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Lent

A New Rhythm: Part 5
Simplicity - NOTES

Jesus could have used the example of a car if he was preaching in Mitchell today. Don't be anxious about what you drive...

Simplicity. A rhythm that encompasses all of life. That's our rhythm today.

Simplicity is an Inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle.

To attempt outward rhythms alone or even first is **legalism**.

1 Thes 4:9-12 NLT

9But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another. 10Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more.

11Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. 12Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

-Inwardly, we are a mess of competing desires and attachments

As Richard Foster puts it, "it is time we awaken to the fact that conformity to a sick culture is to be sick ourselves."

We've baptized covetousness as "ambition" - hiding wealth away we call "prudence" and greed has become "industry".

asceticism which is not God's plan for you. Asceticism is NOT simplicity. Asceticism renounces possessions. Simplicity accepts possessions in their proper priority.

Counterculture is only a **reaction** to the present state of things.

- we need **Kingdom-culture**.

So what is Kingdom Culture? And how does it relate to a rhythm of simplicity in our lives?

the Bible is much more than a counter-cultural reaction - the Bible is arguably *the* account of the "original" truly human culture - the way God intended it.

1. All wealth is God's wealth, because "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it"
Psalm 24:1

Was it followed well? Hardly! But that's not a reason to ignore the obvious Biblical worldview being taught to both the ancient Israelites and to use today.

2. The Old Testament also addresses the transitional state we're in - halfway through the story of redemption of creation. Or a better way to put it – we live in an already/not yet creation. The Old *is passing* away, yet new creation is *here!* – it is for anyone in Christ. But we're also part of the broken order.

Psalm 62:9-10 says...

Our lives are like a vapor in relation to the passing age – and culture that we still live in.

Riches in this world don't last, if we set our heart on them, we are risking letting a dying commodity drag us down with it.

-we need to choose the real culture of the kingdom instead of this "man made alternative" of greed

-to return to the kingdom culture – in which God owns everything -everything is crown land (HIS crown!) - and we are stewards, is to begin the rhythm of simplicity

Inward Vs. Outward

Simplicity does not start with **outward** practices like you quitting your job, giving, etc.

In Paul's words in Thessalonians we read earlier, he talks about their **hearts** before their **actions**.

Simplicity is inward and it begins with LOVE.

(1 Thes 4:9)

"Simplicity" is a description of walking with God - without hinderances, without baggage.

It is not a goal to be checked off - it is a state of being.

Simplicity is... "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness or right-living" - Jesus' words from our reading in Matthew 6:33

-we don't find any of this in ourselves or even in creation – we find it all in the Face of Jesus.

So how can Simplicity become a spiritual rhythm, even my "state-of being" as I follow Christ?

We must remember:

1. **The Truth: Everything we receive is a gift from God. (Js. 1:17, Matthew 5:45)**
2. **The Truth: Caring for what we have is God's business, not ours. (Matt 6:27)**

3. The Truth: Having our good available to others marks simplicity. (Ps 24:1)

Suggestions:

Inward:

1. Have an **ambition** to be still/silent (1 Thes 4:11)
 - a. Let this stillness be a moment when you recall your goal – the Kingdom – life with God.
2. Speech:
Controlling your tongue has an effect on your heart:
-Out of the overflow of your heart your mouth speaks – Luke 6:45
Let your yes be yes and your no be no. (matt 5:37)

Outward: - Not legalistic rules!

Concerning Stuff:

1. What you buy
 - a. Buy things for their usefulness – not prestige
 - b. Buy things that last
2. Develop a habit of giving things away.
 - a. One in, one out. (or if you are just starting – 1 in, two or three out!)
3. Resist being turned into an ATM for big companies with big advertising budgets.
 - a. Advertising in general is basically a huge scam.

Concerning behaviours:

4. Focus on your business – 1 Thes 4:11
5. Work with your hands 1 Thes 4:11 – or better understood – do the task God has given you in life. –