

Gracious and loving God, we confess as a community that our idea of “discipline” raises negative feelings and thoughts in us. Perhaps we think of it as punishment, or as a dark shadow of long forgotten and deeply seeded abuse as a child. Maybe we think of it as a heavy burden, a set of rules and regulations we ought to live by. Loving God, help us to understand spiritual practices as positive conduits to receive your grace.

Would you, even now, touch us at our points of brokenness and incompleteness – heal our hearts and make us whole. Help us Lord to receive what you have for us here. Help us to put our feet on the narrow road of the spiritual practices that will lead us to Your heart and bring us complete freedom in your love. Amen.



WHEN

LIFE'S

NOT

WORKING

spiritual practices for a deeper life

Life doesn't work when we are constantly navigating competing priorities.

“Much of our activity today is little more than a cheap anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty life.”

Lewis Sperry Chafer

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a **simple** and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

For I resolved to know nothing while I was
with you except Jesus Christ and Him
crucified.

1 Cor 2:2 (ESV)

For I delivered to as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1 Cor 15:3 (ESV)

For the apostle Paul, simplicity in life meant sacrificing and saying “no” to things that would detract from following and experiencing all of the fullness of God in the person of Jesus – and becoming like Him.

“If you want to have a spiritual life you must unify your life. A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No man can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.”

Thomas Merton

*The core of simplicity is an undivided heart
toward Jesus.*

Once you know your ultimate priority,
you will know what should be filling your
life – and that is what makes it simple -
you're all about one thing!

“When we are unclear about our real purpose in life—in other words, when we don’t have a clear sense of our goals, our aspirations, and our values—we make up our own social games. We waste time and energies on trying to look good in comparison to other people. We overvalue nonessentials like a nicer car or house, or even intangibles like the number of our followers on Twitter or the way we look in our Facebook photos. As a result, we neglect activities that are truly essential, like spending time with our loved ones, or nurturing our spirit, or taking care of our health.”

Greg McKeown

There's no point in simplifying your life if you are heading toward a destination that doesn't matter to begin with!

When simple devotion to Jesus is your destination, it becomes clear what should be and what shouldn't be part of your life.

1

Set goals that align with a single-minded devotion to Jesus.

Devotion to Jesus and His Kingdom

Goal #1 → Spiritual Life

Goal #2 → Family Life

Goal #3 → Community Life / Relational Life

Goal #4 → _____

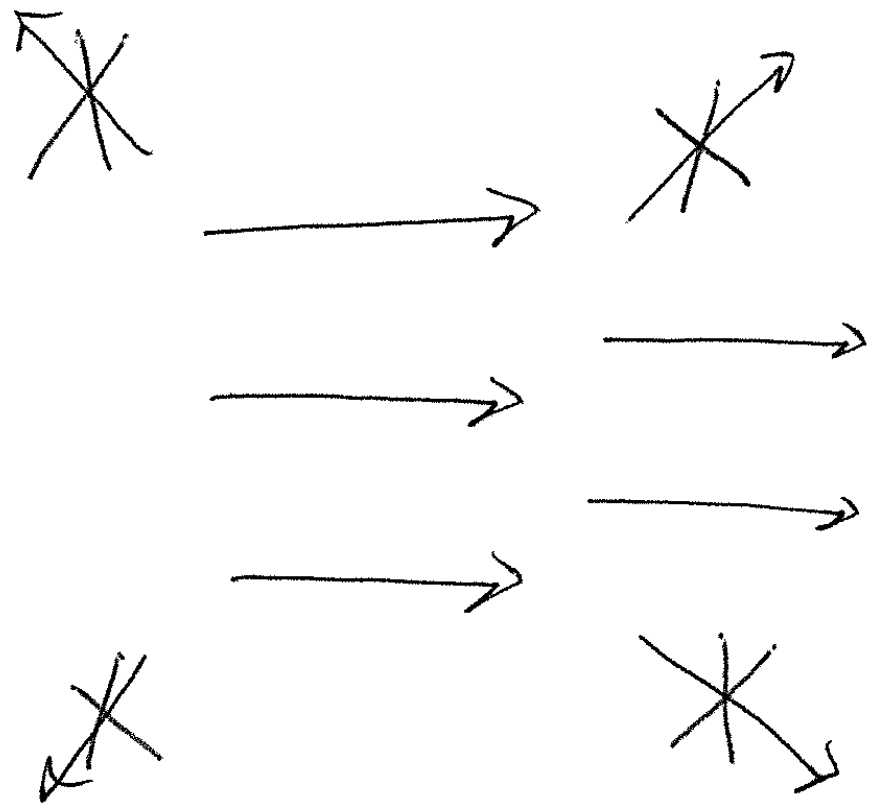
1

Set goals that align with a single-minded devotion to Jesus.

