



LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of 12/5/2023

During the holidays, it's easy to get caught up in materialism, busyness, and the pressures to have the perfect celebration. But we need to fight against letting the noise of the world shape us. Instead, we must simplify - our space, pace, and gaze - to stay focused on what matters most: loving God and loving others. The Christmas story shows that God uses the humble, the overlooked, and the simple.

After your group opens in prayer, please discuss any questions or thoughts that came to mind after hearing/watching the sermon and read the following passage:

1. When you think about simplicity, what comes to mind?
2. Discuss the role of noise and distractions in our lives during the holiday season. How do media, materialism, and external pressures impact our ability to focus on what truly matters?

Read Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

3. Which fruit of the Spirit do you desire more of in your life? Which seems most lacking during the Christmas season?

Luke 2:6-10

6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

4. We explored the biblical examples of simplicity in the Christmas story, such as Bethlehem's humble setting, Jesus being laid in the manger, and the shepherds as the first messengers. How do these examples align with the idea of God exalting the humble?

Read Philippians 2:6-8 *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

5. How does Jesus' life reflect the principles of simplicity and selfless sacrifice?

Read Matthew 6:33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

6. What do you think it means to "seek first God's kingdom"? How can we fight against greed, consumerism, and cultural Christmas pressures to do this?
7. The sermon mentioned, simplify your space - the stuff in your life; your pace - your schedule, words, and actions, and your gaze - what you are focusing on". Which area do you think you need to work on most - your possessions, money, schedule, words, things that can be addicting, and why?
8. How do you think embracing simplicity and avoiding unnecessary complexity can help us remove hindrances and be used by God? Is there anything you need to simplify to focus more on God?

As you close, share any challenges, encouragements, and needs. Close with prayer for one another.