

Minimalism Vs. Materialism- Where's The Balance

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SPEAKERS

Dave Leake, Jeff Leake

D Dave Leake 00:02
What's up, everybody? Welcome to the Allison Park leadership podcast, where we have a new tagline with culture creating conversations where

J Jeff Leake 00:09
we have culture, creating conversations. Love that one up. Yeah, that's all right. Welcome to Season Five as we kick off our fifth season here at the beginning of 2024. And we're excited about a brand new season.

D Dave Leake 00:21
Absolutely. Yeah. And as always, we want to give a couple of gratitudes because a few of you a few of you were kind enough to leave us five star reviews since we've had our last podcast. So thank you to Superman, coolamon 10, and Joe caster for your kind reviews. And again, we would love to leave you a shout out as well. If you go on Apple podcast and leave us a five star review, we'll see your name, we'd love to give you a shout out. It just helps us to, you know, get the word out about the podcast and what we're doing and share it with people. And if you've been listening for, you know, even just an episode or a few like thank you for being a part of our show and part of the audience and, you know, it makes it makes it worth doing. Yeah,

J Jeff Leake 00:58
so a little context. So of course, I'm Jeff Leake, I'm the Lead Pastor Allison Park church and Dave is my son and also the campus pastor at the Northside campus. This is season five for us. And we just talked about our new tagline tagline what was previously our tagline for the first four seasons was the principles behind the plans. And the idea for that was we were trying to teach

not so much how to but why we do the things we do. And we originally I think we were thinking in terms of leadership and helping the Allison park staff and then it grew into something else. Right. So that's where we we have conversations about theology, about controversy about politics, about worldviews about church trends. And what we try to do is from a biblical perspective, from our two generations, talk about how we approach these issues in a way that creates, I think, a healthy culture, for your life, for your family, for your church. And so therefore the new tagline culture, creating conversations. So we're glad you're joining us for this for this season. And for this particular episode. So yeah, Dave, what are we talking about today?

D Dave Leake 02:06

So on the weekends right now, at least for two of our campuses, Northside descends a little different, but we've been in a series where we're discussing

J Jeff Leake 02:15

Yeah, so this this series is called Ancient ancient habits, current stress,

D Dave Leake 02:19

where we have St. John Mark combers. Yes, elimination of hurry book, huge plug

J Jeff Leake 02:23

to this particular book, John Mark comer, who wrote the book, the ruthless elimination of hurry, which made its way through a lot of our staff last year. And we mentioned this book during an episode that we did in last season called Content addiction. And other things that destroy your soul, I think was what that was when was called. And a lot of people reacted to that particular podcast because it really hits you where you live, in fact, full disclosure for me, after we talked in that particular episode about addiction to your phone, and how many times we touch I think it's like 2600 times a day people touch their phone. I felt very convicted personally about that. No, seriously, I did. And I, I took email, Instagram and Facebook and several other apps off my phone. And I have been handling it much less Yeah, since that particular episode. So if that happened for you, we'd love to hear from you of steps that you've taken and the benefit that it's had. But some of that research about you know, content addiction comes out of John Mark homers book, the ruthless elimination of hurry.

D Dave Leake 03:33

Well, disclosure, I already been on a journey to try to do some of that with content addiction, like I deleted social media, all my platforms. But I also what after you did the email thing, I was like, I should do something more. So I put a very short time limit on my phone for a sports app that I have that I was using way too much. That's really healthy for me. Because I was when

you're talking about like, you know, you'd be in your phone to check email when you wake up in the middle of the night and stuff. And I was like, I do that all the time. Yeah, so it's been it's been a freeing feeling for me

J Jeff Leake 04:05

it's insidious. It's creepy it creeps into your life without you realizing and if you're not constantly looking to create boundaries for the content, addictions potentially that can arise they just grab you by the throat and have an impact on you. So yeah,

D Dave Leake 04:19

and there's a similar thing that we're going to discuss which it's not content addiction Exactly. But one so we talked about this before but the in the ruthless elimination of hurry. The idea is that hurry sickness and the drive to always be productive and always be moving in for more speed and, you know, make every second count can actually leave us exhausted and sick and tired of loadable Irani. Yep, yeah. And never really satisfied. Whereas there are spiritual practices that Jesus had in his life. Yep. That helped him to model a life of, you know, you could call it like slow wholeness like, Yeah, that wasn't the phrase that

J Jeff Leake 04:59

I coined loaded in the weekend message last week, which was on slowing, was a Dallas Willard quote, and I love this. So the cure, or the goal, which I guess, reveals that you're cured, is to have to gain the ability to do calmly and effectively with strength and joy, that which really matters in your life. That's so good. So to gain the ability to do calmly, and effectively with strength, enjoy that which really matters in your life calmly and effectively with strength and joy, strength and joy that which really matters. So it's not like we're just going to do less, we want to keep doing the things that really matter. Yeah. But we want to do it calmly and effectively not in a hurry, not in a rush with strength and joy, knowing that we're in the zone, and we're doing what we've been assigned to do. And we're doing it at the right pace. And we're doing it in a way that brings joy into our experience. I

