



Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship

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Growing through Simplicity

by Pastor Len Smith

Based on Richard Foster's book, Celebration of Discipline, I have shared the following spiritual disciplines that can help our church grow since 2005: Guidance through the Body of Christ, Service, Bible Study, Worship, Spiritual Submission, and Prayer. This year I want to suggest the spiritual discipline of "Growing through Simplicity."

As you walk in the entrance of our church you can view the sign, **Following Jesus; peacefully, simply, together.** What does it mean to simply follow Jesus or to follow Jesus simply?

Richard Foster has written that simplicity is freedom. Simplicity brings joy and balance. Many Christians have begun to experience the liberation the Lord brings through simplicity.

The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward life-style. We deceive ourselves if we believe we can possess the inward reality without its having a profound effect on how we live. To attempt to arrange an outward life-style of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism.

Experiencing the inward reality liberates us outwardly. Speech becomes truthful and honest. The lust for status and position is gone, because we no longer need status and position. We cease from showy extravagance, not on the grounds of being unable to afford it, but on the grounds of principle. More of our earnings and wealth becomes available for true spiritual and physical needs.

Do we clearly understand that the lust for affluence in our society is psychotic? It is psychotic because it has completely lost touch with reality. We crave things we neither need nor enjoy. We buy things we do not want to impress people we do not like. We are ashamed to wear clothes or drive cars until they are worn out. Until we comprehend how unbalanced our culture has become at this point we will not be able to deal with the materialistic spirit within ourselves nor will we truly desire Christian simplicity.

Our modern hero is the poor boy who becomes rich rather than the example of Christ who voluntarily became poor.

Too often we end up calling covetousness - ambition, hoarding - prudence, and greed - industry.

We need to articulate a new way to live as a congregation and as individuals. We need to challenge the modern psychosis that defines people by how much they can produce or what they earn. We must recapture the spiritual discipline of simplicity.

The Bible and Simplicity

We need to put to rest the notion that the Bible is ambiguous about economic issues. No serious reading of Scripture can substantiate such a view. Biblical injunctions against the exploitation of the poor and the accumulation of wealth are clear and straightforward. Ps. 62:10, *...though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.* Prov. 11:28, *Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.*

Jesus criticized the materialism of the First Century too. Luke 16:13, *No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.* Luke 12:15, *Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."* Luke 12:33, *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.*

The June 2010 issue of CrossWorld Currents asked this question of a missionary family who was preparing to leave for Asia. "What are you doing with all your STUFF? They wrote the following:

We never thought of ourselves as materialistic. After all, most of our furniture was either given to us, or purchased at yard sales, and I never buy anything that isn't on sale!

Materialism, though, isn't just for the rich. When it came time to part with our possessions, it was painful, maybe more than we had expected. We have grown attached to

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some of our belongings, out of sentiment or preference, and releasing those things was a felt sacrifice.

This journey has been characterized by sacrifice, Jesus inviting us to identify with Him in His sacrifice for His kingdom. Sometimes the sacrifices seem petty when you really consider them – after all, it's just “stuff.”

The apostle Paul too was inspired to write a lot about economics. He wrote that Christians should not love money (1 Tim 3:3), or be greedy for gain (1 Tim 3:8). He called covetousness idolatry and commanded the church to exercise stern discipline against anyone guilty of greed (Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 5:11). He counseled the wealthy not to trust in their wealth but in God, and to share generously with others (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

How many vehicles, TVs, radios, telephones, cell phones, and flashlights do I really need? What about new cars? In 2009 I traded an 03 auto for an 05 auto. In 2010 I traded a 99 truck in on an 04 truck.

Having said this I must hasten to add that God intends that we should have adequate material provision. The Scriptures declare consistently and forcefully that God's creation is good and to be enjoyed.

Asceticism and simplicity are mutually incompatible. The 18th Century Brethren at Ephrata experimented with asceticism and that once thriving spiritual community is now a museum administered by the Commonwealth of PA. Asceticism renounces possessions. Simplicity sets possessions in proper perspective. Simplicity can rejoice in the gracious provisions from the hand of God. Asceticism can find contentment only when it is abased. Simplicity knows contentment in both abasement and abounding. Paul wrote this in Philippians 4:12-13, *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

How many of you have visited a college dorm room? If so you have seen a bed, a chair, a desk, a dresser, and a small closet? An individual works tens of thousands of hours over four decades. How many of you have visited a nursing home room. There you may also see a bed, a chair, a desk, a dresser, and a small closet. What has that individual really gained after some 45 years in the work force?

The spiritual discipline of simplicity provides needed perspective. Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift that is not ours to keep, and that can be freely shared with others. Once we recognize that the

Bible denounces the materialist and the ascetic with equal vigor, we are prepared to turn our attention to the framing of a Christian understanding of simplicity.

