

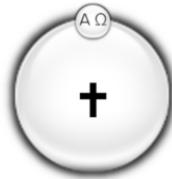


Spiritual Minimalism

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Minimalism: (1927) **1:** a style or technique (as in music, literature or design) that is characterized by extreme sparseness or simplicity **2:** MINIMAL ART-Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary 11th edition.

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

-Matthew 6:31-34 (NKJV)

We all have enough on our minds as it is. We don't need anyone to add to it. I don't know of anyone who appreciates being "piled on" when they're already down. The call is to help each other carry their burdens. The admonishment is for those who add stumbling blocks to their brothers'/ sisters' path.

There are too many things competing for our attention everyday. There are too many "faiths" to count. It's made worse when the individual denominations are added to the mix.



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How can we simplify our faith and also make it more simple for others?



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"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

-Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

-James 5:12 (NKJV)

Clarity and simplicity are important for a lot of things. Relationships are especially sensitive to these two principles. In Matthew 7:5 we're called to remove the *plank* from our own eye before we attempt to remove the *speck* from our brothers'. In order to help someone else we must first be able to see clearly ourselves. This is so obvious it should not need to be stated, but for some reason it does.

Ecclesiastes 5:5 states it's better not to make a vow to God as opposed to making one then not following through. Throughout all of scripture ("Old Testament" and "New Testament") vows to God are something he takes very seriously. For those who've publicly confessed "Jesus is Lord" Matthew 5:37 above should be the governing principle for their life. Unfortunately, secularists with a religious facade will want to negotiate this. Apparently, when you re-examine the Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic and take into consideration the eastern communal culture it was stated in, you'll find Jesus didn't actually mean what he clearly stated. Besides this, one of the theological fashion trends is to deny certainty so that one can pretend there is no straight and narrow path in life which we're expected to adhere to.

Why does Jesus (the one whom believers theoretically confess as 'Lord') want to constrain us to this overly simplistic paradigm? It doesn't seem to be very open-minded or inclusive (insert other appropriate buzz words here-as approved by the powers that be). Hasn't this kind of narrow mindedness been outgrown by our advancements in education, etc.? Haven't we 'progressed' beyond these backwards, limiting beliefs?

There are a lot of reasons for simplicity:

- It doesn't allow for anything to be hidden. Please refer to the image at the top, if anything is there which does not belong-it will be *very* obvious. God and Jesus (being one and the same) take sin very seriously. Believers having signed on the dotted line and having agreed to submit to Their lordship have agreed to operate their life/ congregation based on Their terms. That involves keeping things simple and eliminating anything which does not belong.
- It builds trust. Trust is of paramount importance to any relationship. No trust-no relationship. Do you expect your spouse to be honest with you? If they vowed to be faithful do you want them to say one thing and mean the opposite? If you're in a precarious situation and someone commits to helping you out of it, do you want to be able to rely on them? Would you prefer they say you can trust them in a life or death situation then decide flippantly not to help you because (insert random thing here)?
- Consistency will allow you to know what to expect with someone and actually get to know them.
- There are too many more to list here. Think of them and ponder them on your own as they come to your mind.

There are a lot of reasons why those who follow other entities want to introduce complexity where simplicity is commanded:

- It does allow for things to be hidden.
- Perhaps they wish to undermine the Church because they are in fact some sort of Manchurian candidate.
- Perhaps there's some area in their life they wish to justify or not change.
- Perhaps they're not regenerate.
- Perhaps they're establishing a brand or trying to create some sort of sub-faction for profit or perhaps prophet/ guru status. If there's some sort of ambiguous threat perceived, who better to provide the answers than the one who identified it to begin with? If you examine these people, their skill set will coincidentally align with the needs of the problem to be solved. All the race grifters who've infested religious organizations are the perfect current example of this phenomenon.
- They like to manipulate. These people will use double meanings for words. They'll speak out of both sides of their mouths having multiple meanings for words depending on the context of the conversation. It's a shell game with vocabulary.
- Inconsistency with someone will prevent you from getting to know them and will keep you perpetually off-balance and guessing as to what to expect. This is by design for (insert nefarious reasons here).
- Again, there are too many to list here. Give this some thought.

In my experience those who wish to deny the command of their professed Lord and introduce complexity as the norm, think of themselves as being on the cutting edge. They see themselves as "complex" and "deep". They have many other synonyms to misrepresent their perversion of the simple faith we're called to so they can be seen as virtuous. To be bluntly honest, based on my experience, they simply have their heads so far up their own egos they're incapable of discerning what day of the week it is. What they delude themselves into calling "complex" and "deep" is just a case of mental, emotional, spiritual hoarding. So many unresolved things have built up over so long a period they've become a toxic hot mess.

Jesus says his yoke and his burden are light. If we are going to follow his example then we must lighten the loads of others. In order for that to happen things *must* be simplified and clarified.