D Dave Leake 05:51

love that. I love that. So of the four practices that John Mark talks about. One of them is Sabbath, and we think we've done an episode on that too. Anyway, we do. Another one is he calls it simplicity. But it's really this idea of asking the question, like have I potentially allowed materialism to infiltrate my life? Because from from his perspective, like, what what he, you know, what the goal is, is actually being the opposite of consumeristic, eliminating what you need to eliminate from your life, and really making sure that you only have what you need. Now, he probably goes pretty hardcore at

J Jeff Leake 06:34

it. Yeah, well, he has like 15 ways to become more of a minimalist he does. And so let me just

it. Yeah, well, he has like 15 ways to become more of a minimalist he does. And so let me just let me pause for a moment. So therefore, for habits, the Sabbath, that's easy. So this, this is the rhythm of rest, slowing, so that you're not running in a hurry, and you're operating at the right pace, silence and solitude, which is getting alone and spending time with God and letting your whole soul catch up. And then simplicity. And actually, Dave, I'm in the process of preparing the weekend message on this particular topic and how, how we came up with this idea to discuss this, it's actually going to add value to the whole series. Is I was like, this one feels kind of hippie to me, like, like, it feels a little bit like, eat organic, and become a vegan and, and cook your make your own bread and that kind of a thing. Like, that's sort of how it makes me feel when I read this amazing book from John Mark Comer. Yeah, I don't want to in any way criticize, but I had this reaction and going through this particular one, like, really is this is this what I want to do? But he quotes this guy Owling founding in the chapter on simplicity. And he says, the drive to possess is the engine of hurry. Hmm. And so what you're saying, Dave, is that somehow a materialistic culture, and worldview is a major contributor to hurry sickness. Yeah. And there has to be a solution to it, you were saying is the discipline of simplicity, or you're describing it as a more? What's the word you use minimalist? Or?

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Dave Leake 08:14

Yeah, yeah. Well, he's really talking about minimalism, in a sense. I mean, that's his solution is solution to the idea of consumerism. So let's just let's just like acknowledge this, I think, like, nobody, so the question, Am I maybe becoming too materialistic? Probably, like, on instinct. Nobody feels like they're super materialistic. So you're talking about this? Where are these people that are materialist? And if you know, our culture is materialistic, right, but I am, I'm not too far. If you if you are somebody that thinks you're too materialistic, it might be just a massive thing where you're like, Yeah, boy, I have so much stuff. It's ridiculous, like, but but I think probably a lot of people wouldn't identify with it. It feels in that way really similar to the idea of content addiction, or digital content addiction, because it's like, it's an insidious thing that we're not necessarily always aware of. Yeah, but it does have major implications ramifications for the direction of our lives. Yes. So here's, here's what I would say. Like, for me, when I was thinking about this and reading through this, here's here's where I started to see myself in this. I think it's it is a an accepted practice to buy something, whatever it is, because you have a need for it. Like you have a use for it. So or desire for it or a desire for it. You want you know, so desire would be like you want a pair of shoes. You want a new laptop, you want a video game, you know, you want a trip somewhere around the world. There's like, Oh, that would be cool. I have the money. Why not? I'm giving my money well enough. I'm tithing. I'm using my time. Well, like what why can't I do what I want to do with this? That's like, a desire, but then there's also just like, you know, you can you could think of a reason why you need this? Like, I really need it. I need a new set of hands. Or I really like, Could I use this? Yeah, but there's certain things that are wrong. No, that sounds all like no no it's not it's not yet but follow me follow me. Yeah, what happens is like, you know, so for me this was an Amazon thing like some I would see a deal in it but it's such a good deal. I can't pass this up. I had like a string of

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Jeff Leake 10:20

sick save so much money when I bought the Yeah, I had a string of six months

D

Dave Leake 10:22

D Dave Leake 10:25

where I bought so many stupid things gadgets and an upgrade on this and a little small thing on this because it was like a deal. It was like 70% off and resell it for more. Yeah, I was like finding stuff like I was on this this Twitter feed that had like deals that are coming out. But like the the question, okay, the question that I am not going to quote him exactly that he's posing. Is Mi Mi accumulating stuff. Only when I really need it? Or am I allowing myself a lot of latitude to just get stuff because I could use it? Because so Oh, that like it's getting old. I want this new thing. I need an upgrade. Like every time there's new iPhone or get a new iPhone, I upgrade my watch

J Jeff Leake 11:04

or two. So none of this sounds soul impacting to me. But I can read some of the questions that he asks. So he says what if the formula more stuff equals more happiness is bad math. Then he said what if more stuff just often equals more stress, more hours at the office more debt, or years working in a job? I don't feel called to more time wasted cleaning, maintaining and fixing and playing with and organizing and reorganizing and updating all the junk that I don't even need? What if more stuff actually equals less of what matters most less time? Less financial freedom, less generosity, which according to Jesus is where the real joy is less peace, is I heard my way through the mall parking lot less focus on what life is actually about less metal real estate for creativity, less relationships, less margin, less prayer, less of what I really ache for. Yeah,

