

Keeping it Simple

This does not mean lack of effort.

1. Upon awakening we pray to God. We pray for willingness, humility, and honesty. We choose one of God's good character traits to grow in as we go throughout our day. We seek sincerity in our prayer and help to do God's will. We seek first the kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:33)
2. We pause throughout the day to evaluate our mood and mental attitude. Are we hurried, angry, worried, faultfinding, blaming, or fearful. Are we thinking about God or ourselves? We set or reset our minds toward humble service in love and sincere truth. We pace ourselves to keep in line with patience and peace. We examine and confess.
3. At the end of each day we review our spiritual productivity and learning. We recall our interactions with others and how we may have impacted them. We think ahead to how we might improve with God's character traits. We set our minds toward improving our character.
4. We share with others how love and peace is good, what it feels like, and how we practice it. We demonstrate sincere truth with compassion. We bond with others who do God's will. (Mark 3:35)

The beautiful thing about these practices is that they require no overhead, money, or scheduling. We can do them while getting ready in the morning, going places, or on breaks. We can do them in the bathroom or while waiting in lines. We can be with God anywhere!

Keeping it simple means if we don't understand something, we look it up and learn. We investigate. Staying uneducated about spiritual development is harmful. We ask questions with mentors or sponsors, do the work needed to find solutions and answers, and make time to learn. We apply ourselves outside of groups and in between meetings. There's keeping it simple and there's keeping it too simple.

It is imperative that we recognize self-sabotage within our thinking. We must practice redirecting thoughts away from self-blame, which leads to

self-condemnation. Just as we redirect ourselves from pride, we are to redirect ourselves from harmful self-talk. We are not bad people. We do not regret the past. We learn from it and set our thoughts toward the next right step. We can think and walk better with God, if we choose to do it.

Keeping it simple involves a very slow and gradual continued progressive development. This requires persistent investment of time. That means every day doing very little. But we do a very little every day. Very little means something like 5%. Five percent of an average person's waking hours (assuming 8 hours of sleep) would be 48 minutes. Surely our spiritual productivity is worth 5% of our time. If we miss a day we can make up the time; otherwise we're investing less than 5%.

This is simple. Yet our own thinking gets in the way of what is simple. We will need to desire this process enough to give ourselves entirely over to it. Are we ready to trust God with 5% of our time? We can give ourselves entirely over to a mere 5%, right?

Most of us will fall short of maintaining this 5%. If not of our time dedication then of our sincere truth in practice. Failing is part of learning and development. Failing can reveal our own corrupted nature. Our first learnings about such failures will be in how we convince ourselves not to do good. We ought to pay close attention to how we justify not giving 5% of ourselves over to develop God's righteousness. Learning how we deceive ourselves is part of the journey. It's a humbling process. We must see our own defective ways and replace them with God's good character traits. We can do this one day at a time. We can do this today!

The only thing required is the choice. We will need to choose to be with God in our minds and hearts. We will need to choose to pay closer attention to what we think and how we act! We will need to choose struggle that produces deeper love, fulfillment, belonging, and peace. We will need to convince ourselves into it, one day at a time.

Twelve Step programs are a valuable resource to promote this correcting spiritual way of life. We all can benefit if are being honest about our own character defects. Meetings are not a place to let others know how smart we are. When attending meetings we can focus upon our inward application of God's spiritual character traits. We focus upon the people in

how we can have sincere compassion, care, empathy, and service, encouragement, and helpfulness. Love and tolerance is the code. We are not spiritually fed through self-seeking. We are fed as we honestly, humbly, and sincerely help others.