The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

Session 4: Simplicity

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Cultivating simplicity will give us the margin to receive the love of God and, in turn, give that love to the people around us.

Head Change: To know that a life of giving is happier than a life of getting.

Heart Change: To feel less inclined to accumulate new things and more inclined to practice generosity.

Life Change: To limit our possessions and obligations to the point that we are free to live freely and joyfully in the kingdom with Jesus.

OPEN

What was the last "fun" purchase you made? Did it make you feel complete? Why or why not?

Things are not evil, but our society is designed to value accumulation. We feel we need more or at least need the newer, bigger, and better version of what we have. Whether it's the next phone upgrade, the newest pair of shoes, or even vying for more followers on social media, our drive for accumulation seems ever-present. The things we chase may not be bad, but when our desires go unchecked, our hearts will be consumed by the hunt for "more."

In session four, John Mark will show us a better way forward: imitating Jesus's lifestyle of simplicity leads us to live a lifestyle of contentment.

rightnow media

Reader

VIEW	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in John Mark's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.	
According to John Mark, what percentage of Jesus's teachings are about money and possessions?	
In what ways does the drive to have and own more lead to a lack of peace?	
What is the basic idea of simple living? How did John Mark describe the idea of a simple lifestyle?	
Watch session 4: Simplicity (9 minutes).	

rightnow MEDIA

REVIEW

John Mark began the session by asking us if what we have is more than enough, why do we still want newer, better, or cooler things? **How would you answer his question?**

Do you consume or accumulate new things that you don't necessarily need? Why do you think that is the case?

John Mark told us that the average American home has at least 300,000 items inside and that our country's storage units could house the entire nation. **What do you think about our society's culture of greed and consumerism?**

It can be easy to think of other people as frivolous, greedy, or consumeristic, but the church can also buy into the desire for more. **Do you think of your habits as consumeristic or even greedy? Why or why not?**

In Acts 20:35, Paul quotes Jesus saying that it is more blessed to give than to receive. John Mark told us that the Greek word for "blessed" can also be translated as "happy," revealing that a happy life is found in giving rather than receiving. Think of a time you were open and generous. **How did it make you feel when you're able to provide someone with something they need?**

Compare that experience to the last time you bought something for yourself. Do you think one experience was "better" than the other? How so?

If we want to live a happy life free from the insatiable desire for *more*, we must seek simplicity, also known as minimalism. What could simple living or minimalism look like in your own life? In what ways have you enjoyed, or not enjoyed, simple living?

Why do you believe it's difficult for people in American culture to accept a simple lifestyle? What do you think the appeal of maximalism is?

The first step toward simplicity is to reduce your consumption. John Mark described it as "limiting the number of our possessions, expenses, activities, and social obligations, to a level where we are free to live **rightnow** MEDIA

8/22/23, 1:06 PM

joyfully in the kingdom with Jesus." **How often do you buy** things that you want as opposed to what you need?

In what ways could limiting your intake give you freedom?

What could it look like for you to limit what you typically buy in a regular month?

Being a consumer isn't just about buying stuff—it also applies to our activities and obligations. As hard as it is to believe, these activities can distract you from God. In what ways could extra activities or responsibilities be a distraction? How does your use of your resources—your time, energy, and money—reflect your priorities?

The second step to simplicity is practicing generosity, giving your money, belongings, or your time to others on a regular basis. What could it look like for you to be more generous with the resources God has given you?

John Mark was honest about his feelings toward practicing generosity: it doesn't sound fun, but it is the way of Jesus. But even though simplicity may not sound exciting, it will bring you happiness and contentment. What in your life could you downsize or give away? What would it look like to try living with less for the next month?

rightnow MEDIA

der

BIBLE EXPLORATION

When ask our possessions to make us happy and satisfied, we are putting our hope and security in things that can be stolen, broken, or destroyed. The only secure place for our faith and hope is in Jesus. Read Matthew 6:19–21.

These verses remind us that our possessions don't last forever. At any given time, they could be stolen, destroyed, or lost. **How does knowing material goods fall apart change your view of your possessions? In what ways does it impact your view of accumulating new things?**

Over-consumption reveals our disordered desires: instead of being satisfied with God, we try to find value and meaning in the things we own. What sorts of things do you buy when you are feeling down? In what ways might you be trying to satisfy your heart with something only God can provide?

When our treasure holds a higher position in our heart than God, it becomes an idol. Are there any possessions or consumeristic behaviors that compete with Jesus for your attention or even affection? Is there anything you are afraid Jesus will ask you to give up?

Our consumerism is a form of worship—but worship focused on things rather than God. We give our resources in return for peace, comfort, and status. **When you are feeling unnoticed, anxious, or unloved, what could it look like for you to turn to Jesus?**

LAST WORD

In a society shaped by consumerism, simplicity is a radical commitment to following the way of Jesus. But when we limit our possessions and commit ourselves to generosity, we will find the joy and fullness of life that Jesus promises.

As you examine your habits, consider what it would look like to limit your intake and increase your giving. Ask God to help you set some goals for this next week and discover the joy of simplicity.

rightnow MEDIA

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read the chapter "Simplicity" in Part Three of John Mark's book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*.

Pray: Pray and ask God to help you become a more generous person. Ask him to help you see the value in giving rather than grieving the loss of a possession.

Give: Take inventory of your belongings while thinking about the needs of your community. What surplus do you have that could meet a need? Take your opportunity to love God and serve others by being generous.

Memorize: Memorize Luke 12:15, "And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the possessions.""