D Dave Leake 11:57

exactly. I think I think that, so when you just talk about like, Oh, somebody's just buying stuff, which has been me a lot of times, like, oh, like it's not that big of a deal. I think he just described it well with your with your quote there. But even you know, reading from John Marcos from the Gospel of Mark chapter four, verse 19, where he talks about the parable of the sower. And one of this one of the types of soil, that when the sower who's sowing the Word of God, and the message of hope for him, that where the seed does not grow, it says where the the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things come in and choke the word making it unfruitful. So, you know, the the danger that I see that I'm trying to describe, it's not that any of those things are bad. But where could we maybe be allowing the worries of this life, or the deceitfulness of wealth, the desires for other things, it's not evil things, as necessarily, it's not. It's not all bad stuff. It's not saying the desire for sin, it's that it's just the desire for more, it's the desire for things that come in, they choke the word making it unfruitful, I think ultimately, the insidious nature of needing more, you know, of, you could say, materialism, or you could say consumerism, the danger of it, if we're not taking a stock is that it has the potential to come in and choke out what God wants to do in our lives. Because it becomes a focus, okay, because we don't so I just was talking about this, you know, a few weeks ago at Northside. But when Jesus talks about greed, when he says, like, Where have all kinds of greed or whatever, yeah, when he talks about greed, and he, man, I'll find the reference in a second. It's right where he goes, then it's I think it must be Matthew six, where it says, Then seek first kingdom of God and all in his righteousness, and all these things will be added to as well. He before that he talks about, you know, if God cares for the sparrow or for the lilies of the valley, how much more will he care about you? You know, don't don't worry about what's going to be in your backyard where you're gonna have to eat because you know, who of you by worrying can add even a single day to your life? Before all of that he's talking

about beware of greed, and then his antidote is be careful not to worry. So what I was preaching about a few weeks ago was that I think none of us thinks about greed, or consumerism and materialism as being our own problem but greed is often worrying about what I don't have what I still need what I want to push for it can be hoarding

J Jeff Leake 14:40

it's not just buying stuff no no exactly desire or insecurity or worry or concern over stuff I'm

D Dave Leake 14:47

not sure I have enough I probably need more. What if this happens I need more I need to I need to work more shifts. I need to work harder, or it can be I don't look good enough. My clothes aren't you know what I mean? Like I just I really want to Yeah, to a certain level, I don't know. You don't I'm saying I think I think there's like, it's like one of those things that just like content addiction, it has a subtle Undertow where there's a current beneath the surface of the waters where it doesn't look like it's pulling us back. But before you know it, you can kind of be swept farther and farther from the shore of what I would say is like wholeness, and it's a life of God's, you know, God, being able to speak to you clearly and change your heart and use you for the fruit that he wants. Because again, the danger is that all of these things, the worries of light, the sinfulness of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word making unfruitful. That's, that is a picture and a description of God's word, not actually making someone a follower of Jesus. It's a description of somebody that's not really like a Christian who saved by the way, he describes it. Okay, you know what I'm saying? So I'm not I'm not saying that all Americans who have a problem with consumerism are not Christians. But my point is it Jesus described it as being so dangerous, that it has the possible possibility of taking us away from God in general. Does it feel fair the way I'm putting that?

J Jeff Leake 16:11

Yeah, I mean, it is that is pretty intense. But But I get what you're saying. Yeah, I mean, Jesus did talk about this quite a bit. And he, you know, he says, A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of his present your possessions. And he talks about worry. And all of those things in the times he challenged wealthy people that this is what they needed to do, to let go of the God that they were serving, which is money. And, you know, he told one guy in particular, to get rid of it all, to demonstrate that he could let it go, right. And so I'm putting in putting, you know, God on the throne of his heart instead. So it still feels to me, like, Okay, you could have this reaction day like, Well, that's nice for you, if you have all that money, that you can go on Amazon and buy all that stuff. But when you don't have stuff, I mean, that's a totally different matter. And I think, I think in here, I was just searching, looking through the chapter of this book. He he quotes some research to say that there is we are culture would believe the kind of the myth, the monster have more, right. The more you have, the more money you have, the more vacations you can take, the bigger the house, the bigger the car. Yeah, you know, we would look at, you know, athletes and movie stars and billionaires and thing they gotta made, like, they obviously have everything that they would need to be happy in, pass that on even the future generations. But he quotes a research in here to say that stats show that there's a certain level that money creates a level of security and comfort for you. But after \$75,000 a

year, it doesn't increase. Yeah. And once you make that amount of money, first, he says, if you make \$34,000 a year, you're in the top 1%, of earners, of all the 7 billion people who are alive on planet Earth, which makes us all comparatively incredibly wealthy, most of us, right, probably right, right. Most of us, if you make 75,000, you actually make enough money as a household that that more money doesn't actually make you happier, happier, more content, that at some point, it has diminishing returns. Yeah, he

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Dave Leake 18:23

actually goes on to say that this was regardless of the city or the part of America, you're under cost of living? Yeah. Which is actually crazy to me, is \$75,000 goes a long way. And some places, you know, as opposed to a savior living in New York City. Yeah.

