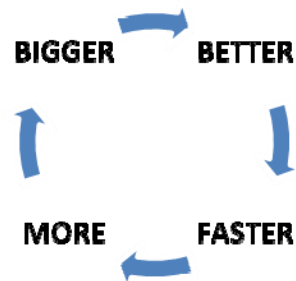


Introduction: Are you doing the Silicon Valley shuffle?

- 4 words drive our lives, our schedules, our relationships, and our souls . . .



- Our attempts to “be it all”, “do it all,” and “have it all,” have created a complex world that:
 1. moves too fast
 2. delivers too little, and . . .
 3. demands too much
- Is it really possible to break free of our high speed, high pressure, high demand, guilt producing dis-ease of our complex lives?

A Visit to the “Simplify Your Life” Doctor

- 2 Diagnostic Questions:

1. What do you want to be known for?
2. If you could only be known for one thing, what would it be?

- 1 Overarching Principle:

Anything minus love = Nothing

Everything minus love = Nothing

¹“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)

- **Summarizing Love's Supremacy**

- Performing in your world with the greatest gifts and abilities...
without love → means nothing!
- Possessing the best, the finest, the most amazing things you can imagine ...
without love → you gain nothing!
- Sacrificially providing for those you love, the greatest cause on earth...
without love → profits you nothing!

- **A Prescription for Transformation**

R_{X1} – The secret to simplifying your life = focus!

R_{X2} – You can only “do less” when you purpose to love more!

R_{X3} – Begin to redefine success . . .

. . . from “How did I do?” to “Who am I becoming?”

. . . from “What do I have?” to “How am I using it?”

. . . from “How much do I give?” to “Why do I give it?”

- **If Love is the Answer, What is Love?**

- What it's not.
- What it is (described, not defined).

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1 Corinthians 13:4 (NIV)

- A word picture to remember.
- An assignment to begin our “doing less, loving more” journey.

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. To what degree are you doing the **Silicon Valley** Shuffle? What does your life and schedule indicate you want to be known for?
2. What is the biggest barrier to you slowing down and simplifying your life?
3. How can you begin to be more loving this week? With whom? Why?
4. Why is it so critical to understand how much God loves you in order to become more loving?

Introduction:

The Question: What's love got to do with simplifying your life?

The Answer: everything!

- **Why?**

1. Because anything minus love = nothing.

Because everything minus love = nothing.

2. Because it is our mis-belief about what our **performance**, **possessions**, and **provisions** can deliver that keep us doing the "Silicon Valley Shuffle."

3. Because you can only "do less" if you purpose to "love" more!"

Learning to Love in "Real Time"

Situation #1: How does love respond to hurts?

- Truth: *Love is patient, love is kind . . .*

1 Corinthians 13:4a

- Practice: When you are hurt, wounded, rejected, or ignored, love "absorbs the blow (pillow) and returns a hug" (kindness).

Situation #2: How does love respond to differences?

- Truth: *Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

1 Corinthians 13:4b-5

- Practice: Love celebrates our differences! Love refuses to compare!

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

The Context: The Corinthian church had two major, unloving responses when it came to their differences:

1. Envy
2. Arrogance

The Principle: Comparison always leads to carnality.

- Envy – Compares **upward** and produces jealousy, anger, resentment, and bitterness. (i.e. “the foot to the hand”)

1 Corinthians 12:15-16

- Arrogance – Compares **downward** and produces pride, boasting, rudeness, and independence. (i.e. “the eye to the hand”)

1 Corinthians 12:21-22

- **We all struggle with envy and arrogance, but we tend to habitually fall into one camp more often than the other.**
 - The envious must believe that God is good and has sovereignly and wisely given them what is best for them and best to fulfill His purposes.
 - Admit, repent
 - Ask God to use you
 - Meditate on God's goodness, generosity
 - Choose gratitude and thankfulness
 - The arrogant must admit their need and choose to be vulnerable in order to receive the goodness of God in their daily experience.
 - Remember everything is given from God
 - Remember where you came from
 - Hang out with those who know where you came from – who you really are
 - Admit your needs

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. What's love got to do with simplifying your life?
2. Share a time in the last week you were patient (pillow) and kind (hug) when someone hurt you.
3. How do you tend to compare yourself with others? Upward (envy) or downward (arrogance)?
4. How does understanding and digesting the reality of God's goodness help you to stop comparing and become more loving?

