the world won't work – you've got to come to brokenness. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.
- Confession - Clean out the dark closets of your soul. Open every concealed hiding place. The devil thrives in darkness.
 - Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
 - James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
- Repentance – The full impact of ones sins & the act of turning way from them and to God's unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness.
 - Psalm 66
16 Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.
17 I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. 18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; 19 but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.
20 Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!
- Freedom – Peace that passes all understanding – Contentment of the soul

John 8

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”... “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.