
THE FREEDOM OF SIMPLICITY

The Gospel simplicity is very liberating to the Christian who embraces it and makes it a part of his daily life. Our world offers many things to improve our lives, give us more comfort, gain us a better name, and serve our fleshly desires. These things are costly and many times add complexity to our lives. They can bring a level of stress to acquire them or maintain them. They often beg for more and better things just like them.

The Bible calls us to contentment. This is at the very core of Gospel simplicity. First Timothy 6:6 says, *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* Hebrews 13:5 says, *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Contentment liberates us from covetousness and the constant drive to get newer things and nicer property features. Contentment empowers us to make our possessions last and wear them out before replacing them. It enables us to resist the pull of the advertisements we receive. It gives us the wisdom to know when to pursue a purchase and when to use what we have.

Another Biblical command that produces simplicity is the command to humility. 1 Peter 5:5-6 says, *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* A humble heart does not seek attention. He does not need a certain class of vehicle to haul his ego around. He only needs sufficient transportation. True humility frees our hearts of self-seeking interests in so many ways and so many places.

Jesus said, *Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth* (Luke 12:15). True living is something deeper than the stuff we own. True life is in a relationship with Jesus Christ, obedience to the Word, and relationships with others. That diesel pickup truck will rust out, and newer models will be the rave. That fancy house will become dated and out of style. But the child of God who walks with God and loves others will be enjoying true living with God as His Father, with family as his heritage, and with the brotherhood as a rich blessing to him.

Happy is the family who embraces Gospel simplicity, for they shall experience the joy of the Lord and a measure of financial freedom. They will frugally use their resources to make them last. They will learn to save. They will love to give and bless others. They'll know the joy of hard work and chores done cheerfully. Happy are those children who can enjoy a simple peanut butter and jelly sandwich and homemade desserts in their lunch box.

Blessed is the couple who understands that real values on their wedding day are much deeper than the color scheme, the fabric chosen, and the decorations on the reception tables. Gospel simplicity frees us from the grip of wanting to have a nicer wedding than the last couple and liberates us from the bondage of measuring ourselves by others. It sets us free to focus on and treasure the real lasting values of a day of such importance. Values like the Word of God, personal commitment, true love, good friends who helped us along in life, and family relationships will hold our attention.

Happy is the businessman who chooses to limit his business to a size that he can reasonably handle. He chooses to honor God above chasing the "almighty dollar." He uses commerce as a way to reach souls, demonstrate the kingdom of God, and secure resources to bless others. Free is the man who keeps his family and his church a priority over his work.

Free indeed are the youth who learn that social acceptance is not the first priority in their life. They know the things they own are not the defining points of who they are. They understand that character and Christian life are worth way more than charm, wit, and personal beauty. Happy is the young man who does not need a new cell phone every year. At peace is the young girl who doesn't always need a new dress of the latest fabric or the sweater that is in style.

Blessed is the congregation that has people and families who have chosen the ways of Gospel simplicity. This congregation will grow. People will be attracted to this peace, this freedom, this obedience to God above self-seeking interests. They will experience freedom from rivalry and jealousy. There won't be the struggle to rise on the totem pole of fame and status. Homes will open their doors to seekers of truth. Deeds of kindness and words of love will flow freely in this group. The youth group will welcome their visitors, the rich and the poor. And God will dwell in their midst and lead them in the pursuit of eternal values.

~ Luke Bennetch