Introduction:

In a fallen world, our failures are often an attempt to obtain “good things” in a bad way.

- We seek **acceptance and belonging** by forming cliques, and criticizing, and excluding others . . . causing division (chapter 3).
- We seek **connection and intimacy** through illicit sex, pornography, and emotional affairs that destroy marriages and ruin families (chapter 5).
- We seek **security and significance** through obsessive financial accumulation and destroy relationships by our greed (chapter 6).
- We seek to **protect God’s holiness** by misguidedly judging other’s motives and differences resulting in disunity and broken relationships (chapter 8).
- We seek **legitimate godly pleasure** with no consideration for those with a weaker faith and allow our freedom to destroy their relationship with Christ (chapter 8).

Summary: So many times our gravest failures are our attempts to “look for love in all the wrong places.”

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- Practice: Love celebrates our differences! Love refuses to compare upward (envy) or downward (arrogance) 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Situation #3 – How does love respond to failure?

- Truth: ⁶*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.* ⁷*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* ⁸*Love never fails.* 1 Corinthians 13:6-8a
- Practice: Love responds to failure with truth and grace. Truthful and grace-filled love chooses to . . .

- A. “**Bears** all things” – to cover, not bury or deny.

- B. “**Believes** all things” – believes the best, but is not naïve.

- C. “**Hope** all things” – hopes in God’s sovereign power and promises, not the person’s ability to change.

- D. “**Endures** all things” – actively tolerates and stands with a person through adversity and failure, but is not enmeshed or co-dependent.

The Result: “**Love** never fails!” – because God is **ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN!**

Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20

Reference - *God: As He Longs For You To See Him*, pp.77-99, Chip Ingram

The Application: “Serving in Love”

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13 NIV

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. Who has failed you that God wants you to love?
2. Why is it so important that your response of love be both truthful and grace-filled?
3. Did God bring someone specific to your mind that you need to:
 - a) cover the failure?
 - b) believe the best about them despite the circumstances?
 - c) trust that God can and will work in someone whose life seems hopeless?
 - d) continue to endure and help someone who you know you don’t have to?
4. Share what your “next steps” of love might be and ask those close to you to help you.
5. Do you believe God really deals with your failure in the way we’re told to love others? Why? Why not?

Introduction:

Why does pursuit of so many “good” things ...

...produce so many “bad” lives?

Consider this – “In the name of love . . .

- We give, and give, and give some more;
yet still feel guilty for not giving “more.”
- We get up early and come home late;
leaving little time or energy to relate.
- We are always on “the go;”
but love requires a time “to slow.”
- We start them early so they’ll be a star;
then spend our weekends in the car.
- We buy them computers and fancy phones;
only to discover they feel all alone.
- We celebrate their role on the traveling team;
then wonder later why at church they’re rarely seen.
- We make success what we reward;
but show little passion for His Word.
- We put our kids in the finest schools;
but fail to teach them spiritual tools.
- We withhold honest feedback from a friend;
then watch them repeat the negative consequences
of their actions again.

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- Practice: Love responds to failure with truth and grace. Truthful and grace-filled love chooses to . . . bear, believe, hope, and endure all things.

Situation #4: How does love respond to misplaced priorities?

- **Truth:** ⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- **Practice:** Love ruthlessly refuses to allow temporal “good” things to crowd out the eternal “best” things.

Thesis -

1 Corinthians 13:8a

Love is supreme! Love is our goal!

Contrast -

1 Corinthians 13:8b

The best of temporal things (even spiritually beneficial/powerful gifts) are far less important than love.

