

Pursuing Spiritual Breakthrough

Keep it Simple

K.I.S.S. — Keep it simple, saints. Jesus didn't put it in those words, but that is the essence of the message He gave in Matthew 6:19-21. It is interesting that this message about treasure falls on the heels of Our Lord's teaching about prayer. When asked, "Teach us to pray," the Lord didn't give an extended course in extemporaneous and liturgical prayer forms. He gave us the simple template of "Our Father..." But our lives are complicated, and the temporal world reflects the spiritual. If our temporal lives are cluttered with consumables, our spirits are likely to reflect that. Today, we have more time and energy saving devices available to us than has any generation before, and yet the most prevalent complaint I hear as a pastor is, "I don't have time for..." We have laid up for ourselves treasures on earth and are missing out on the treasures in heaven.

G.K. Chesterton, the late 19th, early 20th c. English Author, said, "People rush for complexity but they yearn for simplicity." This may be true; however, most modern Americans don't seem to know how to simplify their lives. We have become so dependent upon complex technological gadgetry that we are unable to imagine living without complexity. And every new gadget that comes on the market is quickly hyped as the next "cannot do without" item. Sadly, most consumers believe the hype and quickly snatch it up. And we wonder why we feel so alienated from God. Why can we not make time for prayer, Bible study, quiet time, meditation? Have we allowed worldly concerns to distract us from our relationship with God?

It is most unlikely that our temporal lives will become any less complicated in the future. So, what is the answer? How do we keep things simple in our pursuit of spiritual breakthrough? There really is a "simple" answer to the question of how to simplify our lives. It is Discipline.

A disciplined spiritual life can help bring order out of the chaos of our daily living. We make time for the things we believe to be important. In your daily routine, do you make time to eat, bathe, go to work or school? How about prayer? Why delegate prayer to "when I've got time"? A rule of life is very helpful in keeping things simple. It helps us focus our attention on what is vitally important. If we were to mark times in each day for prayer as we do for meals, wouldn't that help simplify our spiritual lives? Instead of trying to figure out "How am I going to make time today to read the Bible and pray?", it should already be in my schedule. Set the alarm on your phone and when it chimes, stop, pray. Use that technology for something worthwhile! Wouldn't it be great if it was part of your daily routine to pick up a book of prayers first thing in the morning and follow the order of service? And the last thing before going to bed? Turn off the news and pray instead. Wouldn't that help simplify our spiritual discipline? Talk to one of the clergy. Let us help you develop a workable rule of life. Talk to others in the parish and work together to improve your spiritual disciplines.

Mother Teresa said, "If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy." Ask yourself, is what I am doing necessary? Have I made my prayer life a priority? Do I give God time every day? Simplify your life—put God first!