

Margin Through Simplicity
November 6 and 13, 2016
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:19-21 NLT)

When we "store up treasures here on earth," they become the focus of our time and attention. Ultimately, all the stuff and the activity surrounding the accumulation of more and more captures "the desires of [our] heart". And the Bible makes it very clear that whatever has our heart has us. Where does your treasure lie?

Digging Deeper

Simplicity is found when...

We use the proper **COMPASS** to guide our lives.

- Psalm 17:8a NIV says, "Keep me as the apple of Your eye;" Or in the Hebrew translation, the pupil of His eye. The pupil is the part of the eye that allows light to enter. Isn't it amazing that we are the apple of God's eye? He calls on His children to shine His light in every dark place. Talk about the ways in which seeking God above all else can provide an eternal perspective and enable us to walk along God's predetermined path for each of us.
- Is God the apple of your eye? With our eyes firmly fixed on the One who holds it all, our feet will begin to naturally move according to His direction. How can we use God's Word to navigate our steps (literally and figuratively)?

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:33 NLT)

We learn to be **CONTENT** with what we have.

- Most of us living in America have all that we need and a lot of what we want. We are far removed from the plight of those who have very little. We sometimes need to be reminded of all the simple blessings we take for granted. Gratitude changes your attitude. Break our hearts for what breaks Yours Lord. What are some things we can learn about living a simple life by looking at Jesus' example? Would acquiescing to any of His ways cause a change in the way you spend your time or money?
- An uncluttered life is a simple life. A simple life provides a clean canvas on which to create a masterpiece for our Heavenly Father. What kinds of clutter occupy the empty spaces in your heart and home? Are these things preventing you from achieving margin through simplicity?

Godliness with contentment is great gain...If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. (1 Timothy 6:6,8 NIV)

We **CUT** some things out.

- Pruning is a necessary process to allow for new growth. It seems a shame to cut away a rose bud that hasn't yet bloomed. But if we trust that the God who created the entire bush has a bigger plan beyond that one rose, we cut and wait in wonder for a new development. Spend some time praying for God's direction on what things or activities might need pruning in your life. How could the process of removing distractions (good or bad) help bring you closer to God?

Everything is permitted. But not everything is good for us. (1 Corinthians 10:23a NIRV)

We resist the temptation to hoard and **CULTIVATE** instead.

- Have you ever watched that show Hoarders? These people have created a deep, emotional connection to stuff and have somehow allowed these things to take over their lives. Anything that controls you, owns you. Read Philippians 4:10-13. How can learning to be content in any situation cultivate a generous heart and remove our desire to acquire more and more of the things that weigh us down?

Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. (1 Timothy 6:17-18 NLT)

Conclusion

Long before Lynyrd Skynyrd sang about it, Jesus was a simple kind of man. Being Lord, He could have lived any way He wanted, but He chose to live a life of simplicity, not even having a place to lay His head. And He instructed His disciples to "go and do likewise". In the Sermon on the Mount, He told His listeners not to worry about even food or clothing. When Christ sent the Twelve out in ministry, He said to travel light. The Bible does not suggest we are to live like a king, but to live like the King. The simplicity, sacrifice, and servanthood of Jesus should be our way of life.