

# SUGGESTIONS FOR SIMPLE LIVING

from PRISM ePistle ([www.esa-online.org](http://www.esa-online.org))

## **Simplicity is:**

voluntary, free, uncluttered, natural, creative, authentic, focused, margined, disciplined, diligent and healthful.

## **Simplicity is NOT:**

easy, legalistic, proud, impoverished, ascetic, neurotic, ignorant, escapist.

## **RELATIONSHIP**

- > Cultivate a closeness with God.
- > Practice regular hospitality.
- > Help each other, emphasize service.
- > Always speak the truth. Develop a habit of plain, honest speech. If you consent to do a task, do it. Avoid flattery and half-truths. Make honesty and integrity the distinguishing characteristics of your speech.
- > Don't judge.
- > Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.
- > Consciously seek to identify with the poor and forgotten. Start by visiting hospitals, prisons and nursing homes.
- > Schedule "simple" dates with your spouse.
- > Teach your children.

## **ACTIVITIES**

- > Make your commitments simple.
- > Don't overwork.
- > Fast periodically from media, food, people.
- > Elevate reading, go to the library.
- > Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you. Cut down on the use of addictive, non-nutritional food and drinks such as alcohol, coffee, tea, soda, sugar, chocolate.
- > Simplify Christmas and other holidays. Develop the habit of homemade celebrations.

## **PACE AND ATMOSPHERE**

- > Slow down.
- > Do not exhaust your emotional bank account.
- > Lie fallow.
- > Say no.
- > Restrict/eliminate television watching. Turn off or mute advertisements.
- > Learn to enjoy solitude.

## **POSSESSIONS AND FINANCES**

- > Cultivate contentment, desire less.
- > Resist covetousness and consumerism.
- > Buy things for their usefulness, not their status.
- > Learn to enjoy things without owning them. Benefit from places of “common ownership” (parks, museums, libraries, rivers, public beaches).
- > De-accumulate. Develop the habit of giving things away.
- > Offer others the use of your possessions.
- > Develop a network of exchange.
- > Avoid impulse buying.
- > Don’t buy now, pay later.
- > Avoid credit cards if they are a problem.
- > De-emphasize respectability.
- > Simplify your wardrobe – give away excess.
- > Learn how to make do with a lower income instead of needing a higher one.

## **APPRECIATION**

- > Be grateful for things large and small.
- > Emphasize a joyful life.
- > Appreciate creation.
- > Send cards of encouragement and appreciation when others are not expecting it.

## **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

- > Make the Word central.
- > Meditate and memorize Scripture.
- > Pray.
- > Encourage simple worship.
- > Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the Kingdom of God.

### Sources:

CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE, by Richard Foster.

MARGIN: RESTORING EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL AND TIME RESERVES TO OVERLOADED LIVES, by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.

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