

***Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity & Generosity***

A Stewardship Devotional 2014  
Week 2 – Simplifying Our Life  
(Ideas from Adam Hamilton’s book,  
some contents written by Pastor Bob)

It may be helpful to write your reflections down - on paper, computer, or electronic device. It’s an opportunity to engage in the spiritual practice of journaling. For the week of Oct 12 – Oct. 18. Do one reflection a day: either every other day or consecutively at the beginning or towards the end of the week, which ever suits your schedule. Do either individually or with another person.

(Verses printed below are from the New Revised Standard Version)

Reflection 1

*Scripture: Matthew 10:7-10*

7 As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near. 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food.

Commentary – In this passage, Jesus is sending the disciples on their mission. He instructs them to take on a lifestyle of traveling light and choosing to live below their means.

Set a goal of reducing your consumption and choose to live below your means for the month of October.  
(Hamilton, p. 86)

Ideas: use canvas bags when you go grocery shopping or recycle shopping bags.

In making purchases, look at the mid grade instead of the top of the line product.

Carpool more often

Make a goal to reduce utilities by 10 percent – adjusting thermostat to a couple of degrees higher or lower to save on cost.

Prayer –

Generous God, we are blessed to be in the land of abundance, flowing with milk and honey. Yet we get into the habits of impulse spending, instant gratification, and indulging on things by credit card. We long for control over our spending; we yearn for discipline, restraint, and careful budgeting. Move us to responsible consumption and practical cost cutting measures. Inspire us to consider living on less and help us to follow through as we seek to follow Jesus. Amen.

Reflection 2

*Scripture: Luke 12:16-19*

16 Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’

The temptation is to acquire more or to get something new. Adam Hamilton suggests that we use something up before buying something new; from household items to appliances to cars – wait until a replacement is truly necessary.

Hamilton’s suggestions:

Resole your shoes. Mend rips and tears and make repairs. If you feel something is old, try to extend the life of that item, keep it for an extra six months before replacing it.

Always sell or donate things that still work.

Instead of buying brand new, shop at a thrift or resale store.

Get items from a 99 cents store when possible.

Questions:

What items that I thought of replacing can I live with for another 6 months?

What items in my garage, storage unit, or closet haven’t I used for over a year or two that I can donate or sell?

Set a goal to downsize or donate particular items. Hold a yard sale.

Prayer –

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, source and sustainer of life, we praise you that we have the privilege of so many choices. We have the freedom to achieve and succeed, the freedom to improve and increase. But we also have the choice to decrease and to downsize, chances to donate and giveaway. Help us to let go of things, to live beneath our means, and to simplify. As you commanded your disciples to minimize, to travel light, to acquire less, help us to value the practical and simple. Inspire us, empower us to free ourselves of these material hindrances, that we may walk in newness of life through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Reflection 3

*Scripture: Luke 12:22-31*

22 He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

#### Questions for reflection

What are my patterns of eating out, shopping (non-grocery), spending for entertainment?

How much do I typically spend?

How can I cut down on eating out? When can I bring food from home to work or bring food to certain outside activities, instead of buying out?

What are some inexpensive ways of recreation and entertainment.

Make a goal or plan to engage to substitute some more inexpensive choices. Set a cap to the number of times you eat out.

Prayer: Read Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Say the Lord's Prayer

### Reflection 4

*Scripture – Luke 12:31, 33-34*

31 Instead, strive for his[a] kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

33 Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Question for Reflection: How can I give more time in service and reaching out?

Ideas:

volunteer at a charity event

participate in a feeding program

sign up for a walk or race to raise funds for a cause

Join a recycle program, a community or church action committee

Set a goal to participate in an activity in the month of October and November.

Prayer – The Prayer of St. Francis

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love.*

*Where there is injury, pardon.*

*Where there is doubt, faith.*

*Where there is despair, hope.*

*Where there is darkness, light.*

*Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,*

*grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled,*

*as to console;*

*to be understood, as to understand;*

*to be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive.*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,*

*and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

*Amen.*