

STRIVING FOR SIMPLICITY IN A COMPLEX WORLD
By Jim Langley

You have probably noticed just how complex life has become. Business and professional people scan through hundreds of emails every workday to locate about a dozen relevant to their business. Even many retired individuals comment on how busy their lives have become even after their careers have ended. They often reflect on how much more they used to accomplish when working full-time!

It seems that the more advancements we make, the more technology snares us into time traps. In my insurance profession, I have observed the past 40-plus years have brought great strides in the way we do business – I am able to provide much more data in less time to my clients and prospects. It is interesting to note, however, when my business was less complex, with fewer options and resources, I was able to write more business with less effort. Can you relate to this paradox?

Many of us get caught up in acquiring the latest smartphones to handle all the apps designed to make life easier and more enjoyable. My car has a built-in navigation system, and I can always use the GPS app on my phone. But surprisingly, I often enjoy finding my destination the old-fashioned way – using a printed version of Google Maps, or sometimes reverting to an old city map stuffed in my glove box.

We have “advanced” so much, people in coffee shops no longer read their favorite section of the newspaper to avoid carrying on conversations with friends or family. (In many cities, newspapers are hard to find!) We stare at smartphones or tablets rather than communicating with others face to face. It pains me to see a family of four or more sitting in a restaurant, everyone caught up in their personal media devices, missing the wonderful opportunity to hear about what has been happening in each other's lives.

For this reason, I deliberately seek to simplify my life. This includes focusing the God who has created and designed our complex world yet seeks to provide simple but effective guidelines for living. Many years ago, I placed my trust in this complex God, realizing His ways are very simple to follow. We do not need electronic gadgets to reveal His will for our lives. The truths and principles of His Word help us stay on an even keel in our increasingly complex world. Here are a few of them:

God's commandments – rules for living – are simple. Most businesses have lengthy employee manuals, and when we buy a car, appliance or electronic device, they come with complex instructions. But when God set forth His commandments, His rules for living, He gave only 10. The first serves as the foundation for all the rest: “You shall not make for yourself an idol.... You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Genesis 20:4-6).

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He offers a simple path to wisdom. Our world is filled with knowledge and information, but wisdom seems in extremely short supply. God promises to provide it to those who seek it. “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7).

God’s provision is not complicated. We plan, devise and scheme ways for reaching our goals and meeting our needs, but God’s ways are relatively simple. All He requires is faith and unwavering trust in Him. “The Lord protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, He saved me” (Psalm 116:6).

© 2024, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing “Fourth Quarter Strategies” in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Many of the technological advances available to us are very helpful but in some ways, they make everyday life more complicated. Can you think of any examples of this?
2. If you have been in the workplace for any length of time, you can probably remember what it was like without some of today’s electronic marvels. Do you ever yearn for the “good old days,” when there were fewer complexities and distractions? Explain your answer.
3. Despite all the “timesaving” devices available to us, many studies indicate that we are experiencing more stress and discontent than ever before. How can you explain this?
4. It is suggested that faith in God can help in simplifying our daily lives, both in the workplace and in our personal lives. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Challenge For This Week

We live in a fast-paced world, almost obligating us to pursue life at a frenetic pace. Over the coming week, try to slow down enough to assess how complex your life has become – and how much it is controlled by the technological tools and devices available to you.

It might be helpful to meet with someone – a good friend or mentor – and discuss ways you might simplify your life and reduce the levels of stress you are experiencing. Pray for God to give you wisdom is dispensing with some good things so you can focus on the best things.

NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:
Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19:7-8; Psalm 116:5-6; Proverbs 8:1-11; Mark 12:28-31

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