J

Jeff Leake 18:38

So okay, maybe we're worrying too much about stuff. Maybe we're trying to get too much stuff. Maybe we're, we have too much stuff in our closets right now. And maybe all of the concerns around it all or the debt that we've accumulated, because we want it all is affecting our soul more than we realize that what we're asking in this,

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Dave Leake 19:01

yeah, ticular episode, can I try? I don't know that I've really based on your reactions, I don't know that I really made a compelling case for how this would feel like something. Let me try it. Let me try one more angle. I'm beating a dead horse. I apologize. Glitches roll with that for a second. So on one of John marks pages, he talks about that there is a subtle thing that we could call the gospel of America. And it's it's a it's a, it's a message that's really different to Christianity, but that maybe has influenced us a little bit. I think we would preach about something like this in church, but it just worth thinking about. So he says this gospel makes the exact opposite claim in a nutshell, the more you have, the happier we'll be. They he describes a bunch of examples that actually feel relatable, because, well, let's slow down and read that very deliberately. Okay, the Gospel, this gospel of America makes the exact opposite claim of the gospel of Jesus, but it says in a nutshell, the more you have, the happier you'll be. That's the claim of this. America gospel as what he said. Gospel of America, which

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Jeff Leake 20:00

is preached to us through almost every commercial exactly that we see on television, you know, on the side of Facebook, you know, everybody's always saying, You need this. And if you have this, you will not just have a new car, you'll have an experience of a lifetime, right? It gives you almost paints like this thing that you need, will become the answer to your deepest longings in life, or at

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Dave Leake 20:26

least this will make you feel way better. Yeah, it'll be like. Oh

least this will make you feel way better. Yeah, it'll be like, Oh,

J Jeff Leake 20:29

if you have that, Matthew McConaughey Lincoln Continental, I mean, you will really be a classy dude. Right?

D Dave Leake 20:35

Just think that people will look at you and think, yeah, so Okay, so then he gives examples, you know, get that new dress, a new pair of shoes, or golf club, or whatever, you'll naturally be happier. Trade your car for the new model that has LED lights around the logo of the bigger, better home or condo or apartment, and make sure you furnish it with the latest design trend, preferably from Sweden or Australia, work your way up the ladder, throw an elbow if you have to, but get the promotion, get the raise, get the bonus. If and when you do, you'll be happier. Everybody knows that happiness is out there. It's just one Pay Pal click or outfit or gadget or car payment or mortgage way out of reach. Yes, but barely. I'm almost there. I can feel it. And I think that that's a subtle thing that, to me, at least feels so relatable. Like I don't I don't think of myself as a materialist person. But do I sometimes have this feeling? Well, yes, let's

J Jeff Leake 21:27

just say it in the in the church world, we have parts of Christianity adopted that ideal. And put it into what we would consider being the extreme parts of the prosperity gospel that they've taken the idea of more, the more you have, the more you achieve, the more you accomplish, the more blessed you are. And that has become this imbalanced approach of the prosperity gospel. It's interesting that historically, there were a whole season centuries, where you were perceived to be spiritual, you had nothing. Like if you took a vow of poverty, and you became a monk, and you lived in seclusion, you could distance yourself from the evil contaminants of the world system. And you could be the most close to God in that regard, which I don't think that's true, either. Jesus didn't live disconnected from the world, he was not a monk. He had no problem with people having money, or living in a house. I mean, Jesus interacted with culture all the time. So you do kind of have these two polar opposite extremes. One is poverty, and seclusion, and, and complete and total mental minimalism is the most spiritual approach. And then the other side is this Americanized prosperity. The more you achieved, the more you do, the more you have, the more you accomplish them, the more people will look at you as a success. In fact, in our culture, in the church world, the church conference speakers are never the monk. You don't ever find the contemplative reflective dude, being given an opportunity to stand on the stage. It's always the CEO, pastor of the mega church, who's just written the latest book, who's, you know, exploding. Yeah, numbers are exploding. And they have more and more and more and more more of that is what we hold up as the epitome of, of what spiritual success looks like. And these two polar opposites probably aren't an accurate representation of Jesus. Either way, poverty or prosperity. So we're looking for a balance here, right? We're looking for the healthy zone, where we're not crazy into the I don't want to have anything or be with anybody kind of a deal. Or I want to have so much that everyone will envy me kind of a deal. So what's that zone in the middle? I think this is what John Mark Comer is calling the habit or discipline of simplicity. And he goes into then these I think, 15 or 20 steps to reduce your dependency on stuff. Where do you go with this? Dave? Have you started this practice? The

discipline? If so, because honestly, part of the reason why we're talking about this today is I don't think I'm very materialistic as a person. But I guess I'm asking that question now. Am I and is this

D Dave Leake 24:24

you personally tend to struggle with this as much knowing you? Yeah, because you're a hard person to buy presents. Like yeah, what's that even gonna want? I think you want a few because I

J Jeff Leake 24:36

am more minimalistic in my desires and, and and concerns. So

D Dave Leake 24:42

maybe that's why it's hard for you to relate to that. Because you don't really want it like a great present for you was a wooden Chelsea puzzle. You were like, yeah. You know, like, that was great for you know,

J Jeff Leake 24:57

I know I really have never been the guy for I need the to your car, or the nicer outfit or whatever, it just never had been my, everybody has their own.

