



## The Simple Life

*From time to time, we get tired of the everyday rush, the deadlines, and the proverbial rat race and we begin to long for a simpler life — and that is what we call it: ‘the simple life.’ We want less work, fewer obligations, fewer bills to pay, less traffic, less stress, and a slower pace. We don’t want to worry about overzealous regulators, whether or not someone is tracking every move we make online or even in the real world, and we don’t want to worry about saying something that has suddenly become politically incorrect. We like things to be simple and straightforward, without a lot of hoops to jump through to accomplish what should be quick, easy, and... well, simple.*

But something keeps getting in the way. Something keeps us from living a simple life and keeps us from doing things simply. Something keeps *complicating* life and making things not-so-simple. That ‘something’ is our own desires.

Our desires for pleasure often complicate life by filling up our schedules with the pursuit of those pleasures, whether it be in pursuit of fine food, entertainment, or more ‘stuff.’ It takes time to find that restaurant that offers the food we seek and presents it as we like it; it takes time to watch movies, listen to music, and sit through all those football and basketball games; and it takes time to shop for that big-screen LED WiFi-enabled HDTV and the home theater system that complements it. And not only does the pursuit of all these things fill up our schedule, our schedules are also filled with work to pay for the pursuit of those pleasures. We work 8-10 hours each day, leaving not much time to go pursue those things we seek, and we stress when, for all we do to afford those things, there doesn’t seem to be enough money at the end of the day to pay for all we seek.

Maybe we should consider what someone once said about such pursuits:

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.”

— Frederick Koenig

But the road to a simple life is often impeded by our desire for the not-so-simple life, in spite of what we may say out loud or just to ourselves. More often than not, it is only our desires that stand in the way of that simple life we claim we want, and we never seem to understand that getting to that simple life means giving up some things we think we ‘must’ have.

Unfortunately, even in spiritual matters, there are many who seek something simpler than what they find in their search for spiritual truths and in their efforts to serve the Lord from the heart, finding that ‘religion’ is not so simple anymore. They are led to believe that their salvation is something beyond their capacity to understand, or they are convinced the faithful life of a disciple as something beyond anyone’s ability. While many people have over-complicated these things by their own imaginations and personal beliefs, it is sadder still that so many have been convinced by religious leaders or by those opposed to God’s ways [an ironic association]. We shouldn’t be surprised that those opposed to God would try to convince us of these things, but religious leaders in some denominations teach that God’s ways are ‘mysterious’ or beyond the common man’s comprehension, and that we all need special help in understanding it [from them, of course], that we must sacrifice a great portion of our material possessions [which, not surprisingly, goes to them or to the church of which they are a part, and its greatest beneficiary], and that we must constantly seek their guidance in everything we do.

Don’t believe for a *second* that God’s ways are so complicated! When Jesus walked this earth and taught the message of salvation, “*the common people heard Him gladly*” (Mark 12:37); when His disciples in the early

### Worth Quoting

“Reduce the complexity of life by eliminating the needless wants of life, and the labors of life reduce themselves.” — Edwin Way Teale



“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Matthew 6:19-21

Let God’s word be  
the FINAL word.



### The Lord’s Church at Glendale Schedule of Services

#### Sunday:

Morning Bible Classes ..... 9:00 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 9:40 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Classes ..... 7:30 PM

*I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.” —*

**Psa. 122:1**

#### Elders:

Daryl Strickler  
Melvin Thompson  
Tad Thompson

#### Deacons:

Bob Lewis  
Sylvester McCalpine

#### Evangelist:

Steven Harper

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church taught that same message, and people were converted to Christ, we find that the makeup of the church was largely the lesser educated and uneducated masses. Paul notes this fact when said of those in Corinth, “*Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards*” (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:26). That wasn’t an insult; he was simply stating the fact that not many of those who were converted to Christ were highly educated according to human wisdom and human standards. But they understood the gospel message enough to believe and to live as disciples! While they certainly had their problems at Corinth, it was never a matter of not being able to understand God’s ways; more often than not, it was their fleshly desires and fleshly thinking that got in the way of doing what they already knew to do.

If our spiritual lives are to be uncomplicated, we must take inventory of ourselves and see what needs to be eliminated. Sometimes, it may be that we need to remove complicated explanations for what we believe and simply stick to what the Bible says; sometimes, we need to eliminate complicated rituals that did not come from God at all, but are the result of centuries of man’s additions to the simple plan of God; sometimes, we make our spiritual lives more complicated by earthly relationships that should not be (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:14-16) and we end up trying to justify ourselves by convoluted, complicated hypothetical stories and explanations that only confuse us and others.

If we find that our lives are too complicated, maybe we need to eliminate the desires for earthly things so we might be able to focus on the spiritual. Paul reminds us we must “*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you*” (Col. 3:5), and in the place of these earthly desires, we must “*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth*” (v. 2). When we make spiritual things, rather than earthly things, our goal and our desire, it simplifies our lives immediately and in the future. No more will we be fretting over whether to choose God’s ways or the way of the world; the simple spiritual life will always choose God’s ways! Temptations will no longer be tempting to us, we will not get depressed when we see the worldly ones enjoying their worldliness (cf. Psa. 73:1-17), and we will not hesitate to put sin away from us if we find it in our lives (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9). These things become difficult and our lives become complicated only when we try to walk the line between righteousness and worldliness and try to please men and God at the same time. Save yourself a lot of trouble and simplify your spiritual life; no matter how hard you try or how sincere you believe it possible, it can’t be done (Matt. 6:24).

Within God’s word, we find only a few times where the writer speaks of *simplicity* in reference to the message he brought or the life he lived, and in each case the meaning was that of *singularity*; and, really, that is what simplifying your spiritual life comes down to — singleness of mind. To please God and eliminate the complications of our spiritual lives, we must focus on one thing and turn away from the many things that are out there that can so easily distract us from our goal. Let us heed the words of a wise man in this:

“*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*” (Heb. 12:1, 2) — Steven Harper

## Seek And You Will Find

Jesus tells us, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*” (Matt. 7:7)

The promise of receiving what we ask, finding what we seek, and doors being opened are there for us, but what are you asking for — what do you seek?

The psalmist [David, a “man after God’s own heart”] tells us he sought after the Lord (Psa. 63:1), His word (119:45) and to dwell in the house of the Lord always (27:4). This was in contrast to the wicked, who did not seek the Lord (10:4) nor His word (119:155). One could expect an eternal reward, one the wrath of the Lord.

The Christian is admonished to seek the heavenly things and not the things of this earth (Col. 3:1, 2), the praise of the Lord and not the praise of men (Gal. 1:10/ Matt. 6:2). Friends, what we seek is what we make our priority, and if you are truly seeking the Lord (diligently, Heb. 11:6) it will be evident to those around you without you even telling them.

Many claim to be seeking the Lord, but it is not an honest search. Seek Him, yes, but make sure you are seeking to please Him, and not self (cf. John 6:26).