

Rediscovering the Joy of Being with God and His People—Week Eight

Practicing the discipline of simplicity during Advent

As with all the disciplines, it is our inward practice of the discipline that leads to our authentic outward practice of it. Only the uncluttering of our soul can lead to the uncluttering of our life.

“If all within us is honed down to the single treasure of Christ and his Kingdom, then we are living in the light of simplicity.” Richard Foster

Consider

If the first step on our journey with the discipline of simplicity is to **seek first the kingdom of God**, what better time to take that step than at the beginning of Advent which focusses on the unfolding of God’s Kingdom on earth in the birth of King Jesus? This year, when most of us are out and about less, with our much emptier calendars and perhaps less money in our pockets and a bit more free time on our hands than usual, we have a unique opportunity to do things differently and not get caught up in the busyness and commercialism, choosing instead to practice simplicity by putting Jesus and his coming squarely at the center of our hearts and habits this season.

Pray

As you think through your usual celebrations of Advent and Christmas, ask God to help you identify where you find yourself distracted from seeking God and his kingdom during this season. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and clarify which parts you need to simplify or let go of completely.

Act

- Light a candle each day of Advent during your daily time with God and center your heart on Jesus, inviting him in to every corner of your life this season.
- Select a few people to make simple homemade gifts for this Christmas.
- Bring the beauty of God’s creation indoors by decorating with natural evergreens, and use them as visual reminders that Jesus is the Tree of Life, and the life he invites us to is abundant and never ends.
- Keep a running list of every good gift large or small that God gives you this season: gratitude leads to contentment and contentment is foundational to living a lifestyle of simplicity.
- Monitor your schedule this season and notice which commitments or activities leave you feeling scattered and unable to focus on your journey with Jesus.
- Knowing that an outward expression of inward simplicity does not happen overnight, monitor your attitudes and behavior around material things during this season and write down what you notice.
- Prayerfully decide on making a gift to a Christian group that serves the poor by bringing them the things most of us have in abundance—water, food or shelter.

We are praying for you to experience the joy of simplicity as you seek God’s kingdom this Advent!