

Simple Life

Devoting myself to God
Developing Christ-likeness
Doing ministry
Discipling others

SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

By Louie Marsh & Brian Van Dyke

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MY SMALL GROUP ROSTER

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SIMPLE LIFE STUDY SERIES

Outline of each session

You are about to embark on a life-changing experience in your small group. Studying God's Word together with other believers always impacts our lives in ways we can't imagine.

As your group studies the Bible together, this study guide will help you strengthen and deepen the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. The format of each session is as follows:

CONNECT – The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. The questions in this section will help you get to know the members of your group so you'll begin to feel a sense of belonging and family.

GROW – This exciting section introduces a new component for many of you: video teaching. Each week you will watch Pastors Louie & Brian teaching video for the session. We ask you to follow along using the teaching outline in your study guide along with your Bibles. After the teaching video, discuss the questions that follow. The questions are designed to bring you to a deeper understanding of the Bible and to help you consider how the truths of the Bible can impact your life.

PRAY – A time to briefly share prayer requests and then pray about them as a group. If you've never prayed publicly before don't worry – no one will *force* you to pray, but we encourage to take a step of faith and try it – you will like it!



LESSON 1 – Staying Simple In A Complex World

"Today, let us ask God to help us be open, willing & ready to make whatever changes he challenges us to make, no matter how difficult or painful they may seem to be."
Louie Marsh, Simple Life Devotional

CONNECT 15 Minutes



If your group is new or you have any new members, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Briefly share how you heard about the church.

As you participate in the Simple Life spiritual journey, what is one thing you hope God will do in your life?

GROW 45 Minutes



Key Verse

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

The foundation of spiritual growth is your understanding of God's Word. Each week, bring your Bible and your study guide to the group meeting.

Watch the video now. Follow along in your Bibles and take notes on the provided outline.

THE SIMPLE LIFE, LESSON #1

1) The more complex and busy your life becomes, the more _____

Since we are surrounded by so many examples {of faith}, we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up. We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him, so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. Then he received the highest position in heaven, the one next to the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2 (GW)

2) Advantages & Disadvantages to Complexity & Simplicity

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:40-42 (NIV)

Complexity

-
-
-

Simplicity

-
-
-
-

3) What the Busy Life and the Simple Life looks like:

- **Definition of Simple Life:** Living for an audience of _____
- **Definition of a Complex Life** is living for an audience of _____
- **Simple does NOT equal** _____

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. Proverbs 6:6-11 (NIV)

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:37-39 (NIV)

- **Here's the truth – you can't put Jesus first if you won't _____**
- **Out of control business is _____**
- **In the final analysis it is _____ of Christ's Lordship of my life!**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Now's the time to talk about what you just heard. Feel free to ask any questions you have, but always be respectful and listen to others.

- 1) **Do you think your life is too complex? Why or why not?**
- 2) **Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of complexity and simplicity that Brian and Louie talked about. Do you agree or disagree with them, and why?**
- 3) **What does it mean on a practical level to "live for an audience of one?"**
- 4) **Do you agree with Louie's statement that "out of control busyness is your enemy?"**
 - **Do you find most people around you are out of control with how busy they are?**
- 5) **On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not committed at all and 10 being totally committed; how committed am I to Christ?**

6) If you had to cut one thing out of your life to make more room for God, what would it be? How hard would it be to remove that from your life? What's stopping you from doing so?



PRAY



LESSON 2 – DEVOTING Myself to God

“There is nothing more important than your relationship with God: All other things in life pale in comparison to a relationship with God.”
- Brian Van Dyke, Simple Life Devotional

CONNECT 15 Minutes



What are some things the world is devoted too? How can you tell they are devoted to them?

Who was or is the most devoted person you know? What impact on your life has their devotion had?

GROW 45 Minutes



Key Verse

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

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THE SIMPLE LIFE, LESSON #2

1) Why are people busy?

- To _____
- To _____
- To _____
- Because they've bought into our culture's _____

2) Devotion means you are only committed to _____

"No one 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. Matthew 6:24 (NIV)

- Fan = _____

Jesus answered him, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' Matthew 22:37 (GW)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

3) How can we worship personally or as a family?

- Read and Meditate on _____
- Pray _____
- Praise _____

TWO KINDS OF PRAISE:

- _____
- _____

Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.
Psalm 145:2-9 (NIV)

- Look for God's actions & _____

4) In the largest sense worship is a _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Now's the time to talk about what you just heard. Feel free to ask any questions you have, but always be respectful and listen to others.

1) Which of the 3 reasons Brian gave for why people are so busy applies most closely to you?

2) How much have you been impacted by our cultures demand that we must be busy? Is this impact good, bad, or both?

3) Should Christian be fanatics for Jesus? Why or why not?

4) Do you intentionally worship God at any time other than the church's worship service?

5) Do you meditate on the Word of God when you worship God privately? How would you define meditation?

