

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – December 6, 2020

Theme: Spiritual Discipline for Christian Growth Topic: Spiritual Discipline: Simplicity

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 1:12 -14; Luke 12: 13-34; Jeremiah 9: 23-24

Key verse: 2 Corinthians 1: 12 *“For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.” (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: A popular understanding and definition of simplicity is “*the absence of luxury, pretentiousness, or ornament, etc.*” No wonder a mention of ‘Simplicity’, tends to evoke images of less clutter, either of material things and or of activities. Interestingly, the dictionary definition of ‘Simplicity’ also includes freedom from complexity, intricacy, or division into parts; freedom from deceit or guile; sincerity; naturalness.” The word translated as ‘Simplicity’ in our key verse comes from the Greek word ‘*Haplotēs*.’ This word is used 8 times in the New Testament to mean ‘Generosity’ as in Romans 12:8; ‘Singleness of heart’ as in 2 Corinthians 11:3; and simplicity or sincerity as in 2 Corinthians 1:12. The Amplified Bible translates ‘*Haplotēs*’ as ‘pure motive’ From all the above instances, it is clear that simplicity is deeper than our external physical conditions or environment.

1. **(a) What does the different connotations of ‘Simplicity’ tell us about simplicity as a spiritual discipline (b) Going by this dictionary definition, what is the possibility that someone with a hectic work situation and or extravagant lifestyle could be living simply? (c) How does Jesus’ warnings in Luke 12: 13-34 further help our understanding of the discipline of simplicity?**

Apart from being beyond our physical environment, simplicity also needs a clear purpose for it to qualify as a spiritual discipline. And that purpose must transcend self and life itself. That clear purpose was a beacon for Paul. No wonder Paul will open all but one of his letters with, “... *from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus...*” (NLT). This purpose guided his life, as we read in 2 Corinthians 1:12 “*For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God...*” Without such a clear sense of purpose, one can easily be sidelined by short-term distractions and pleasures. So, when Jesus was asked to intervene in a case of injustice, He could reply “*Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own... Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God*” (Luke 12:15, 21)

2. **(a) What does Jeremiah 9:23-24 and Luke 12:21 teach us about what should be the heart and purpose of our lives and endeavours? (b) How do you think this purpose forms the basis for the discipline of simplicity? (c) With this in mind, how would you define simplicity?**

Pursuing simplicity is spiritual when one’s purpose is spiritual. A person is simple when the principal aspiration is to be all that God desires for him or her. Jesus makes the point in Luke 12:15 and 21 that any attainments in this life is pointless if it is not centred in God. But it does not come without effort. Jesus illustrates the efforts needed to practice simplicity in Luke 12:22-33 with key words like “*That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life... And don’t be concerned about what to eat ... don’t be afraid...*” (Luke 12:22,29,32 NLT). Rather, we are to do more of what really matters – seek the Kingdom of God above all else.

3. **(a) According to Luke 12:22-30, how do everyday life issues like what to eat or what to wear negate a life of simplicity? (b) How does remembering my value to God (Luke 12:24) help in focusing my life on what really matters to God? (c) How else does laying up treasures in heaven help in a life of simplicity?**

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, Your purpose for our existence is to pursue Your kingdom and Your righteousness. Help us to focus on doing just that and watch as other things fall into place. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*