The Reason -

1 Corinthians 13:9-10

Because they don't last, they're temporal.

The Solution -

1 Corinthians 13:11

Grow up!

How?

- Grow up in your speech
- Grow up in your thoughts
- Grow up in your reasoning

The Principle:

1 Corinthians 13:12-13

- Cloudy vision leads to complexity.
- Clear vision leads to love.

The Application: “Separate from the World’s Values”

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 12:2 NIV

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. How can our seemingly best of motives actually be unloving in their long-term impact?
2. In what ways have some good activities kept you and/or those you love from the best investment of your life and energy?
3. How do you need to “grow up” in your talking, thinking, and reasoning in order to address misplaced priorities? What might this look like?
4. What’s your next step of faith/obedience to realign your priorities around what matters most and will last forever?

Introduction:

When we are not **deeply and personally** loved in ways that make sense to us, we will settle for any number of “pseudo-love” substitutes . . .

- Like the **affirmation** we receive from our success.
- Like the **adulation** we receive from fame.
- Like the **temporary intimacy** we experience from illicit sex.
- Like the **attention** we receive from our appearance or our possessions.
- Like the **esteem** we receive from position.
- Like the **security** we perceive in wealth.

Summary:

- Our quest to be loved **deeply and personally** create fast-paced, over-extended, complex lives driven to obtain success, fame, sex, looks, position, power, and wealth in the desperate hope that someday, someday, we will be loved . . . just for who we are!
- “What the world needs now is love sweet love, no not just for some, but for everyone.”

If what the world needs now is love, then...

1. Where do you find it?

- The source of love is God.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 4:7-8 (NIV)

“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”
Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

- God deposits His love in His follower’s hearts through His Spirit.

“We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.”

I John 4:13-15 (NIV)

- When we are filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit, the outcome/overflow is fruit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness . . .”

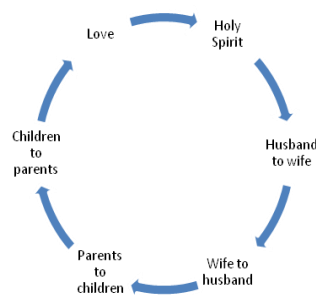
Galatians 5:22 (NIV)

If what the world needs now is love, then...

2. How do you get it?

- God designed love to be birthed and modeled in our families.

Ephesians 5:18-6:4




- We often experience love most deeply
when we need it most desperately.

Romans 5:3-5

*Experiencing God's love requires that we:

1. Step down!
2. Step away!
3. Step in!
4. Step up!
5. Step out!

3. How do you give it away?

- The  Application – “Serving in Love”
from the book - True Spirituality.
- Jesus loved His family, friends, and enemies by . . .
 1. Talking with them.
 2. Walking with them.
 3. Eating with them.
 4. Praying with them.
 5. Playing with them.
 6. Suffering with them.
 7. Taught them.
 8. Forgave them.

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. In what ways is your life too busy because you are settling for “pseudo-love” substitutes?
2. How deeply do you feel loved by God? On a scale from 1-10?
3. What “next step” do you need to take to experience God’s infinite love for you?
4. Who in your family and/or relationships desperately needs to know God loves them? How could you be a conduit of His love to them this week?

Introduction:

What do you want to be known for? If you could be known for only one thing, what would it be?