A Place to Stand

Simplicity directly challenges our vested interests in an affluent life-style.

The central point for the spiritual discipline of simplicity is to seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness of His kingdom first – and then everything necessary will come in its proper order (Matt. 6:25-33). Even simplicity can become idolatry when it takes precedence over seeking the kingdom. Any person who does not seek the kingdom first does not seek it at all, regardless of how worthy the idolatry that he or she has substituted for it.

Freedom from anxiety is one of the inward evidences of seeking the kingdom of God first. The inward reality of simplicity involves a life of joyful unconcern for possessions. Wealth does not bring freedom from anxiety. Freedom from anxiety is characterized by three inner attitudes.

1. To receive what we have as a gift from God is the first inner attitude of simplicity. We are dependent on God for the air, water, and the sun. What we have is the result of the gracious care and provision of God. When we are tempted to think that what we own is the result of our personal efforts, it takes only a little drought or a small accident to show us once again how radically dependent we are on God for everything.
2. We need to know that it is God's business and not ours to care for what we have. We have to trust God to protect what we possess for there is simply no such thing as a “burglar proof” precaution. Obviously these matters are not restricted to our possessions but include such things as our reputations, our employment, and/or our retirement savings.

3. We need to make arrangements to have our goods and/or wealth available to others. The reason we find these words so difficult is our fear of the future. We can learn to share more when we have more faith that God will take care of us. If someone is in need we are free to help them.

The Outward Expression of Simplicity

Finally, I want to share ten principles that relate to the outward expression of simplicity.

1. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status. How big of a vehicle do we really need? How many vehicles do we need? How many rooms do we need in our



Matthew 6:33

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homes? How many pairs of shoes can we wear at the same time?

2. Reject anything that is encouraging an addiction in you. We can eliminate or cut down on the use of addictive, non-nutritional drinks or chocolate. Give away some of the media you think you can not deal without: extra computers, radios, DVD players, CD players, magazines, DVDs, CDs, newspapers, and books. Simplicity is freedom. As a Christian, refuse to be a slave to anything but God.

3. Develop a habit of giving things away. If you find that you are becoming attached to some possession, consider giving it to someone who needs it. De-accumulate. Most of us could get rid of half of our possessions without any serious sacrifice. We would save a lot of time sorting, storing, dusting, and resorting so many items.

4. Refuse to buy the time-saving gadgets that almost never save time. Beware of the words, "It will pay for itself." Buy things that really conserve energy.

5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them. The idea that if we own it, it will give us more pleasure is an illusion. Enjoy the public beach, the public parks, and the public libraries.

6. Develop a deeper appreciation for creation. Walk whenever you can. Listen to the birds. Enjoy the different textures of the grass and the leaves. Marvel in the changing colors of the seasons.

7. Look with a healthy skepticism at all "buy now, pay later" schemes. They are a trap to deepen your financial bondage. We need to use extreme caution before incurring any type of debt.

8. Obey Jesus' instructions about plain, honest speech. Matt. 5:37, *Simply let your "yes" be "yes," and your "no," "no," anything beyond this comes from the evil one.* If you consent to do a task, do it. Avoid flattery and half-truths. Make honesty and integrity the distinguishing characteristics of your speech.

9. Do not support anything that breeds the oppression of others. Do we buy products that are produced by exploited workers? Have we ever oppressed our children or spouse because certain tasks are beneath us?

10. Shun whatever would distract you from serving and living for the Lord.

To seek first His kingdom and His righteousness is to live in simplicity.

2011 Meat Canning Project

For the 34th year, the Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania Districts are co-sponsoring a Meat Canning Project which is scheduled for April 25-28 and May 2-3 at the Christian Aid Ministries facility in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Many food banks are low on food. Your donations will allow the meat canning team to can for more days providing meat for food banks and soup kitchens throughout the United States. Milt Greenlee along with three other volunteers from our congregation will be helping with the canning process on Wednesday, April 27.



2011 Disaster Response Auction

The 31st Annual Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction will be held Saturday, May 7, at 9:00 a.m., at the Carroll County Agricultural Center in Westminster, Maryland.

Last year's auction raised over \$67,000. Of that amount \$60,000 was given to the Emergency Disaster Fund of the Church of the Brethren to help victims recover from many disasters all around our world. \$7,000 was given to the Mid-Atlantic District to provide transportation for volunteers working on projects around the U.S.

