

Invest in Your Spiritual Health: *Keep it simple*

LESSON AT A GLANCE	
Facilitator Notes:	<p>I wonder...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) How can I make time for Christ? 2.) How can I learn to be happy with what I have? 3.) What should I get rid of? <p>I believe...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) When my life is Christ-centric, everything else will be added. 2.) Everything I have is a gift from God. 3.) Refusing to be a slave to anything but God, is freedom. <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IGNITE Bible ➤ Paper and pencil <p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 12:15-21, Luke 12:33, 1 Timothy 6:10
PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
	<p>Read Luke 12:15. What would you consider to be an abundance of things? How much is too much? Join us _____ for small group as we discuss the discipline of simplicity.</p>
POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week the "I Wonder..." questions were - How can I make time for Christ? How can I learn to be happy with what I have? What should I get rid of? The spiritual discipline these questions surround is Simplicity. The goal of Simplicity can be summed up in a single phrase, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God". Discuss with your son or daughter what things in your life consume a lot of your time, energy and money. Ask your child the same question and discuss if any of these things bring you closer to our heavenly Father. Then talk about what you can give up and what you could do with the extra time, energy or money that will bring you closer to God. As always, if you have questions about the topic, feel free to contact us.</p> <p>Your Youth Leaders</p>

SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon? ➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn? ➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday? ➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
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HOOK (up to 10 minutes)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week. Remind the students that the purpose of this exercise is to just get them thinking about decisions and behaviors. It isn't a comprehensive list of actions nor a scientific way to determine their entire worldview or motivations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are you and how are you feeling today? ➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week? <p>"The Simple Life" quiz:</p> <p>Have students number their paper from 1-10, and ask the following questions. Student should write A or B. They should answer each question with complete honesty and choose the response that applies in most situations. Read the questions quickly and only once:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you dress each morning for A. fashion B. comfort Do you use social media for A. comparing with friends B. communicating with friends When you make a purchase do you A. buy the most expensive/popular version B. buy the most functional/affordable version When your friends invite you out do you A. always say yes B. only say yes if your homework and chores are done On a Saturday do you A. text friends and find out what everyone is doing as soon as you awake B. sleep in and spend the day as you want How would you define a successful career A. you earn a large salary B. you enjoy going to work everyday Would you rather receive a A. a pair of North Face mittens in a color you hate B. Target mittens in a color you love What fills your calendar A. social events B. academic events When you hear about a box office hit do you A. see it as soon as it hits the theater B. wait to rent it from Redbox or borrow it from the library Do you A. buy your lunch B. bring a lunch <p>Ask students to count how many times they answered A and B and then share the following:</p>
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If 5 -10 answers were A, you may be focused/driven by what others think or you
 If 5-10 answers were B, you may be very self-focused and not considerate of others

What's the point??

- The point of this activity is for students to begin searching their heart for why they do what they do.
- The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward life-style. (ex. we cannot say we don't care what others think if we are checking social media every 5 minutes)
- Student should understand that The goal of simplicity is to increase our focus on Christ and our future in His Kingdom.

SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

Facilitator Notes:

- Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students.

I wonder...

- 1.) How can I make time for Christ?
- 2.) How can I learn to be happy with what I have?
- 3.) What should I get rid of?

LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

Read the story of the rich young man: Mark 10:17-22

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

¹⁷ Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸ So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God.¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' "

²⁰ And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

²² But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss the following questions which can be found on the Student Copy of the lesson:

Student Question #1 In verses 17-20, what do you think the rich young man understood as the necessary steps to attaining eternal life?

- a. He thought he could earn it just by “doing” something. We cannot earn our way into heaven no matter how many good deeds, or acts of service we perform.
- b. Following the commandments, attending all divine services, putting in an offering, serving in the congregation are necessary but do not guarantee eternal life.

Student Question #2 What do you think is necessary for eternal life?

- a. A pure heart
- b. A heart that seeks the kingdom of heaven first and foremost
 - i. Matthew 6:33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*
- c. A heart that puts no other desire before being near to God and the Lord Jesus for all eternity

Student Question #3 Read the same story in Matthew 19:16-22 and notice the difference between verse 21 in Matthew and verse 21 in Mark. How do they differ? What do you think the version in Mark is trying to convey?

- a. The difference lies in the words in Mark “Jesus looking at him, loved him,...”.
- b. These words tell us that **Christ looks** deep into our hearts and knows what barriers or desires exist that keep us from seeking the kingdom of God. **Christ loves** us so much that he tells us what it is and asks us to cleanse our heart of it.