2

There is freedom in a gentle “no.”

If it isn't a clear "yes," then it's a clear "no."



Priority of
devotion to
Jesus and His
Kingdom

1

Set goals that align with a single-minded devotion to Jesus.

2

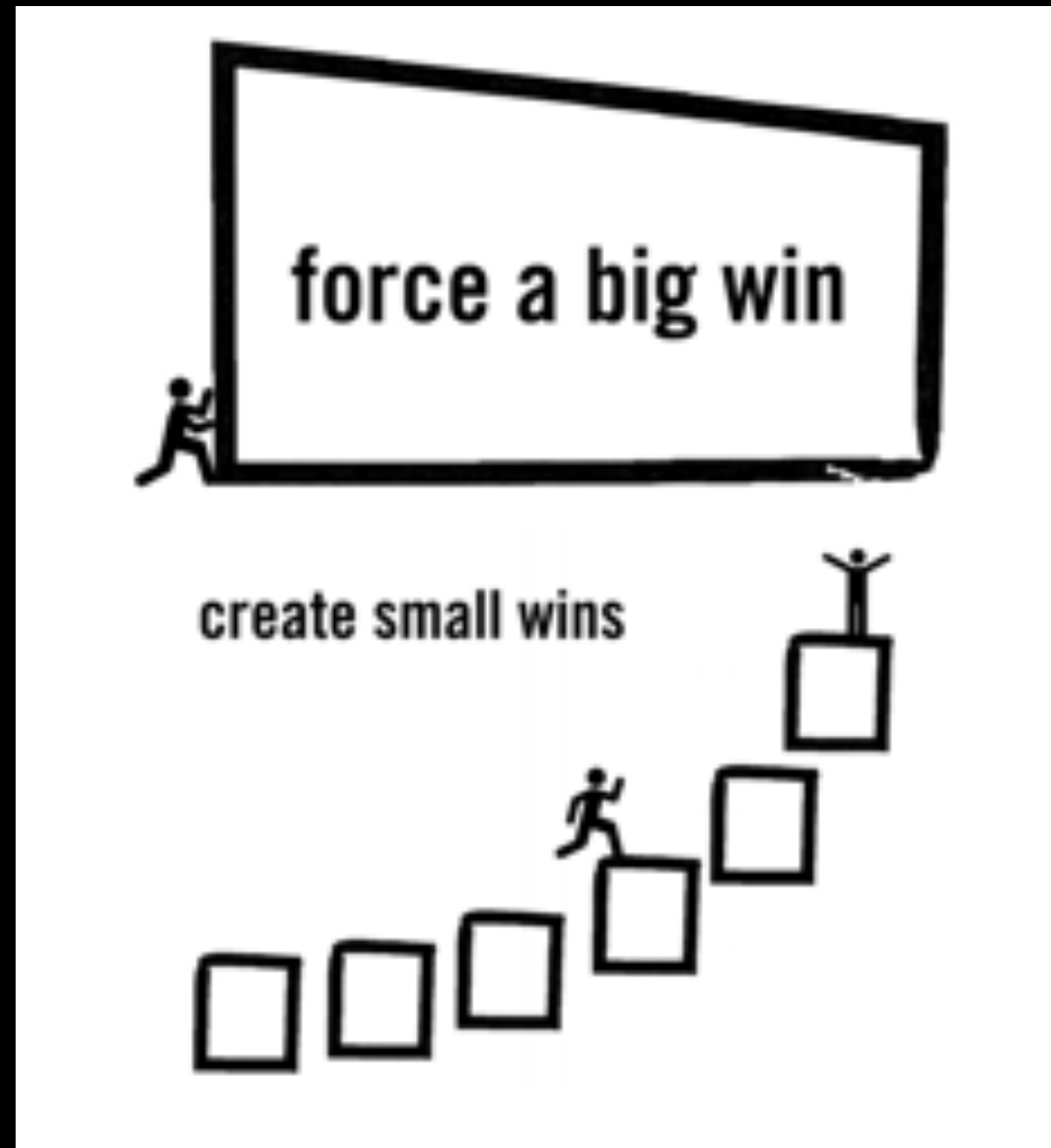
There is freedom in a gentle “no.”

3

Let go of the clutter.

“Because we lack a divine Center our need for security has led us into an insane attachment to things. Contemporary culture is plagued by a passion to possess. The unreasoned boast abounds that the good life is found in accumulation, that ‘more is better.’ Indeed, we often accept this notion without question, with the result that the lust for affluence in contemporary society has become psychotic.”

Richard Foster



From the book *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* by Greg McKeown

When simple devotion to Jesus is your destination, it becomes clear what should be and what shouldn't be part of your life. This is the practice of simplicity.

