

Discussion Guide: *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, by John Mark Comer.

Part 7

Read:

Chapter 8 – Simplicity.

Review, Reflect and Discuss

Feel free to comment and raise any questions that occur to you as you read. Don't be limited to the questions listed after each summary, but they might help to prime your thinking.

Chapter 8 – In our culture, we often don't like the teaching of Jesus on wealth, possessions and greed. This is partly because, in Western culture, we get our meaning and identity from what we consume. Happiness has become measured by what we possess. Called the gospel of consumption, this has been a deliberate strategy of the advertisers and businessmen in America and the West. With tragic irony, it is not making us happier but more miserable. The problem is thinking we need more to make us happy. Poverty is not good – don't idealise it - but after a certain level of income, more stuff is more likely to make you miserable, or there is at least a law of diminishing returns. Materialism is damaging the soul. The drive to possess causes hurry, taking our time as well as our money. So why not follow Jesus's teaching of the good life? He teaches in line with the grain of the universe and he teaches a lot about wealth, including 25% of the Sermon on the Mount. The practice that helps us to embed his teaching into our lives has been called the discipline of simplicity. It is similar to the modern, secular version known as minimalism. This practice is not about being poor or getting more organised; it's about holding on to what we really value and removing anything that distracts from this. It is about decluttering our lives. And it is about not putting our trust in wealth or in stuff. It is living well in the tension between enjoying the things of the world but not allowing them to turn us away from God. It is living with 'a carefree unconcern for possessions.' JMC then lists 12 principles about the discipline of simplicity and gives some practical advice about how we can begin to put it into practice, so that we start to learn the secret of contentment.

1. *Are you aware of the gospel of consumption and can you identify ways in which you are affected by it?*
2. *How does materialism take our time as well as our money?*
3. *Which of Jesus's teachings about wealth and stuff really spoke to, and challenged, you?*
4. *What would it look like for you to start getting intentional about practising simplicity?*

Next

We are taking each of the four core practices one at a time. So for next time just read **Chapter 9 – Slowing**.