

Simplicity

What did you think of the words from that Matthew passage? (Slide #1) “Come to me, all you that are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

As a Christian, a believer, a child of God, is that how you feel? Do you feel rested? Do you feel the yoke is easy and light?

I don't. I am living in an age where people wear busy-ness like a badge of honour. Over-commitment of time and energy is in epidemic proportions. Most of the time I don't feel rested and that life is easy.....and that disturbs me because it is Christ's call upon my life....to somehow navigate my life with a sense of the peace of Christ within me, with grace, and humility, and time to be unselfish, and generous, and kind. That's a lot to ask of people

who's schedule is filled to overflowing! To not feel rested, to not feel that the burden is light, indicates that my strategy for navigating this wonderful life, is not working. If this isn't you, then kudos to you! You have done well!

So I am taking some time to learn about how I might respond to God's call. I am trying to learn how to be more rested, less frantic, less exhausted.....to carry a lighter burden. My hope is that as I make some progress in this regard, my relationship with Christ will grow and perhaps even flourish.

When we recall that Christ sent the disciples out into the world he instructed them to take nothing....only a walking stick...no food, no change of clothes, no money. They were to rely on the kindness of strangers to feed them and put them up for the night. Where have you gone lately for a night or two and travelled so light?

After spending time with these passages I did some research. This is some of what is going on in the world as at least some people are having some success simplifying their lives. Their goal, is perhaps not to respond to Christ's call, but to de-stress their lives. For us, our motivation is faith based. But the process and the end goal are very similar.

It seems the new buzz word is Hacks. It means tips, or solutions. Laundry hacks might be creative, new solutions to getting out stains. Coffee making hacks refers to tips to make coffee making easier, or to make the coffee taste better.

I googled (Slide #2) **Life Hacks to Simplify Daily Living**. I wanted some practical day to day tips that would help me become more rested. I wanted to find out, like the disciples, how to travel lighter.

Does the name (Slide #3) **Sarah Ban Breathnach** ring a bell? In the mid- 90's her book called (Slide #4) **Simple Abundance – a**

daybook of comfort and joy flew off book seller's shelves. People were craving rest, simplicity, quiet. The book inspired a sense of gratitude.

Does any of this resonate with you? Perhaps the pace and demands and opportunities in your life are just what you want them to be. If not, consider this list of Life Hacks, put forward to those who want to simplify their lives.

(Slide #5) #1. Possessions- Think about all the things that you currently possess. Sports equipment, towels, sheets, shirts, pants, shoes, furniture, nick knacks, records, CDs. If you had to pile everything you owned on the front lawn, how big would that pile be? Imagine that pile. How much of that pile do you really use, need, want? Could you part with any of it without diminishing the quality of your life?

Are you familiar with **(Slide #6) Marie Kondo**? For quite some time I was aware that I was feeling encumbered by stuff!

But I was always unsuccessful about doing anything about it. And then I discovered Marie Kondo. If you watch an episode of her show, she has a person put all of their clothing on a bed. The pile is always VERY high! Then the person is asked to pick up one piece of clothing. If it sparks joy in them, they keep it. If it does not, they thank it and send it on their way. Repeat. At the end of the day, there is loads of room in the closet, filled only with clothes that the person will actually wear, or has sentimental value!

Marie Kondo also shows people how to fold and store their clothing. Clothing folded properly takes up very little space. There was a time when I could not close my dresser drawers.

Here is a **before** shot of two of my dresser drawers. **(Slide #7)** Here is a shot of those same two drawers **after**. **(Slide #8)**

I cannot tell you what peace, and quiet, and thankfulness this has brought to my life. I have done all our clothes closets and cupboards. Everyone in our home breathes deeper now.

So much that we did not need or could not find. Burdened down by things we don't need. Would you be surprised to hear that **(Slide #9)** 12 days a year in our lives are spent looking for things in our home that we can't find.

(Slide #10) Office workers spend 1.5 hours each day looking for things.

(Slide #11) 23% of the population pay bills late and incur late fees because they can't find their bills.

How do we think we might ever experience the rest that Christ offers in the midst of all of this?

Does anyone here have a TV, or computer, or smart phone, or kindle, or I pad?

(Slide #12). Screen time - Have you ever tracked the amount of time you spend each day looking at a screen? Do you ever wonder how we ever got through a day before the advent of mobile phones? How many stations can you get on your TV? How many of those have you never watched?

Here are some numbers to consider-

On average, **(Slide #13)** Adults spend 11 hours per day on a screen of some sort. **(Slide #14)** Teens spend 9 hours per day, **(Slide #15)** Children 8-12 spend 6 hours per day, and **(Slide #16)** Young children 2-5 spend 32 hours per week looking at screens!

Studies show that internet addiction is associated with structural and functional changes in brain regions involving emotional processing, executive attention, decision making and cognitive control.

In an attempt to be a counter influence on a culture of urgency, information overload and endless productivity, **(Slide # 17) The Slow Living Movement** offers some things to consider.

Although it seems paradoxical, **(Slide #18)** When we speed up, time speeds up. When we slow down, time slows down.

How often have we heard people in the work force say that they would rather things were busy - it makes their time at work go faster. When we slow down, when we act, talk, and drive slower, the world transforms before us. Irritation diminishes. Beauty, kindness, humility and peacefulness unfolds within us and outside of us. Slowing down makes us more aware of our surroundings. We see where we are, and what and who is there. We become more mindful. We think more clearly and act accordingly.

Does it not seem obvious that if we are going to take our faith seriously it requires more than only going to church and

reading the Bible? Don't get me wrong - those two things are essential. But when we take our discipleship seriously, those words of Mark Twain become all the more poignant - **(Slide #19)**

You may be the only Bible some people ever read!

Some time ago we spent some time on (Slide #20) **Love Languages**....finding out what our love language is and the love languages of those we love. We need to know their languages and they need to know ours, in order to communicate love effectively. Love language is not a specifically Christian practice. But if we are going to put our faith into practice then we need to practice love and the more effective we can be at that, the better.

There is nothing specifically Christian about **Simplifying our Living**, but if it is a pathway to nurturing our faith, and our relationship with Jesus, and the positive impact we can have on others, it is an important ingredient in our ministry toolbox.

More than 2 centuries later, the impact of Jesus and His disciples is unmistakable.

What kind of legacy are we going to leave? The busiest, most frantic generation on the planet.....or those who breathed deeply, took time to smell the roses, lived from a position of grace, and peace, and kindness and generosity.

Often times, we can learn from ways and means that are not intended as Christian, to live much more meaningful Christian lives.

God's grace and peace to you.

Amen