



Intentionally Drawing Near: Introduction

Some basic presuppositions about the spiritual life:

- # 1 We personally and individually set the _____ between God and ourselves. Jas 4:8.
- # 2 God is the Potter and I am the clay—He is _____ me.
- # 3 In order for me to grow spiritually and in order for my relationship with God to improve, God must work and I must work. Philippians 2:12, 13.
- # 4 “Spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.” M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. in *Invitation to a Journey*. Pages 12 and 15.
- # 5 The pursuit of God is not for the “Gung-ho Few,” it is expected of _____ of us.
- # 6 _____ to God is the great good and the genuine joy in life. Psalm 73:25-28.

Intentionally Drawing Near: The Freedom of Simplicity

Matthew 6:19-34

Listen! Twin sisters thirty years later: the great financial contrast.

- Q. Why are these lives so starkly different financially? A. Choices over time.

Why are we talking about this?

- A. Because choices over time also have a profound affect on our spiritual lives.

Idea: Simplicity is an inner life centered first and foremost on God’s Kingdom and His righteousness...which results in inner peace and outer simplicity of lifestyle.

- **The Decision:** I decide to center first and foremost on God’s rule and God’s righteousness in life.
- **Therefore, inwardly:** I am free from anxiety—I know everything is a gift from God and I know it is God’s business to care for what I have and my goods are available to others.
- **And, outwardly:** I am free from materialism—I am not greedy, driven to collect, and incessantly “trading up” in my possessions.

The Material Spectrum:

ASCETICISM

- misery
- want
- denial for denial

SIMPLICITY

- integrity
- contentment
- sufficiency

MATERIALISM

- greed
- striving
- anxiety

For Instance:

Application: Ten controlling principles for the outward expression of simplicity by Richard Foster from *The Celebration of Discipline* (Pages 78-83):

First, buy things for their usefulness rather than their _____.

Second, reject anything that is producing _____ in you.

Third, develop a habit of _____ things away.

Fourth, refuse to be _____ by the custodians of modern gadgetry.

Fifth, learn to enjoy things without _____ them.

Sixth, develop a deeper appreciation for _____.

Seventh, look with a healthy _____ at all “buy now, pay later” schemes.

Eighth, obey Jesus’ instructions about plain, honest _____.

Ninth, reject anything that will breed the _____ of others.

Tenth, shun whatever would _____ you from your main goal.

“Walking Papers”

This week, think through the ten principles in the application section above.

Corollary Passages for reading and reflection:

Hebrews 13:5

Matthew 13:45, 46

Proverbs 11:28

Luke 16:13

Luke 6:30

Luke 12:15, 16-21, 33

Matthew 19:16-22

Psalm 62:10

Matthew 6:19-34