

Soul Care

SESSION #4:

Room for your Soul to Breathe

SESSION GOALS

The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.

MAIN IDEA: Our souls thrive when we cultivate the habit of simplicity.

HEAD CHANGE: To know that the habit of simplicity is completely countercultural.

HEART CHANGE: To enjoy the freedom of decluttering our stuff and our schedules.

LIFE CHANGE: To define what we really need, discover our distractions, and decide how we'll begin to get rid of those distractions to simplify life.

CONNECT

Do you have a junk drawer – or even a junk room? That place in your house where everyone dumps random stuff (and where you can never find what you're looking for)? If you live with other people, who is the first person in your household to start clearing, tidying, or throwing things away because they've reached Junk Drawer/Room Saturation Point?

In this series so far, we've discovered that to live out the teachings of Jesus, we need to adopt the lifestyle He lived by building the keystone habits He modelled – things like silence and solitude, and Sabbath rest. In this session, we'll discover that simplicity – decluttering our stuff and our schedules – is another way to tend to the garden of the soul. Jason highlights how Jesus exemplified this kind of minimalism and how we can too.

LEARN

As you watch, write down how Jason answers these questions.

1. What did Jesus tell His disciples to take with them (or not) when they travelled?
2. Why did Jesus tell His followers not to worry about food or clothes?
3. How does Joshua Becker define minimalism?
4. What four steps does Jason suggest if we want to live more simply?

Show SESSION #4: Room for your Soul to Breathe (13 minutes)

REVIEW

Jason points out that we live busy, noisy lives – mentally and emotionally, and in terms of our plans and possessions. **What makes you feel most overwhelmed? Your schedule, your to-dos, the clutter in your home? Where does most of the 'noise' come from in your life?**

If you're working through this series, it's likely you have too much stuff. In the last session, we saw that the Sabbath is a beautiful antidote to that problem. Another way we can overcome more-itus is through simple living, as modelled by Jesus. **What indications are there in the Gospels that Jesus lived lightly and freely?**

In Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6, He identifies the difference between what we need and what we want, and He emphasises how deeply we're loved by our generous, well-resourced Heavenly Father who promises to take care of our every need. **Is your tendency to hoard or accumulate too much stuff linked to a scarcity mindset – a fear that you won't have enough, or that you need to have all your material bases covered? What might be your next step in terms of trusting God to provide for your needs? When last did you do an audit of what you actually need?**

Jesus says, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:19-21). He's urging us to put our time, money, and energy into things of eternal value, and to acknowledge that our deepest desires are closely aligned with the things we possess. **What's your most treasured earthly possession? Would you feel a certain loss of identity if that thing was suddenly taken away from you?**

Joshua Becker defines minimalism as 'the intentional promotion of what we value most by removing everything that distracts us from it.' **Would you consider yourself a minimalist? Do you know any minimalists? Does minimalism strike you as bland, beautiful, clinical, or restful? What distracts you from what you value most?**

Jason suggests four simple steps we can use to build the keystone habit of simple living:

- (1) Define what you (really) need. Start with the three big categories of food, clothing, and shelter, and go from there.
- (2) Discover your distractions.
- (3) Decide how you'll remove these distractions. Without a plan for eliminating them they'll continue to prioritise themselves above what's most important to you.
- (4) Remove the distractions. Be generous and donate things you don't need.

Where do you think you may get stuck in this four-point process? Why?

Jason warns that simplifying your life is completely countercultural, and you'll run into opposition from a consumerist, materialistic world. You'll need to continually weed out the clutter to give the garden of your inner life space to thrive and bear fruit. **What difference do you think it would make to your level of inner peace if you were to begin simplifying your life? If you're struggling with doubt or confusion, how might decluttering bring clarity? Do you agree that living more simply brings greater freedom and emotional or physical wellbeing to your life?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Micah 6:8 reads, 'He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' **How might this scripture become a grid through which you filter decisions as you build the habit of living simply?**

In 2 Corinthians 1:12, Paul writes, 'For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.' He is humbly defending his ministry, which he asserts he carried out with simplicity. **Is your church community complex or simple? What might be a next step for your community to simplify ministry to those in the church, and to simply reach out to those not yet in the church? Read Acts 2:46 to give you some ideas.**

Romans 8:5–6 differentiates between a worldly, fleshly, materialistic life, and the life of simply walking with God's Spirit, which leads to life and peace. **Who is the most vivacious person you know? Who is the most peaceful person you know? Where do they get their life and peace?**

REVIEW

Let's remember that if we don't intentionally build the life-giving habit of simplicity, we'll drift into suffocating complexity. Adele Calhoun writes, 'One day we will all have to let go of everything, even our own breath. It will be a day of utter simplicity. A day when the importance of stuff fades. Learning to live simply prepares us for our last breath while cultivating in us the freedom to truly live here and now.'

BEFORE NEXT TIME

Select at least one activity below to complete before watching the next session.

READ: Do a concordance study, or a Google search, of Bible passages that talk about simplicity. What is God saying to you personally about where you may need to declutter or simplify?

WRITE: Walk through your home and make a list of everything you could give away to make some space.

PRAY: Set a reminder on your phone to make a hard stop for five minutes of prayer, somewhere in your day, and use that time to breathe deeply and declutter your thoughts with prayers of thanksgiving until you reach a place of absolute peace and contentment.