**Simplicity**

Define Spiritual Disciplines - Spiritual Disciplines are not the desired end product of spiritual life, but rather they are a means to an end. They are the intentional development of authentic Spiritual life and intimacy with God.

**Ecc 7.29** - This only have I found: God created mankind upright, but they have gone in search of many schemes.”

The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle.

* What does this mean?
* Example: Guy on Sharp top – Insecure, yet life style of boastfulness, arrogance, brashness

What would a simple life style look like?

* Desire for popularity gone
* No more jealousy over others possessions, content with what you have
* Being able to enjoy what you have
* Detachment from insignificant things in our lives

Two extremes that fight against simplicity:

1. Love of money-possessions-status

**Heb 13.5** - Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you;

never will I forsake you.”

1. Asceticism - going to great lengths to avoid all forms of self-indulgence or self-denial?

**Phil 4.10-13** - I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have *learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want*. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

How do we avoid the extremes?

**Matt 6.25-33** - “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But ***seek first his kingdom*** and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God?

* *Kierkegard says, “becoming nothing before God, learn to keep silent; in this silence is the beginning, which is, first to seek God’s Kingdom.”*
* God is to be the focus of our efforts, all we do, have, posses, stand for, believe, want, hope for, dream for, all we are is to bring us closer to God.

Simplicity has nothing to do with abundance of possessions or lack of possessions, it is a mind set or trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us and to follow that path.

Inward reality of simplicity is freedom from Anxiety.

Three inner attitudes:

1. Receive what we have as a gift of God.
   1. “…Give us this day our daily bread”
   2. How much of my life do I receive as a gift of God? What parts do I hold onto with the assumption that I have a right to do what I want with them because I worked hard for them and earned or acquired them by my efforts!
2. It is God’s business, not ours, to care for hat we have
   1. Do I trust everything in my life to God’s care and protection! How much time and energy do I spend worrying about what might happen to people, things, or circumstances in my life! What patterns of thought or behavior in my life arise out of an anxious attempt to control the unknown or eliminate uncertainties?
3. Make what we have available to others
   1. Are you free to make my possessions and resources available to others? Or do you cling to them in fear that sharing means losing? What are you willing to share, and what are you not willing to share? Where do you exhibit a selfishness that God wants you to let go?

Outward Expressions

1. Buy things for their usefulness, not their status
2. Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you – Refuse to be a slave to anything but God
   1. What is the first thing you do when you get home from school?
   2. Facebook, Instagram, games
3. Develop a habit of giving things away – or throwing them away if they are useless
4. Refuse to be propagandized by modern gadgetry
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them
6. Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation
7. When you are older, avoid using credit to buy things, with the exception of a house, If you cannot pay cash for it you can do without it
8. Be honest in your speech and actions, avoid drama and the people who create it. Decide what is right, according to God and do that, not what you think people would approve of
9. Avoid anything that puts someone down, oppresses people, or creates controversy
10. Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the Kingdom of God