



Six Reasons to Live More Simply — *AND GIVE MORE GENEROUSLY*

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www.epm.org/blog/2014/Sep/29/live-more-simply#ixzz30FWWQIRg

Someone has said, “Live simply that others may simply live.” Of course, there is no automatic relationship between my simple living and someone else being rescued from starvation or reached with the gospel. There is only a relationship if I, in fact, use the resources I have freed up to feed the hungry and reach the lost. This itself assumes I will continue to make a decent wage. For if I go off and pursue simple living for simple living’s sake, spending what little I earn on myself, it does no good for anyone else. The point is not merely saying “no” to money and things, but using money and things to say “yes” to God.

How can we live more simply? *There are thousands of ways.* We can buy used cars rather than new, modest houses rather than expensive ones. We don’t have to replace older furniture just for appearances. We can mend and wear clothes we already have, shop at thrift stores, give up recreational shopping and costly clothes and jewelry, cut down on expensive convenience foods, and choose less costly exercise and recreation. Some of us can carpool, use public transportation, or a bike instead of a car or second car. But these are things few of us will do unless we have clear and compelling reasons. Here are six:

1. We should live more simply—and give more generously —BECAUSE HEAVEN IS OUR HOME.

The single greatest deterrent to giving—and to living more simply—is the **illusion** that this world is our home.

Suppose your home were in France and you were visiting the United States for eighty days, living in a hotel. Furthermore, suppose there’s a rule that says you can’t take anything back to France on your flight home, nor can you ship anything or carry back money with you. But while you’re in America, you can earn money and send deposits to your bank in France.

Question: Would you fill your hotel room with expensive furnishings and extravagant wall hangings? Of course not. Why? Because your time in America is so short, and you know you can’t take it with you. It’s just a hotel room! If you’re wise, you’ll send your treasures home, knowing they’ll be waiting for you when you arrive.

We’re here on earth on a short-term visa. It’s about to expire! Don’t spend too much time and money and energy on your hotel room when instead you can send it on ahead.

2. We should live more simply—and give more generously —BECAUSE IT FREES US AND SHIFTS OUR CENTER OF GRAVITY.

Copernicus sparked a revolution when he proved that the sun doesn’t revolve around the earth. *Giving* will spark a Copernican revolution in the lives of Christians who understand that life doesn’t revolve around the things of earth. In giving, we surrender our possessions to their proper center of gravity: God. Life no longer revolves around houses and land and cars and things. Giving—and the simpler living that results when we give—breaks us out of Money’s orbit and sets up for us a new center of gravity, in Heaven.

3. We should live more simply—and give more generously —BECAUSE WE’RE GOD’S PIPELINE.

Christians are God’s delivery people through which he does his giving to a needy world. We are conduits of God’s grace to others. If we forget that we’re God’s stewards—his delivery drivers—it’s like FedEx or UPS forgetting that what they carry in their trucks doesn’t belong to them. When that happens, deliveries grind to a halt and people don’t get what they need.

God comes right out and tells us why He gives us more money than we need. It’s not so we can find more ways to indulge ourselves and spoil our children. It’s not so we can insulate ourselves from needing God’s provision. It’s so we can give and give generously ([2 Cor 8:14;9:11](#)).

4. We should live more simply—and give more generously—BECAUSE OF THE REWARD WE’LL RECEIVE IN HEAVEN AND THE JOY IT WILL BRING US

If I choose a smaller house here on earth and invest the savings in God’s kingdom, God will give me eternal treasures in Heaven that will make a big house on earth seem utterly trivial. Why settle for an expensive necklace now when by selling it and giving the money to meet needs it could contribute to an imperishable treasure in eternity?

5. We should live more simply—and give more generously —BECAUSE OF THE DIRE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE WORLD.

Suppose God wanted to reach the world for Christ and help an unprecedented number of suffering people. What might you expect Him to put in the hands of His delivery people? Unprecedented wealth to meet all those needs and reach all those people? Well, He’s done it, hasn’t He? The question is, what are we doing with it?

John Piper makes this observation: **Three billion people today are outside Jesus Christ.** Two-thirds of them have no viable Christian witness in their culture. If they are to hear—and Christ commands that they hear—then cross-cultural missionaries will have to be sent and paid for. ***All the wealth needed to send this new army of good news ambassadors is already in the church.*** If we, like Paul, are content with the simple necessities of life, hundreds of millions of dollars in the church would be released to take the gospel to the frontiers. The revolution of joy and freedom it would cause at home would be the best local witness imaginable.

6. We should live more simply—and give more generously —BECAUSE OF THE WORLD’S URGENT PHYSICAL NEEDS.

“[Agabus] stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul” ([Acts 11:28-30](#)).

Here is the biblical pattern for giving: See a need, give to meet it. Giving according to our ability means living on less than God has entrusted to us. If He has entrusted us with a great deal, as He has most people reading this, it means living on far less so we can deliver the excess to the needy. That way they will not have too little and we will not have too much—exactly what God intends, according to [2 Corinthians 8:14](#).

How WILL YOU live more simply—and give more generously—this year?