Spiritual Simplicity: Breaking out of the Silicon Valley Shuffle

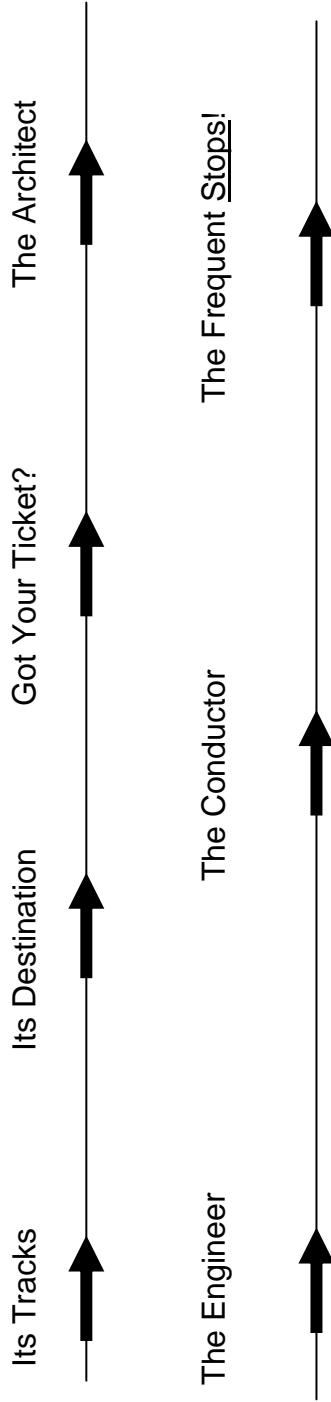
- Why?
 - (1) Because anything minus love is **NOTHING**.
 - (2) Because everything minus love is **NOTHING**.
- Love is the supreme and ultimate test of success.
- 1 Corinthians 13 taught us how love responds to . . .
 - Hurts 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - Differences 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
 - Failure 1 Corinthians 13:6-8
 - Misplaced Priorities 1 Corinthians 13:9-13

We will never “do less” until we “LOVE** more.”**

- Progress report
- Your progress report?

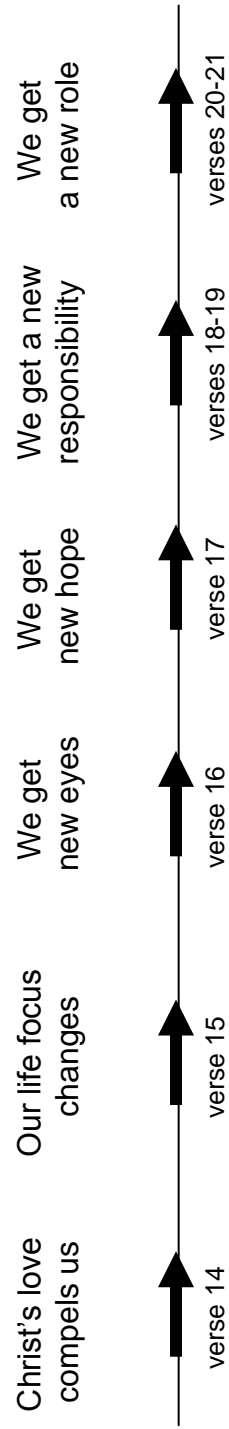
Question: How can we gain and sustain spiritual simplicity?

How do you sustain spiritual simplicity? Get on board the Love Train!



What's life like on the Love Train!

2 Corinthians 5:14-21



How does it really work?

A. Jesus' Command:

- Love God
- Love people

These are the marks of a mature disciple.

B. The Profile of a Disciple – r12

- Surrendered
- Separate from the world
- Sober self-assessment
- Serving in love
- Supernaturally responding to evil

C. The Practices to become an r12 Christian

- B efore God
- I n Community
- O n Mission 24/7

D. The Process that Ignites Life Change

“I’m all in!”

“You accepted me.”

“God used me.”

E. Phobias to Overcome

Fear of the future
Fear of rejection
Fear of failure

A call to all – “Get on Board!”

James 1:19-27

Experiencing and exporting God’s love demands:

1. We step down!
2. We step away!
3. We step in!
4. We step up!
5. We step out!

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. Where did God speak to you today?
2. What specifically do you need to do to get on board the Love Train?
3. What new insight helped you understand how to receive God’s love and stay connected to Him? Who can help you do that?
4. What new insight may help you share God’s love with others? Who will help you do that?
5. Which of the 5 steps did you take today? Why?