



moms monthly

support encourage share grow

simplicity

What types of things or situations complicate your life?

What does simplicity mean to you?

What advantages might accompany a simple life?

What challenges will you meet as you attempt to simplify?

Simplify your...

Scope: Let's face it: keeping up with the Jones's whether in accumulation or simplification is not healthy. Decide for yourself *why* and *how* you will simplify. What is simple for you may not be simple for someone else. Embrace a personal definition and avoid comparison.

Steps: Becoming overwhelmed with the process of simplifying defeats the purpose. Take manageable steps in the direction of simplicity by setting reasonable goals. It is a process that will evolve and change over time.

Stress: If you can change your commitments or lifestyle to minimize stress, do so. For the inevitable stressors of life,

practice prevention with regular exercise and sleep. Prayer can be a wonderful outlet for daily complications.

Standards: How many of us try to live up to the Martha Stewart culture that dictates a spotless house and homemade, well, everything? So many of our expectations have nothing to do with reality. No one was ever killed by a dust bunny. If you love to bake from scratch then by all means do it. Just lose the guilt when Betty Crocker offers a simple solution.



Strategies: Where parenting is concerned, know what your

big picture goals are for your children. Don't change your methods with the latest fad in parenting. God's truths don't change. Seek out and consistently practice a reliable plan.

"Shoulds": Consider the motivation for your list of obligations. Are they really necessary or could they be simplified? Beware of the role of people-pleasing and false guilt as complicating factors.

Struggles: Ask for help. When you are having a tough time, reach out for some support. Don't let pride get in the way. People are often willing to help when they are aware of a need. Don't carry your burdens alone. Accept the grace that comes through others.



Come, follow me.

Jesus



Coffee Talk

1. How are you learning to be content in your situation?
2. What contentment concerns are you aware of with your kids?
3. What practical choices have you made to nurture contentment?

Why Simplify?

Without proper motivation, simplifying your life may actually seem too complicated. Unless you believe that your efforts have meaning beyond the sorting and purging of possessions you'll easily become discouraged. Your staying power will diminish. But the truth is, there is a Biblical correlation between the quantity of our possessions and the quality of our spiritual lives. It is important that we don't waste ourselves in the pursuit of things that do not satisfy.



Getting rid of the clutter is not about letting go of the things that are meaningful to you. It's about letting go of the things that no longer contribute to your life so you have the time and the energy and the space for the things that do.

Elaine St. James

Simplicity is an outward display of an inward reality. A life with minimal distractions provides a platform for deeper reflection and connection with God. A life with fewer material demands can be the gateway to a life focused on people. Simplicity creates the freedom to make our priorities a reality in day-to-day living. And that should be motivation enough.

If we enter into the simplicity of God we will have an exterior quality of life marked by unity and peace.

Richard J. Foster



mommy moment: Make a list of what you feel are the simple truths of your faith. Consider words like love, grace, peace, forgiveness and hope. You may wish to use these words in your home décor. Nurture your inner simplicity through contemplation of the basics.

This Month With Ourselves:

EDUCATE:

Read Matthew 19: 16-28 and Isaiah 55:1-3. What are we to value in life? How can our stuff get in the way of our souls?

EVALUATE:

Spend some time reminiscing about “golden moments” in your life. Ask questions about those experiences to identify and understand your own view of the simple life: Who kept you company? What was happening? When does the

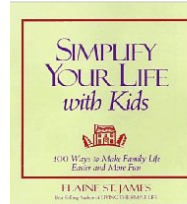
Oh, blessed simplicity, that seizes swiftly what cleverness, tired out in the service of vanity, may grasp but slowly.

Soren Kierkegaard

memory take place? Where were you located? Why was it a memorable time? How can you cultivate similar moments in your life on a more regular basis?

EXPRESS:

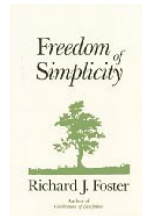
Elaine St. James writes, “Simplifying is a process. It no doubt took you years to build your complicated, high-pressure life. It will take some time to simplify it. You can’t undo it all today. But you can get



started today”. In your journal, respond to the following questions: What is complicating my life right now? How might I begin simplifying? Commit to some specific and practical applications by writing down some action steps and sharing them with a friend.

EXPAND:

If you wish to “find harmony in a complex world” this is a fantastic starting place. Foster gets at the heart of Christian simplicity as a discipline and offers practical challenges to his readers.



family fun: Host a simple gathering for some friends or neighbours. Maybe a “fun in the sun” party with backyard play and make-your-own sundaes. Ask your guests to bring a favourite topping and you provide the ice cream. In general, keep it simple with potluck and easy activities. Remember the focus is time for relationships.



This Month With Our Kids:

MAKE A POINT:

An easy way to teach the art of simplifying is to involve your kids in the process. One easy clutter-busting trick is to remove one item for each item that comes into the house. If you buy new winter boots this year, immediately donate or pass on last year’s boots. This will help the whole family maintain simplicity and order in your home.



MAKE A PROMISE:

Question your decisions about purchases and

activities. Ask each other, “does this really simplify our lives?”. If it complicates things, take a little more time to decide if it is worth adding it to your home or your schedule.

MAKE A PLAN:

Read the Gospel stories about Jesus with your kids. Think about the lifestyle he modeled: What were his priorities? How did he feel about possessions? What types of relationships did he foster? What was his take on solitude? Help them to see that as Christ-followers we are to be like him in the simplicity of his mission to love God and others. Work toward that goal.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:19-20

There are two ways to get enough: one is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less. G.K. Chesterton

Simplicity at Home:

- Solutions:** Solicit the help of a friend with the practical aspects of simplifying.
- Space:** Less is more as far as your home goes. More stuff means more time and maintenance. *If you don't know that it is useful or believe it is beautiful, let it go.*
- Sources:** To avoid information overload, stick with God’s word and minimize other resources. Have a couple of trusted friends that are your “go-to” people.

- Spending:** Keep a simple budget that is based on your means. Beware of debt.
- Shopping:** Frequent the same stores for your regular needs. Make lists so you only have to shop weekly or monthly.
- Style:** Be ruthless in your closet. Only keep what you actually wear.
- Suppers:** Plan easy meals with fresh ingredients. Think variety not difficulty.
- Schedule:** A simple and predictable flow to the week helps everyone in the family.
- Screens:** TV and internet can become mindless distractions. Set reasonable limits on time and content.
- Selections:** If Pantene works for you stick with it. Avoid unnecessary decisions where too much choice is concerned.
- Storage:** Purge and then organize in systems that work for your family. *Everything has a place and everything in its place.* Transparent bins are best.
- Seeds:** Stick with perennials unless gardening is a personal passion.