During 2010 the Emergency Disaster Fund supported these efforts:

Haiti Hurricane Response

Tennessee Flood Project

Cedar Rapids Ecumenical Build

Hurricane Katrina Rebuilding

Indiana Flood Response

American Samoa Project

Pakistan Flood Response

Uganda Response

Chile Earthquake Support

Sudan Food Crisis

Niger Food Assistance

Giving a donation as a Patron (\$10), Supporter (\$25), Sustainer (\$35), or Sustainer Plus (Over \$35) is one way to support this effort. Donors will be listed in the auction booklet. A patron ad sign-up sheet will be available during February.

Why so many young people don't know the Bible

by John Longhurst

Every year since 1995 Wheaton College has tested the Bible knowledge of incoming freshmen. These students are among the best and brightest of Christian youth in the US. Despite this, many do poorly on the Bible test. They can't put Bible events in order—they don't know that Abraham came before the Old Testament prophets, that the prophets preceded the death of Christ, or that Christ died before Pentecost. They find it hard to identify biblical characters like the apostles, or the thief released by Pilate.

Something similar is happening at Hesston College in Kansas, where all students who want to graduate have to take a biblical knowledge test as part of a biblical literature course. The test shows that many are unfamiliar with the Bible. It is common for most students to get 10 or fewer correct answers out of 50 questions.

"They know some individual Bible stories, but the majority don't know how the whole story fits together," says Michele Hershberger, who teaches in Hesston's Bible and Ministry department.

How did we get into this situation? Wheaton New Testament professor Gary Burge believes most of the blame can be laid directly at the feet of local congregations. "The problem starts at the church level," he says. "Bible instruction today is episodic, looking at a few favorite passages out of context.... Most teaching is based on felt needs. They never get the story line from front to back."

Karen Jones, author of *Transforming Student Ministry: Research Calling for Change*, echoes those sentiments. "There are key passages and books that we faithfully



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But, without knowing the basics of the faith, 'we're lost.'

teach [to youth], but large portions of Scripture that we overlook or only mention in passing," she wrote in a 2006 issue of Southern Baptist *Texas*.

Of course, just knowing certain Bible facts doesn't make someone a better Christian. As Hershberger puts it, "just knowing information about the Bible isn't transformative." But, she adds, without knowing the basics of the faith, "we're lost."

What's the solution? Burge believes that churches need to take a "curricular approach that tells the story." Without such an approach, he believes, young people won't be able to assess the Bible and apply it to their lives. "They can't do analysis about something they really don't understand."

Hershberger agrees. At Hesston she walks students through the whole Bible story, beginning with the creation account in Genesis and ending in Revelation.

Through it all she seeks to help them answer this question: How has God worked in history to heal all the broken relationships caused by sin, a rescue that culminates in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus?

"If we want to make the Bible come alive for youth, we have to make it a priority as adults," she says. "If we are on fire about learning our faith, it will help youth to be more excited."

Reading the Bible to young children is also important, adds Marion Bontrager, who teaches Bible at Hesston. "Students who said their parents read the Bible to them as children score highest on our test."

John Longhurst directs marketing and sales for Mennonite Publishing Network.

Helps are available to prevent bullying

Bullying is becoming widely recognized as an issue for children in school classrooms, on the playground, and in day care and other settings.

The bad news is that Christian education programs are not immune to bullying behaviors among children. The good news is there are many resources to help "bully-proof" your Sunday school.

What is bullying? Bullying is not a fact of life," states a helpful web resource offered by the National Mental Health Information Center. "Harassment and abuse are more accurate names for it. Parents and school personnel should no longer consider bullying just a part of growing up. It is harmful to both the perpetrators and the victims and is responsible for behavioral and emotional difficulties, long-term negative outcomes, and violence."

The center gives several tips for teachers, adapted here for Christian educators:

Create a church environment for children that is characterized by warmth, positive interest, and involvement with adults.

Establish firm limits against unacceptable behavior.

Apply non-physical, non-hostile negative consequences if a child breaks the rules that have been agreed upon.

Expect adult leaders to act as authorities with responsibility for the children who attend the program, bringing an authoritative but not authoritarian model for the relationship between adults and children.

Download a booklet titled "Bullying Is Not a Fact of Life" from <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SVP-0052>. Find more at www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov where a section on "What Kids Can Do" comes complete with cartoon style resources.



Evangelism Exploding

Chuck and Debby Baldwin are Go Ye Fellowship missionaries in Rwanda, where Chuck is **Evangelism Explosion Africa Great Lakes Area Director**, overseeing Evangelism Explosion (EE) ministries in Rwanda, Burundi, and the eastern half of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In each of these countries, trained national leaders direct the ministry in their own country, each working with a National EE Committee to help guide the work.

In DRC-East, the work has been going on for many years. More than 60 local churches reach out to their communities, and multiply soul-winners through their EE programs.

