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Simplicity Done Rightly

- "Christian simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Both the inward and the outward aspects of simplicity are essential. 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 lifestyle of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism." (Foster)
- Our cultural psychosis regarding wealth and possessions is reflected in our stories.




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The Bible on "Stuff" – Old Testament

- We like to convince ourselves that the Bible doesn't have much, if anything, to say about our "stuff."
- The Old Testament laws required farmers to be willfully and purposely inefficient in the way they harvested their fields so that no one would go hungry.
- The Old Testament concept of the year of Jubilee required all land revert to its original owner every 50 years.
- General warnings against neglecting the poor, and warnings against accumulating wealth, can be found throughout the Old Testament.




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The Bible on "Stuff" – New Testament

- 1 Timothy warns that a heart set on riches will battle "senseless and hurtful desires" and plunge people into "ruin and destruction."
- Church leaders are warned about being "lovers of money" or "greedy for gain." (1 Tim.)
- Hebrews urges us to live contentedly and "free from love of money."
- James blames violence and war on the lust for more possessions.
- Paul lists greed as dangerous sin multiple times, alongside things like adultery and theft, and reminds us that the love of money is the "root of all kinds of evil."

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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- Luke 6:20, 24 – "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.... But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort."
- Matthew 6:19-21 – <sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- Matthew 19:21-24 – <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. <sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- Luke 16:13-14 – <sup>13</sup> “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” <sup>14</sup> The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.
- It is impossible to serve two masters who are diametrically opposed in their desires for a servant.
- When the Pharisees responded by “sneering” at Jesus, they were turning up their noses in arrogant mockery.




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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- Luke 12:15-21 – <sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” <sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ <sup>18</sup> “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.’

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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- Luke 12:15-21 – <sup>19</sup> And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” <sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ <sup>21</sup> “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- First, Jesus gives a stern warning: "Be on your guard!"
- "Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."
- The "American Dream" in many ways is the opposite of simplicity.
- "Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone... with an abundance of material goods available to all Americans..."




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The Bible on "Stuff" – Jesus

- With no place to store the excess, the man asks himself an important question: "What shall I do?"
- His solution: build bigger barns.
- We would call this man wise, prudent and forward-thinking. God calls this man a fool.
- Simplicity allows us to live richly toward God and others.
- A first step toward simplicity is Mathew 6:33 – "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."




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Closing Reflections

- Ask God to open your eyes to what Scripture truly teaches us about our "stuff."
- This week, give something away and throw something away.
- Allow the Spirit to reveal to you where you have built "bigger barns" in your life.
- Pray that God will further teach you how to put his "kingdom and righteousness" in its proper, primary place so that all other things will fit where they belong.

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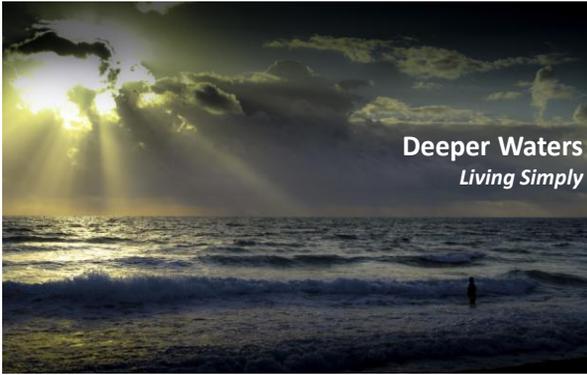
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**Deeper Waters**  
*Living Simply*

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