



Spiritual Formation for Individuals and Groups

# SIMPLICITY

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## EXPERIENCE ONE / *Seeking Simplicity*

### 1 DID YOU WANT AN EASY LIFE?



The tag line of *Real Simple* magazine is “Life Made Easier.” No wonder it’s one of the top forty best-selling magazines in the United States! Goodness knows, we often feel the need for an easier life.

Maybe the *Real Simple* people are behind the “easy button” available at Staples office supply stores. A friend of mine actually has one that he keeps on his desk. Whenever things at the office get hard, he presses the large red push-button, which then loudly proclaims, “That was easy!” Maybe you can think of one or two projects that could use an easy button right now. Even if it doesn’t accomplish anything, it might make you feel better to push the button!

As we embark on a journey toward simplicity, is that what we most need? For life to get easier? Is that how life becomes better and more vibrant? According to Staples and *Real Simple*, perhaps. And the appeal is certainly there.

- What contributes to the stress level in your life these days?

The complexity of my relationships, my disorganized pantry and garage, my work commitments, and the overall complexity of life these days all seem to stand in direct opposition to a more manageable, easier life. Now, to be fair, I have read my share of *Real Simple*, exorcised (and sometimes accessorized) the unnecessary junk from my share of closets and experienced the joys of decorating with white. But I have also discovered that there is a deeper and truer path to simplicity that stems from a far more interior place—a place deep within my own soul. This place is not cluttered with dusty Christmas gifts or wrinkled laundry; it's cluttered with false versions of myself.

The interior path of simplicity is one I must walk if I want to live out my days in deep alignment with the person God has created me to be. I need to get rid of the false versions of myself that are cluttering my soul, because I've learned that, from a spiritual perspective, the enemy of simplicity is not complexity at all, but rather duplicity.

If you're like me, the very mention of the word *duplicity* makes you more than a little bit uncomfortable. It's not exactly on the "mostly okay" list of vices! *Duplicity* is used to describe double-dealing, two-faced, sneaking-on-your-taxes kinds of people. Surely not *I!* But we'll explore together how the temptation toward duplicity can and often does cause us—all of us—to live from various false versions of our true self. Sometimes we may be aware of this process, but often we're not.

The path toward biblical simplicity calls us, instead, to a single-minded pursuit of God from which everything else flows. This interior simplicity yields great personal integrity and a deep alignment between who we are, who God is and, thus, how we live. We are focused on what matters. Experiencing freedom regardless of the complexity and degree of difficulty in our lives. It starts with facing duplicity.

- How do you respond to the prospect of finding duplicity lurking in your soul?

The current stress level in your life, and now the wondering about duplicity, could threaten your sense of well-being and hope. I want to remind you of God's heart toward us. In the Bible God conveys great sympathy for the tremendous burdens we often bear. They are by no means a phenomenon of modern-day life. Jesus understood these burdens, experienced his own burdens and spoke to his followers, both ancient and future, about entering into a new way of life:

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:29-30)*

Is he offering us an easy button? Not exactly, but not that far from it either. He is offering a different way to live—a way that is readily available, though few seem to experience it.

Read Jesus' words again from *The Message*, a popular Bible para-