D Dave Leake 25:04

I'm way more like that than you are. I don't I don't, I hope I'm not, like so far, but it's relatable to me, I get it, I do understand it, you know, and I think, you know, I

J Jeff Leake 25:16

would probably be more in the success, like achievement sure, like, I want to, I want to Plant more churches, I want to grow larger, I want to be more effective in what we do. I think that is, it can also be an insidious type of greed, where you're trying more and more accomplishment will make things more and more better. And

D Dave Leake 25:38

no doubt, they're both offshoots of the same American Dream. Yeah, you know, of the idea. Like, you can come here from wherever you are, or you can be born here. And if you work hard enough, and you're smart enough, and you're tenacious enough, then you can be as successful as you want to be. And that's translated into our spiritual lives to some degree, you know, like

that, if you like, do whatever it is that God's gonna give you more and more, and he's gonna further your dreams. And it's again, it's not that God doesn't have any interest in some of those things. But that's clearly not the main point of the gospel is more and more of my dreams, big dreams being achieved. Yeah, are more and more accumulation of stuff.

J Jeff Leake 26:16

So So where do we go to find the right? Mix? Like, in some ways, when I read John Marx chapter, I feel like he's trying to make us a little more, like the Amish would live like, no electronics, and everything's homemade, and chop your own wood and bake your own bread kind of a thing. And not he doesn't go that far, you know, I'm saying, but it sort of feels like that. Get back to nature, and, you know, live in a tiny house and that kind of thing. Again, not what he says, my that's my impression of it. Yeah. So. And for some people that might be, that might be the right way. Like I've talked to some people who have said, we're just getting rid of any clutter, any complication, any extra, we're gonna live real simple. And we're going to create financial margin for ourselves so that we don't have to pressure we have the freedom to decide what we want to decide to do where we want to be. And that becomes their new lifestyle. But most people who are raising kids or in a career are probably ready to go to that extreme. So where do we even begin with this? How does this start?

D Dave Leake 27:28

So I don't know that I'm going to be able to give a an answer to this that is, like, comprehensive, but I can give some thoughts, I guess. Okay. So I think, I think for one. So like, let's just start with some of the basics. Like, the basics, that you know that anything that I have is not my own. It's God's and it's rare for me. Yeah. So I'm a steward of what I have, but it's not mine. So then, for example, part of the way I think we could diagnosis is when it comes to tithing and offering, you know, like, so giving 10% of what we make to God. And then offerings are above and beyond. If that's a pattern of my life already, then I think that that's a big step towards that headway. If it's like, well, I'll give whenever I can, right, like, I'll give whenever I have a little more, I think we need to probably begin to question what so

J Jeff Leake 28:26

what the Sabbath is to our time in setting boundaries for ourselves and creating a rhythm of when I rest and when I work, the the tie this to our finances, and I guess to our soul, when it comes to its attachment to things, it's a way for us to say God, you ask for this 10% I'm giving this believing that you're going to care for everything that I own and everything that I have, and I want my life to be submitted to you. So I'm not giving this just because there's a need out there. I'm giving this as a act of worship and submission as sort of almost like a rebellion against the, the materialistic culture that I'm a part of, I want to make sure that God remains first and the way that I live my life financially. So that's a good place to start. Yeah, I mean, radical generosity, which begins with the obedience of the time it

D Dave Leake 29:14

begins there. Right. But I mean, Matt. Matthew 6:36-24. I think is what it is. is where it says. No

begins there. Right. But I mean, Matt, Matthew 6:24, I think is what it is, is where it says, No one can serve two masters either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. So this

J Jeff Leake 29:29

tithing or stewardship decision, say, God, I want you to be the master of my life, financially. So that's one step right? Yeah, I guess there's a second one and that's to ask the question when is enough? Enough? Like rather than just thinking well, let's just keep accumulating. When is this amount of money this car this you know, amount that I have in savings? when is enough enough? Probably very few. People are there. Most people have tried to climb out of a financial hole that they've created. Right. Sure. But I guess that's a that's a question at least to ponder. when is enough enough? And then maybe another one would be? What is it that I have? That maybe I don't need? Right? Isn't that the Declutter? Question? Yeah, I Yeah, absolutely. And how could I take what I have, that's just complicating and cluttering my life and get rid of it in a way that might benefit somebody else? And make my life a little, a little less complicated? Like, is there stuff I could sell? There's there's stuff that

D Dave Leake 30:39

Yeah, I think it absolutely is, I think, like, do I need this? Like, I think okay, so how do I say this? There's, there's a way that you get, like, really religiously strict to the point of where this actually isn't necessarily just a helpful heart thing. This is just a way of clearing a religious bar. And it's now fair saikal. Yeah, we don't need to get there. But that's, that's part of why this is individualized. And everybody needs to ask themselves this question. I guess, at the bottom of it. I would say, if I'm not doing well, I tend to give myself grace. And I'm like, well, this isn't that, you know what I'm saying? So, if that's if that's the reaction, I think it's just, it's good for us to slow down and ask, you know, really, like, do I need this? If the answer is I really don't need this, I would like this. I think we just have to say, well, how much of what I like am I going to immediately get, like, for example, I was somebody was talking about somebody else they knew around Christmas, they're like, they're really tough to buy for, because anytime they want anything, they immediately buy it. To me, that should make me stop and question and say, Do I want to live like that? Where it's if anything comes out that I want, I immediately have it. And I probably have, you know, a accumulation somewhere of old things. I don't need my clothes. overfilled I have so many boxes of stuff. It might be just that like so when

J Jeff Leake 32:02

is enough enough? What do I have that I don't need? When do I actually tell myself? No? What?

