



## Simplicity

This is one of those magazine issues that one reads and says, “So many challenging ideas I could use! Where do I begin?” This “Make the Most” intends to direct you to some starting places, or some continuing places if you already strive to live more simply and responsibly. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the issues that surround the theme of simplicity, focus in on the key areas explored and determine to make a dent 1) in your own life, and 2) in one other person’s awareness and response

 **One approach** might be to examine the definition of “Living simply” offered in “Living Simply: Holistic Discipleship in a Spendthrift World,” by Mihee Kim-Kort, page 6:

Living simply is simply living openly, hands and hearts uncluttered, unhindered and unfettered by worldly goods or worry. Living simply is living connectedly, realizing there is an overlap in how we do stewardship and social justice, and facilitate our own spiritual lives. Living simply is living humbly, realizing that it is a privilege for many of us to choose simplicity when there are people around the world who live complicated lives at a very different level, who struggle simply to live.

Ponder your own lifestyle. Do you live openly, connectedly, humbly? Think of your inner circle of family and friends. Identify one person you believe might be open to discussing this definition with you and talking about how you each might respond.

 **Another approach** might be to examine key questions the articles themselves ask and then further expand upon and discuss. Pick a question that intrigues you. Find that article and read it to glean ideas, strategies and/or actions. Then find someone to consider the question and the ideas with you, someone who will choose a follow-up action alongside you. Commit to hold each other accountable for those actions. I have provided the question first, the article title, and the page on which you will find the question:

- “What does stewardship have to do with living simply?”—“Living Simply: Holistic Discipleship in a Spendthrift World,” by Mihee Kim-Kort, page 5.
- “Are we choosing selfishly, or are we choosing that which is life-giving and life-sustaining?” —“Living Simply: Holistic Discipleship in a Spendthrift World,” by Mihee Kim-Kort, page 5.

- “How can we train ourselves to see food as manna, a gift from God, and remember that there is enough, if only we do not hoard?”—“Living Simply: Holistic Discipleship in a Spendthrift World,” by Mihee Kim-Kort, page 6.
- “‘A fair distribution can become reality if the rich do not greedily swallow up whatsoever they can get together.’ So, how do we do this ‘fair distribution?’” —“Living Simply: Holistic Discipleship in a Spendthrift World,” by Mihee Kim-Kort, page 6.
- “Would a little discomfort in our lives really be all that bad? Isn’t it out of discomfort that we learn to trust God and grow the most?”—“The Simple Living Journey,” by Melanie Hardison, page 8.
- “Does [a particular possession] give you joy or enhance your life and the lives of those around you?”—“The Simple Living Journey,” by Melanie Hardison, page 9.
- “So, what does a simple, faithful life mean with regard to eating?” —“Living Simply, Eating Simply,” by Ruth Farrell, page 10.
- “Am I damaging my child emotionally by not providing cute little raisin boxes that other kids have? How many times do I buy the two-for-one, the supersize or add the cookie and drink because it makes economic sense? Or, do I feel like a meal is special only when it has a sugary dessert?” —“Living Simply, Eating Simply,” by Ruth Farrell, page 10.
- “Have you ever been so exhausted when the guests arrive that you cannot really enjoy their company?” —“Living Simply, Eating Simply,” by Ruth Farrell, page 12.
- “So how can we use our power as consumers to positively affect social and economic justice rather than uphold the vicious cycle of poverty?”—“The Power of a Purchase: How Buying Thoughtfully Can Improve Lives,” by Carrie Hawthorne, page 12.
- “How can you receive anything when you are already full to overflowing with other things?” —“Discernment” by Nancy Copeland-Payton, page 34.
- “What fills us? What fills our lives?”—“Discernment” by Nancy Copeland-Payton, page 34.
- “If we are unused to hearing Christ in prayer and scripture and quiet—how will we ever discern his presence amidst life’s cacophony of voices and tasks?”— “Discernment,” by Nancy Copeland-Payton, page 34.



A **third approach** might be to scan a list of topics addressed in this issue and select one that challenges you. Read up, zero in on a doable idea, and reach out to another for partnership in the follow-through. Here are some topics you will find in this issue on simplicity:

- Practice stewardship of stuff (page 5 and 6)
- Sort through commitments and focus on the life-giving (page 8)
- Downsizing ideas (page 8)
- Tip the balance from excess to basic (page 9)
- Read labels and choose carefully (page 11)
- Buy locally (page 11 and 12)

- Practice “full” table hospitality with more than food (page 12)
- Use and give Fair Trade products (page 13)
- Gift ideas that create a better world (page 14)
- Birthday gift ideas for children (page 16)
- Honor God’s creation (page 16)
- Simple living in families (page 18)
- Paying-it-forward in mission (page 26)



A **fourth approach** might be to consider how to use this issue to engage younger women in your congregation. Simple living is already an issue young families and 20–30 somethings care about. Here are some ideas, but thumb through the issue with this intention in mind and come up with your own ideas that fit your particular situation

- I made copies of “Giving Our Children the Gift of Simplicity,” by Melissa Florer-Bixler, then personally delivered them to the coordinator of our Moms group (they meet bi-monthly for discussion and support) and asked her to pass them out at their next gathering. I stapled a subscription card to each copy and asked the coordinator to mention that Horizons magazine now has feature articles and departments specifically for parents. I gave her a copy of the issue so she could pass it around as an added incentive – there is no substitute for seeing the beautiful art and colorful layout, noticing the resource suggestions and Bible Study Resource, and taking in the breadth and depth of an issue by looking at the contents pages (2–3).
- Use the “Faithful Parenting” department (page 35) as a devotional at a PW gathering, a circle meeting, or in an adult education class that draws young parents. Invite their conversation or response and mention that this is a regular department in Horizons magazine.
- Buy copies of the resources for families (page 18) and donate them to your church library, or offer to lead an adult education class or series for families using the ideas in them.
- Let your Christian educator, educational ministries committee, or church school coordinator know about the new children’s resource, *Piece Work/Peace Work: Working Together for Peace in Sudan* (“Mosaic,” page 28). You might find a couple of Presbyterian Women interested in the subject and offer to teach it together.
- Highlight the focus on children in the 2010 Birthday Offering projects and invite your church school to participate—children helping children. Prepare creative and engaging presentations about the projects using the promotional materials (see the back cover) and offer to take them into your church classrooms. Work with classroom teachers to come up with ideas for raising money for a project that appeals to that class.