

Put God Ahead of Things

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 4****Focus:**

Put God first.

Lesson 4**Bible Basis:**Exodus 20:15, 17;
Luke 12:13-21**Lesson 4****Memory Verse:**

“For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”
—Luke 12:30-31

As they explore putting God first, students will consider whether less is more when it comes to material objects.

Materials:

- Internet access

Minimalism is gaining popularity as a lifestyle. People are de-cluttering, choosing to own only things they truly value or are absolutely essential. Some are moving into tiny houses. Others are committed to making as little trash as possible by refusing, reusing, and repairing before buying more. Here is one man’s view on decluttering:

Play the following video for your students [video is 7:22; if time is an issue, stop at 3:54]:

Title: Minimalism – How to become a minimalist – Declutter!!

Source: YouTube.com

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9yPxyDwXd0>

Short Description: A man takes his first step towards minimalism—decluttering!

➤ **Have you ever had to downsize or get rid of a lot of possessions? What was that experience like? Was it difficult? Was it a relief?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Students may think of experiences such as spring-cleaning, garage sales, moving, or packing. Others may have experienced a more devastating loss due to fire, natural disaster, or other reasons. In these instances, we tend to find what we truly value and what we can live without.)

➤ **What is nice about having things? What is not so nice about having things?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Things can bring us joy and be useful, but they can also distract us from what really matters, or be expensive, hard to care for, or wasteful.)

➤ **How do you feel about the idea that not having “stuff” helps you know what your values are?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

Things are not bad, but we should consider their proper place in our lives. Scripture actually has plenty to say about this. Let's find out more.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Materials:

- Internet connection
- Whiteboard and markers
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

If your lesson is online, write the following bullet points in a Word document before your teaching time. Ask students to have an index card and a pen/pencil ready for this part of the lesson. If your group is meeting together in a physical room, write the list on a whiteboard during Step 3 of the lesson.

- Assessing what keeps life complicated; working to simplify these things
- Setting priorities that flow from loving God above all else
- Downsizing possessions
- Cutting back on shopping and discretionary spending
- Eating simple foods
- Enjoying simple pleasures that require no expense
- Removing distractions and preoccupations with things

Simplicity is recognized as a spiritual discipline in many traditions of the Christian faith, though perhaps one we don't focus on much in our affluent, American culture. One writer on spiritual practices says that some ways to practice simplicity would include these points (share the list document on your screen).

- **Consider these practices. Do any surprise you? Would you add any points that might help in practicing simplicity?** (Accept all reasonable answers. We may understand the practice of getting rid of things but may not think about how the foods we eat and activities we participate in relate to a stuff-based mindset. Students might specifically name technological items and distractions, or others; these suggestions may fit into the existing bullet points or you might add a new one.)

➤ **Which of these practices would you find easiest to implement? Which one would be the most challenging?** (Answers will vary. Accept all reasonable answers. You could ask how living through this pandemic has affected their answers.)

Have students discuss what they might specifically do to implement each of these seven simplicity practices in their lives. Ask students to write down the seven simplicity practices. Have them carry this card during the week, trying out one practice per day. At the end of the week, students can circle one practice they want to incorporate into their life on a regular basis.

Close in prayer, with palms open, as if to receive a gift. Remind students that this posture can help us remember that everything we have is a gift from God. We can be joyful about our things and hold them loosely, so they don't take His place.

Take time this week to text your students. Check in with them to see how they are doing. Find out how it is working to implement the different simplicity practices. Share how you are doing.

Additional resources:

Title: Living Simplicity

Publisher: 21st Century Christian

URL: <https://www.21stcc.com/store/Living-Simplicity-A-Journey-to-Embracing-a-Fully-Supplied-Life-p150110657>

Short Description: "Simplicity is about being purposeful...It is about reaching out for the best that God has for us...It is about choosing the beautiful, true, and best."

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