D Dave Leake 32:08

Yes, that's a good one. Do I tell myself? No. Because if you're not in the practice of telling yourself, no, you're not doing what the Bible calls self denial. Yeah. You know, if we don't know how to tell my tell ourselves, by

J Jeff Leake 32:21

the way, fasting is good for that. It's great for that's one of the things we're doing this month, you're telling yourself no to your appetites. But this would be another one another appetite. I guess the third one was, would be, I guess, fourth question. So we said when is enough enough? When? How much do I have that? I don't need when do I tell? Tell myself know? What causes me? worry and concern? Yeah. For so. And, you know, is? Is that a situation that's just beyond my control that I need to trust God with? Or is there a way for me to mitigate the worries and concerns that I have? By figuring ways to pay off my debts or spend less or, you know, position myself for the future so that the stress that I feel today about finances are things I don't feel so much right? That's how do I how do I I guess you know that the picture Dave, you gave us the deceitfulness of wealth, choking out the word that's sewn into your life so that your life is not fruitful in the way that God wants it to be, is a great picture. And the soil to be prepared to receive the Word of God properly, has to be cleansed of the deceitfulness of wealth and the worries about this life. So how does one cleanse their soil?

D Dave Leake 33:42

Let's, why don't we why don't we start? How is wealth deceitful? And what are worries of life?

J Jeff Leake 33:48

Well, wealth is deceitful because it says, if you have more, you'll be happy. Isn't that the main lie? Yeah, yeah,

D Dave Leake 33:56

right. Right. Okay. So it or if you have more, you'll be secure. If you have more, you'll be safe. Yeah, you know, nothing like so what's the truth roll? If that's the frankly, like, okay, the

J Jeff Leake 34:09

truth is, if I have God, I'll have enough because yes, he's gonna care for my needs. And, and what I was gonna be secure. And if I, if I if I have him, I'll have everything that I need. And, and even more than that, but it'll come because he, he releases it to my life and takes care of me. And yeah,

D Dave Leake 34:29

and the flip side is that the control that we think we're exerting over life is somewhat of an illusion, because we, we can't really have control

J Jeff Leake 34:39

well, because in that same passage that we're talking about, which is I think it's found in Luke chapter 12, as well as Matthew chapter six, the Luke chapter 12. passage, Jesus tells the story about the guy who had a successful farming business and he built a bigger barn to store all of his things. And he thought to himself now I'm going to be well off and I'm going to retire by God me for the rest of my life? Yeah. And then the next day dies, right? Yes. And so Jesus then says, Be careful about this, building your security in your bank accounts or in your success, because you don't know what life is gonna hold for you. It's better to have your security in him. Right? Yeah.

D

Dave Leake 35:16

So when you're talking about like, what am I, what am I worried about? You know, sometimes we get ourselves in situations of where we are going to be here until we get ourselves out. Like, we're like, you've already made a choice to live in a certain place or to have a certain job or whatever. And it's just like, well, I it's, it's stuck. Yeah. But but I think maybe what could be helpful? You know, it's, I think it's 90% of Americans tend to live paycheck to paycheck. And that's not because we're not making enough money. It's typically because we max out the amount of things that we can pay for in our given economic situation.

J

Jeff Leake 35:50

Yeah, so it's a little hard to hear if you're in a stuck situation,

D

Dave Leake 35:53

well, and I can totally understand, I really do, you know, like, like, with me and my wife going down to a single income for a time, because we have a baby. Now we've had to refigure and sort things out. So I empathize. And I relate. But what I was gonna say is, I think if you're getting ready to make a decision about this next thing moving to a new house, you have to

J

Jeff Leake 36:12

factor in what impact will this have on our soul? Exactly.

D

Dave Leake 36:16

And then your here's the last thing that I all this as far as like we were talking about, so what do we do? So this is, this is a quote that John Mark has from Richard Foster and Mark skin dreht. He's Erskine, jetty. And he said, simplicity is an inward reality, that can be seen in an outward lifestyle of choosing to leverage time, money, talents, and possessions towards what matters most. So I think, how do we start to have simplicity? What do we do to combat potential materialism? You know, or or this other thing? That's going to be a danger of choking out the fruitfulness? Well, am I using what I have, effectively for what matters most? Yeah, if it's like, well, someday I will, we can, we really should try to start moving towards that now. And when we do that, I think the benefit isn't just that we're more effective. But I think sometimes this

kind of a thing is like, when you hear this conversation, or whenever I hear this conversation about simplicity, it's like this is how I can be the best version of myself. And that's, that's true, like, oh, it can be more effective, I can be more godly, great. But like, from a more felt perspective, this also allows us to have more peace, because actually needing more, and always not having quite enough and having to strive, it actually is stressful, it's exhausting. It doesn't allow us to rest in God's peace or joy. Sometimes it actually takes us away from the purpose that God has for our life, which gives you contentment, and it gives you you know, impact on the world, which is a deeper sort of filament, and it can get us toward stuff that we know really isn't worth of long term.