Student Question #4 Think about what most of your time, money, and thoughts are spent on, and write down the top 3. Could these be barriers?

Student Question #5 What would your response be if Christ asked you to give up these 3 items, or if He took them away?

Student Question #6 Do you think the message in this story is that wealth is a bad thing? Explain your answer.

- a. The message in this story is that Christ knows what barriers or desire reside in our heart, and He will make it known to us, if we ask.
- b. He does expect us to give it up.
- c. It does not mean that wealth is bad, but rather identifying what is holding us back from following Christ: an obsession about social media posts, FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), video games, being popular, having the highest grade point average, being the most active in the congregation.....etc..
- d. When any of these become more important than our love for Christ and seeking His kingdom, they become a barrier, and we need to get rid of them.

- Be sure the discussion around question 4 is about things that students love to do, have an intense interest in, or insist they must have.

- As you go through each principle, ask the students to refer back to their quiz answers. The principles will help students gain an understanding of how and why they make the decisions they make, and if their decisions have a positive or negative impact on their ability to seek God first.
- It is possible to do many of these 10 items without necessarily growing closer to God. Consider how to make sure that the students understand that simplifying your life does automatically make you closer to God, but merely gives you the chance (e.g. gives you more time) to do so. It is one thing to have a simpler life, and another to have a close relationship with God.

The Discipline of Simplicity has 10 guiding principles. These are not laws, but ways to help begin practicing simplicity in your life, and to make sure nothing becomes more important than seeking the kingdom of God....

1. Buy things for their usefulness, rather than their status.
2. Reject anything that is producing an obsession/addiction in you.
3. Develop a habit of giving things to which you are obsessively attached, away to someone who truly is in need (voluntary poverty).
4. Learn to be ok with the device you have even though it may not have the newest feature.
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them (enjoy public parks, libraries, share things etc.).
6. Develop a deep appreciation for creation, walk when you can, listen to the birds, smell the flowers, etc..
7. Lend without expecting anything in return.
8. Speak with integrity and use plain honest speech, don't try to flatter, tell half-truths, don't use jargon to impress.
9. Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others (when buying something consider where it's made, by whom, and in what conditions do the laborers work).
10. Reject anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God (job, relationship, college choice, friends, etc.)

Ask student to go back to their quiz results and see if any of these guiding principles can help them to discern their heart. Let them share any insights/reactions they might have.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

End the lesson with this quote and ask students to share what they think it means:

"It's not bad things that make people do bad things, but rather good things that make people do bad things."

- An unhealthy obsession with money, makes someone steal
- An unhealthy need for power/control leads someone to harm or kill
- An unhealthy need for status leads someone to lie or gossip
- Money, power and status are not bad things, but when they control the heart they can make/lead people do bad things

Close with the "I Wonder..." questions

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder..." question and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe..." statement or an "I Believe..." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students on their Confirmation day that they will or have already promised and committed to surrendering themselves in belief in God.

I wonder...

- 1.) How can I make time for Christ?
- 2.) How can I learn to be happy with what I have?
- 3.) What should I get rid of?

I believe...

- 1.) When my life is Christ-centric, everything else will be added.
- 2.) Everything I have is a gift from god.
- 3.) Refusing to be a slave to anything but God, is freedom.

Point to Ponder...

- Think about how and why you make the decisions you make.

A Call to Action...

This week, choose one of the Discipline of Simplicity guiding principles and use it to make decisions this week. Be prepared to share with the group if it made life simple or more complicated, if it saved you money or caused you to spend more money, and did it free up time or take up time.

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

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<p>➤ References: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 12:15-21, Luke 12:33, 1 Timothy 6:10</p>	

1. In verse 17-20, what do you think the rich young man understood as the necessary steps to attaining eternal life?

2. What do you think is necessary for eternal life?

3. Read the same story in Matthew 19:16-22 and notice the difference between verse 21 in Matthew and verse 21 in Mark. How do they differ? What do think the version in Mark is trying to convey?

4. Think about what most of your time, money, and thoughts are spent on, and write down the top 3. Could these be barriers?

5. What would your response be if Christ asked you to give up these 3 items, or if He took them away?

6. Do you think the message in this story is that wealth is bad thing? Explain your answer.

Point to Ponder: Think about how and why you make the decisions you make.

A Call to Action: This week, choose one of the Discipline of Simplicity guiding principles and use it to make decisions this week. Be prepared to share with the group if it made life simple or more complicated, if it saved you money or caused you to spend more money, did it free up time or take up time? How did you choose to spend the extra money, time or freedom.