6) What part does Prayer and Praise play in your worship?



PRAY



LESSON 3 – Developing Christlikness

“What’s involved in bearing my cross? **Doing whatever it takes to be like Jesus!**”
- Louie Marsh, Simple Life Devotional

CONNECT 15 Minutes



When you hear the word discipline do you react in a positive or a negative way? Why?

It often seems that the average Christian is more disciplined about watching their favorite TV program than they are about being faithful in a ministry. Agree or disagree? Why do you think this might be true?

GROW 45 Minutes



Key Verse

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Luke 9:23 (NIV)

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THE SIMPLE LIFE, LESSON #3

1) Definition of Developing Christlikeness: Developing Christ's _____ &

2) Two tools for doing this: _____ & _____

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

- All who disciple must also be _____
- A majority of learning involves some type of _____

3) A mentor is someone who:

- _____ what they know.
- _____ their life experiences.
- Allows him or herself to be _____

4) A Mentor should be...

- The same _____
- An active member of and involved in a ministry in _____
- Grounded in _____
- Someone I can _____
- Someone who's not afraid to _____

5) A second vital tool: _____

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

- Jesus founded the very first _____

- Small groups are NOT _____

6) Why are small groups so important?

- God made us with a need to _____
- They provide _____
- I have a greater _____

7) What happens in a small group?

- They are centered around _____
- Authentic _____ takes place.
- Mutual sharing of _____
- Time for _____
- _____ for each other.

8) Small groups _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Now's the time to talk about what you just heard. Feel free to ask any questions you have, but always be respectful and listen to others.

1) Do you think developing Christlike conduct and character is a good way to sum up spiritual maturity?

2) Do you regularly practice spiritual disciplines? (Prayer, Bible Study & Meditation, Fasting, etc.)

3) Name a few of your spiritual mentors, either past or present, and talk about the impact they've had on your life.

4) Discuss how someone could go about finding a mentor. Do you agree with the list of qualifications given in the video. Are there any you would add?

5) Do you meditate on the Word of God when you worship God privately? How would you define meditation?



PRAY



LESSON 4 – Doing Ministry

“One of the biggest excuses for not serving is time. Our lives have become so complex/busy that we have failed to continue what the early church started: We fail to serve our church family.”
- Brian Van Dyke, Simple Life Devotional

CONNECT 15 Minutes



Do you think Pastors talk about finding your ministry to disguise the fact they just want a lot of people to work for nothing?
Share how someone’s ministry has impacted your life, or tell how being part of a ministry has changed your own life.

GROW 45 Minutes



Key Verse
Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Proverbs 3:27 (NIV)

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THE SIMPLE LIFE, LESSON #4

1) Working for God does NOT mean being _____

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

2) "Doing ministry is the result of a heart that turns from self towards God and others."

Ministry is _____

3) Two types of Ministry:

- Ministering to the _____
- Ministering to the _____

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (ESV)

4) How do I find my Ministry? (Romans 12:1-8)

- _____ myself to God.
- _____ distractions.
- _____ my strengths and weaknesses.
- _____ with other believers.
- _____ my gifts by doing the work of the ministry.

5) MY S.H.A.P.E. WILL DETERMINE MY MINISTRY

- S = _____

"... Each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." 1 Cor. 7:7b

ASK: WHAT AM I GIFTED TO DO?

- H = _____

"God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose..." Rev. 17:7

"For it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose!" Phil. 2:13 (NEB)

AWHAT DO I LOVE TO DO?

- A = _____

"There are different abilities to perform service..." 1 Cor. 12:6

*"I (God)... have given him **skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts...**" Exodus 31:3*

*"... our **competence** comes from God." 2 Cor. 3:5b*

ASK: WHAT NATURAL TALENTS AND SKILLS DO I HAVE?

- P = _____

"No one can really know what anyone else is thinking or what he is really like, except that person himself." 1 Cor. 2:11 (LB)

ASK: WHERE DOES MY PERSONALITY BEST SUIT ME TO SERVE?

- E = _____

ASK: WHAT LIFE EXPERIENCES DO I HAVE TO USE IN THE MINISTRY?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Now's the time to talk about what you just heard. Feel free to ask any questions you have, but always be respectful and listen to others.

1) Are you currently involved in a ministry at KCC?

- Do you believe this is what God has gifted you to do, or are you still looking for the right spot?

2) Discuss this statement from the video: Doing ministry is the result of a heart that turns from self towards God and others.” Agree, disagree & why.

3) Can you name one or two spiritual gifts that you are confident God has given you?

4) Where is your heart for ministry? What is “wrecking you” right now?

5) What natural abilities do you possess that you are using in ministry?

6) Based on your personality, what kind of ministry do you think you ought to be involved in?

7) How has God used the painful experiences of your life to allow you to minister to and help other people? Give one specific example.