In Burundi, EE started in 2001 and today is a strong, growing ministry. Thanks to one of EE's leaders there, Onesphore Manirakiza, EE is rapidly expanding among the Burundi churches. Each summer, Onesphore sends out EE-trained young people (mostly in their 20s) for two weeks to unreached areas of Burundi to evangelize in the villages, towns and countryside. They are sent with very little and are often persecuted, sometimes beaten and jailed, but the Holy Spirit year after year has worked amazing results in the hearts of people whose lives they touch.

In Rwanda, where the Baldwins live, EE is just getting a good start since the Kinyarwanda translation of the primary materials was finished last year. Chuck writes, "It is a joy to see pastors and church leaders realize that they are not called to do everything, but rather to

train their church members to do the work of the church. In addition, we see many pastors and church leaders who pray for the first time to receive Christ into their lives at our Leadership Training Clinics, because up until that time, they preached and taught the Bible as they learned it in school, but they continued to see salvation as a matter of good works. They find joy and freedom in the message of salvation by grace, and many have stood up in the middle of a clinic, in front of their fellow-pastors, to confess something like, 'I have wasted the last 16 years of my life pretending to have something I never received. Now I know Jesus lives in me, and by His grace, I will live for him and tell my family and my church about the true salvation in Jesus Christ alone!'

"Please pray with us that God will protect and work through these personal evangelists so that whole communities of unreached and Gospel-resistant people will be opened to the Good News of Christ's love and salvation."

Blessings in Christ,
Chuck & Debby

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Twenty-two years of ministry with Joy El

In November, 2010, **Lois Ann Glessner** marked 22 years of ministry with Joy El Ministries, Greencastle, Pennsylvania. A portion of Broadfording's local operating and outreach giving each week helps to support her ministry.

Released Time, Leadership Training, and Camping Programs are ministries of Joy El. Released Time is a program to evangelize and disciple public school students through adults who relationally teach, model, and apply Biblical truth. This happens for students, grades 3 through 12, with an emphasis on Bible lessons, character instruction, and Bible memorization. It occurs weekly during the school day through volunteers who interact "Life to Life" with the children.

Aaron E. Ziebarth, Joy El's Executive Director, writes, "What then is my reward?' Paul asked in 1 Corinthians 9:18, 'That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge.'

"I thank God for you and your partnership with this ministry. Thank you for helping share the Gospel

without charge. Your gifts enable us to offer ninety Released Time programs to children who need to hear the Gospel for free."

Lois Ann writes, "Thank you for sharing in the ministry. I appreciate the generosity you exhibit.



"Recently I wrote a lesson for Jr. High students on the Armor of God. It was a good reminder that all of us are engaged in a spiritual battle but God equips us to be victorious.

"May God bless you in this New Year as you continue to serve Him."

In Christ,
Lois Ann

The tireless efforts of Lois Ann's father, Rev. Henry Hunsberger, in the late 1970s and early 1980s were instrumental in the establishment of Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship. He also served the Broadfording congregation as its moderator for many years.



Can you match up these couples of the Bible?

Refer to the passages of Scripture if you need help. The correct answers are given below.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Adam & ____ (Genesis 3:20) | A. Rachel |
| 2. Isaac & ____ (Genesis 24:67) | B. Zipporah |
| 3. Esther & ____ (Esther 2:16) | C. Joseph |
| 4. Samson & ____ (Judges 16:6) | D. Eve |
| 5. Jacob & ____ (Genesis 29:18) | E. Delilah |
| 6. Abraham & ____ (Genesis 17:15) | F. Gomer |
| 7. Aquila & ____ (Acts 18:2) | G. Sarah |
| 8. Mary & ____ (Matthew 1:18) | H. Boaz |
| 9. Moses & ____ (Exodus 2:21) | I. Bathsheba |
| 10. Hosea & ____ (Hosea 1:3) | J. Rebekah |
| 11. David & ____ (2 Samuel 12:24) | K. Priscilla |
| 12. Ruth & ____ (Ruth 4:13) | L. Xerxes |

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Answers: 1-D, 2-J, 3-L, 4-E, 5-A, 6-G, 7-K, 8-C, 9-B, 10-F, 11-I, 12-H.



Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday, March 26, 2011

Served 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Suggested donation:
Adults - \$7.00
Children under 8 - \$3.00



FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY

March 27, 2011

Sunday School
9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship
10:30 a.m.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS TO CHURCH

Festival of Music and Hymn Sing
7:00 p.m.
to benefit
Shepherd's Spring Summer Camp Scholarships
16869 Taylors Landing Road
Sharpsburg, MD 21782



♪ Music by area Church of the Brethren congregations
♪ Entire offering for summer camp scholarships
♪ Refreshments and fellowship

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