

PROFOUND SIMPLICITY

I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3, NASB

We simplify, not just to be less busy, even though we may be right to pursue that. Rather, we simplify to remove distractions from our pursuit of Christ. We prune activities from our lives, not only to get organized, but also that our devotion to Christ and service for His kingdom will be more fruitful. We simplify, not merely to save time, but to eliminate hindrances to the time we devote to knowing Christ. All the reasons we simplify should eventually lead us to Jesus Christ.

DONALD S. WHITNEY, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*

I SMILED AS I READ the T-shirt slogan: *I am woman, I am invincible, I am tired*. What an appropriate commentary on our lives as women. We are great multitaskers and have hearts to give and serve, but at the end of the day we are usually weary—wary from the pressures of jobs, family, and commitments. Our schedules dictate our lives, and the demands and needs of everyday life leave us little time for what we truly love and value. We keep thinking that next week, next month it will be better, but often the unexpected barges into our already full lives and our longing for a simpler lifestyle stirs our hearts.

The challenge to live more simply is not new to our generation.

More than fifty years ago, in her book *Gift from the Sea*, Anne Morrow Lindbergh expressed her desire for simplicity:

There are so few empty pages in my engagement pad, or empty hours in the day, or empty rooms in my life in which to stand alone and find myself. Too many activities, and people, and things. Too many worthy activities, valuable things, and interesting people. For it is not merely the trivial which clutters our lives but the important as well.¹

We do live in a world of “too many” activities, people, and things. Our years are lived all too quickly and we suddenly realize that our lives lack a quality of significance because there is so little empty space. The challenge of leaving empty pages on our calendars is that so many of the opportunities we encounter are worthy and valuable. But the “too many” has the potential of leading us astray from the most vital aspect of our lives: our devotion to Christ.

As a loving pastor, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church expressing his concern that false teachers might lure his flock away from the purity and simplicity of their love for Christ. The Greek word for simplicity is *haplotēs*, which means “singleness, sincerity, without pretense.”² Paul reminded the Corinthians that just as a betrothed woman should have a singleness of affection for her husband, so should Christians have a single-minded devotion to Christ. The purity he is concerned about is their purity of doctrine. He feared that the church might be led astray from the simple truths that Christ had taught.

This single-minded devotion to Christ is the fundamental principle of this study. My concern is that we live in a world where