J Jeff Leake 37:58

And I don't think and I think that's what we want to shoot for. Right, it's back to that same thing to gain the ability to calmly and effectively do with strength and joy that which really matters. And if if the if the stuff you have for the stuff you want or the money you have for the money you need, is taking away your strength and joy or your calm effectiveness. Or it may be distracting you for that which really matters, then you're end up off track from where you need to be in some degree of dis ease or unhealth your life and many of us are in a mental health crisis and we're longing for solutions, and maybe the monster have more in the desire for stuff and the concern about money is part of what's affecting your mental health. And you have to attack that strategically. Just like we talked about attacking content addiction.

D Dave Leake 38:48

Yeah, I mean, John marks, you know, what's the word I'm looking for his his supposition is not the right word, his suggestion, what he's saying is, is that following Jesus isn't just taking what you like from him and not doing the rest. It's trying to live like He lived. Yeah, you know. And so I think like for us, like, when it comes to this idea of of what are we doing? It's important for us to ask the question, Am I using my resources for what matters most? So I wanted to ask you this question. What are you think? What's the filter that we should be thinking for? Like, what does what should matter most what matters most? to Jesus? What should matter most so that I can have a sort of a filter? Am I using my money and my stuff and my time towards what matters most? How would you define it?

J Jeff Leake 39:39

So, okay, so I've always looked at it from the perspective of this idea, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you as well. I love the combination of that verse. If I concern myself with that which matters most of God, God will concern himself with that which matters most to me. And so if I'm totally absorbed in the kingdom, and what's going to advance the kingdom. And I invest in that financially, and I invest my gifts in that. And I'm concerned about what's on the heart of God. I'm never going to want for anything, right? So that's my tithing. That's my giving the kingdom dollars, which is our over and above. That's my being willing to be gracious and generous with my time, energy and gifting to help somebody else. That's me having enough margin with my time and energy, and with my money, that I actually can be free to make an impulse giving decision to benefit somebody else, because I'm not so chokehold it with, with with all of the things that are

important. But let me let me do a counter to some of the things we've been talking about. Because Sure, so one of the things that matters to me is that I take good care of my wife, sure, and that I do the things that invest in her. And I have always felt, I don't know, I guess, I grew up in a family that felt like having too much was almost shameful, and that you needed to live a humble lifestyle. My dad and mom were always very humble and the way they approached anything financially. And of course, we didn't have a lot when I was growing up, I didn't know we were pretty poor, but we didn't have much we dependent on the generosity of a lot of people for us to survive, because my dad was pastoring a smaller church at the time. So fast forward into my life, you know, we were living in the house where mainly Dave, you grew up in. And it wasn't a huge place. But it was sufficient for a family of five and family of seven really, yeah, families, seven, five kids. At some point, we had the opportunity to buy a larger house. And we were getting an incredible deal. It was almost like stupid not to buy it because the deal was so good. And because it was larger, I felt some degree of guilt in buying it. It wasn't going to create a huge financial burden on us. It wasn't going to be something where I feel a lot of pressure over. It just was US upgrading to a newer house in a nicer community, right? And I said, No, my initial response was to say no, because it was like now, I kind of I want to live a simple life, I want to stay humble. But I could tell this was important to my wife. Not that like she wanted to be richer than someone else. But it just was the heart's desire, it was the house you always wanted. And eventually, the Holy Spirit said to me, go look at it again. And so we actually decided to buy something bigger, without any guilt or shame or distress, because it was the provision of the Lord in our life. Yeah. And we've been living our lives, always giving way beyond 10%. Trying to be very faithful to save and be conservative in what we spend. And so when the Lord blessed us with something, we still to this day fully enjoy that provision of God. Without any guilt or stress. It's great, because it's, it's it's been given to us, but we're not. So what do they say? It's not wrong to have things. It's only wrong with things have you? Right, so we have this house, but the house doesn't have us? Yeah. And if we needed to move, nope, no big deal, right. And we're not living stressed out about it. So I think this is true for because I think we could go to the opposite of stream and make you feel totally guilty that you have the car you have or the house you have or the stuff that you have. That's not the that's not the point. It's more the question is how much does stuff have you? How much does your desire is for stuff? Have you how much of your worries about stuff? Have you how much of your time and energy goes to earn the money needed so that you can have the stuff that you want? How much does it clamp down on your willingness to be a good steward or be generous to the kingdom? How much is your life oriented around Kingdom things? So do you live the opposite? Some people are like, I'm gonna make sure that all these things are added to me so that I can put the kingdom of God first. Right? God says no, put the kingdom first. And then everything will be added to you. And so a person who's living in true simplicity, is consumed with the kingdom of God. Yeah. And is letting God be with the one that takes care of the rest. And I actually so this is another one of these backward things. I actually think that if you can relinquish the hold that that material stuff has on you, and you can become oriented around the kingdom, that actually God does prosper us. Yeah. Yeah. Like he doesn't have a problem with us having things as long as they're not the dominating focus or force in our life. And so simplicity doesn't have to mean poverty. Yeah, it means that our heart has been detached from the material things of this world and no is no longer dependent on them. In order to feel like they can be we can be content. Yeah. And it's good. Yeah. And I think you also said something