PRAY



LESSON 5 – Discipling Others

“...I’m not saying ‘Evangelism is horrible. I am saying that most Christians react to it with a carefully hidden sense of horror. Which is why most Disciples in America do not share their faith...”

- Louie Marsh, Simple Life Devotional

CONNECT 15 Minutes



Which would you rather do? Share your faith with a non-Christian, or have your finger nails slowly pulled out? Is this a difficult choice to make?

How many non-Christian friends do you have? Do you try and live and speak in a way that will be a good witness to them?

GROW 45 Minutes



Key Verse

And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
Matthew 4:19 (ESV)

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THE SIMPLE LIFE, LESSON #5

1) “ _____ tie directly to the complexity of life. What if you had only one goal in mind? Would this simplify life?”

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31-33-11:1 (ESV)

- This doesn't mean you drop _____
- But you may have to drop _____

2) Jesus said to make disciples “ _____ ”

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

- Discipleship is a _____
- _____ is the beginning of that process.

3) Don't think you can always just use one _____

4) S.H.A.R.E.

- _____ God first.
- _____ live
- _____ show love
- _____ others rights
- _____ presents _____

5) B.A.S.I.S.

- B = _____

• A = _____

• S = _____

• I = _____

• S = _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Now's the time to talk about what you just heard. Feel free to ask any questions you have, but always be respectful and listen to others.

1) Discuss this quote: "Ultimate concerns tie directly to the complexity of life. What if you had only one goal in mind? Would this simplify life?"

- Do you agree or disagree with it?
- Do you think it's possible, in a practical sense, to have just one overriding goal?

2) If the goal is showing people who Jesus is, what are some practical ways I can do that?

3) Discuss the concept of Discipleship as a process and the importance of seeing Evangelism as just the beginning of that process.

- Do you agree with that?
- If so, why is it so important to understand and live that out?
- Do you think most churches have traditionally practiced this?

4) Go through the five letters of S.H.A.R.E. and discuss how well you are doing with each one.



PRAY

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Group Development



GROUP AGREEMENT

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such an agreement will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your agreement during session 1 in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

If the idea of a written agreement is unfamiliar to your group, we encourage you to give it a try.

We agree to the following VALUES:

Clear Purpose	To grow healthy spiritual lives by building a healthy small group community
Group Attendance	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late)
Safe Environment	To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)
Be Confidential	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group
Spiritual Health	To give group members permission to help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God
Welcome Newcomers	To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers
Building Relationships	To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who may attend group?

Anybody you feel would benefit. As you begin, we encourage each attender to invite at least one other friend to join. The best time to have people join the group is in the first or second week of a new study. Take some time at your first meeting to share names of friends of group members so that as a group you can pray that they might be open to attend.

How long will this group meet?

This series is 5 weeks long, and we are encouraging groups to add one additional week for a celebration. At the end of this study, each group member may decide if he or she desires to continue on for another six-week study. In your final session, week six, take time to discuss your *Group Agreement*, and what study you might do next.

Who is the leader?

Most groups have a leader. If you do not have a leader, take a few minutes to talk about who will be the leader in your group. We encourage you to select one or more discussion leaders. We recommend that you rotate the job of facilitating your discussions, creating opportunities for everyone's gifts to develop. Several other responsibilities can be rotated, including refreshments, prayer requests, worship, or keeping up with those who miss a meeting. Shared ownership in the group helps everybody grow.

Where do we find new group members for our group?

This can be an issue for groups, especially new groups starting with just a few people, or existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to brainstorm a list of people from your work, church, neighborhood, children's school, family, the gym, and so on. Then pray for the people on each member's list. Have each group member invite several people on their list. No matter how you find members, it is important to continue actively looking for new people to join your group. All groups go through some healthy attrition as a result of moves, releasing new leaders, ministry opportunities, and so forth. If the group gets too small, it runs the risk of shutting down. Remember, the next person you add just might become a friend for eternity. You never know.

How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?

Very carefully. This is a sensitive issue in groups. We suggest that you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to meet in the living room with the adults and share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can be with the kids in another part of the house. Another popular option is to have one home for the kids and a second home (close by) for the adults. If desired, the adults could rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson for the kids. This last option is great with school age kids and can be a huge blessing to families.

What if we cannot get through all the content each week?

The curriculum is provided to serve you as a group and as a leader. Do not feel obligated to get through all the content in this study guide. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit during your group meeting. Some items will be more applicable for your group than others. Choose those items that best fit your group life. However, if an item stretches you as a group, do not ignore it. New experiences will breathe new growth and community into your small group.

Many groups are able to complete these study guides in the suggested 5 weeks, while others take several extra weeks. Please feel free to adjust your pace according to the needs of your group. If the need arises to take a week and give attention to needs in your group, do so. Then come back to the study guide the next week. We encourage you to periodically meet together specifically for the purpose of building relationships within your group.