D

Dave Leake 44:58

that like stood out to me there. Which is like, you can somewhat have an idea of whether something has you or not based on not just the inflow of things into your life, but how much is

flowing out of your life? Yeah. Because it's not, it's not about like, Do I have something that's too big or too nice? But it's like, well, how much is just coming in into like a reservoir of accumulation for me? And how much am I actually taking the resources and redirecting them towards the kingdom? Yeah, because I think that is the measure we're talking about is seeking first the kingdom and producing the kind of fruit that God wants from the soil. That's not choked out by the worries of life, or the deceitfulness of wealth. Yeah,

J

Jeff Leake 45:39

so so so having it so my dad, of course, has gotten to be with the Lord a couple of years ago. And again, we always live very frugally. And he was always the guy to where the by the, the, you know, the Hanby down suit, or like, he just never, he was way less materialistic than me sure that I remember I came to him when I was getting ready to buy the house. And I said, Dad, do you think we should do this? And he goes, actually, this is part of your life message that if you seek first the Kingdom, you add things to you. Yeah. So there's nothing wrong with having, in fact, this is a sign of the blessing of the Lord. He said, I rejoice. And I was like, wow. So if you have things, be free to enjoy them, yeah. God has put them in your life. He's blessed you with them? Praise God. Be radically generous, be Kingdom oriented. Make sure that you're not serving it that it's serving you. But at the same time, probably the majority of our culture isn't in that free place. No majority of our culture is in that this has me by the neck. And I need to do something about this because it's choking me out. Yes. And

D

Dave Leake 46:50

it's added to hurry sickness, and it's adding stress. So it's always tough balancing these sort of personal conviction things. But it's like, the standard for each individual is not at all black and white. It's very gray. But the principle is black and white. And that's what I think I think, at least for me, I'm trying to be strong on, because I think it brings freedom, and it brings fruit, and it brings the kind of life that God wants for you. Yeah. And there's, there's I mean, it really, there's peace from being like, Alright, I'm going to really limit what my resources are going to, to make sure that I have control of it and doesn't have me.

J

Jeff Leake 47:28

Yeah, so that's, as we tie it toward the end. Let's read some verses out of First Timothy chapter six, where he Paul's writing to Timothy and he says, teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud, and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. This is one of those signs of that it's got a grip on you that you trust in something so reliable. Their trust should be in God who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. This is what God wants for us to live a life filled with joy, and enjoyment, tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works, and generous to those in need. Always being ready to share with others financially free emotionally and spiritually around that so that you can do whatever God's called you to do. By doing this, they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future. So that they may experience true life because everything you possess, if used properly, will be sewn into treasure that will be eternal. And so this is this is the challenge.



D Dave Leake 48:31

By the way, not everything you read was scripture. You're saying commentary between the verses Right? Was it really? Oh, I sounded like you were at the adding onto it. Or was that? Oh, yeah, I

J Jeff Leake 48:39

was commentating. Yeah, yeah.

D Dave Leake 48:40

So just in case you're listening to this podcast? Yeah.

J Jeff Leake 48:42

No, that was Yeah. Yeah, I was adding my commentary. And then that same chapter, early on, it's as but people who longed to be rich fall into temptation, and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people craving money have wandered away from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows verse six, yet true godliness with contentment is great wealth. That's good. And then the simplicity verse. After all, we brought nothing into this world we came into it and we can take nothing with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. That's good. By the way, that's what same thing Jesus said. If you if you have food and clothing, God is able to clothe you and give you you have basically everything you need for today. Yeah, that's really hard is Matthew Chapter Six in Luke chapter 12. He basically says food and clothing is the be all and end all. If you have that. You have enough to be content today, right?

D Dave Leake 49:55

Yeah.

J Jeff Leake 50:00

Yeah, but I think those slots are really good and challenging because most of us have way more than that way more, and may lack contentment. And so the secret is realizing, putting your trust in Him and living for his purposes, is a big key to live in this way. So,

D Dave Leake 50:16

so not everybody needs to become a minimalist, although could be helpful for some, but all of us should be just taking a second look. And asking yourself and God the question, does some of the stuff that I have really half me is there? Is there a desire for more? Do I feel like I'm

constantly lacking in my pushing? Because just a little bit more is going to finally be enough? Or maybe do I need to slow down and limit what I'm doing and decide to be intentional with my resources to direct them out towards the kingdom? Because I know that God's peace is going to be enough that I have what so

J Jeff Leake 50:54

few people are consumed with the kingdom of God, right? Yeah, we're consumed with other things. But if you consume yourself with the kingdom of God, to put a paraphrase into Jesus's words, and His righteousness, all these things will be added to you as well. Right? So that's, that's also part of the solution is not just to declutter and simplify, it's to become consumed with the things that matter most to God, that's good. So yeah, it was good. First episode. In season five, here, we are going to try to add some creative elements. We won't tell you exactly what they are throughout the season, but we hope to do some creative things coming up. And we'd love to hear from you if you have a topic that you'd like us to address.

D Dave Leake 51:37

Yeah. So thank you for being with us. I know a lot of a lot of listeners have been listening for a long time. So we appreciate you. And, you know, we asked this a lot, but it's just helpful if you have the chance, either on Spotify or on Apple podcasts. Go on the app, hit the writer view, you know, leave us a five star review that would be really helpful. You can also spread the word by sharing it on social media. You can like and subscribe if you're watching this on YouTube. All of that's really helpful. So yeah. Anyway, thanks again for joining us. We'll see you again next time.