

## Overcoming FOMO: The Fear of Missing Out

Thinking "simple" is quite trendy these days.

- In addition to a magazine called "Real Simple," major magazines geared to women, food, decorating, home, and garden carry cover articles around "'Simplify your \_\_\_\_\_' or 'Creating a simple \_\_\_\_\_'."
- Tiny houses are popular. Go with a minimalist lifestyle and chunk all that excess stuff and unneeded square footage.
- Tiny camping trailers are even trendy. Want to go camping? Do it simply with just the basics—and the basics include \$16-19,000 to buy it. Apparently, tiny trailers do not accept small bills.
- And, finally, there's our ever-present friend: the world wide web. It is overrun with blogs, articles, and whole websites devoted to helping you simplify whatever you think needs simplifying.



I'm not disparaging this trend toward simplicity. I'm for it. We have complicated—overly complicated—our lives. We've done this several ways. We're always making more purchases and filling our homes with stuff. We complicate our lives by always being online or connected via social media—even if we're driving or in the restroom! Or we keep our schedules full and are always on the go.

So, yeah, we would benefit from finding ways to simplify our lives. I'm sure you agree with me too. I don't care what age or generation you're a part of, we've all had moments when we wished life was simpler. We agree, so why don't we do it? Why don't we pursue a simpler life?

It's called FOMO. The fear of missing out.

- You're not necessarily interested in an upcoming event, but everyone else in your circle is going. You might be missing out on something if you stay home, so you go—even though it wasn't your first choice.
- There's a lot of buzz about the "shiny new object" everybody's buying these days, so you buy it for fear you might be missing out on something really cool—but it's just another shiny object in your collection of shiny objects.
- Your fingers are fused to your smartphone because



you don't want to miss out on breaking news or breaking gossip. You'd hate for your friends to have an online conversation you're not a part of.

Marketers know all about FOMO and they play off our fear of missing out.

- Don't miss this!
- Only 9 minutes remain until this deal ends!
- Only three left in stock!

We read the articles extolling the virtues of simplifying our lives, but we won't do it until we conquer our fear of missing out—and these articles offer no help. The heart of simplicity is contentment, which is the opposite of FOMO. When we're content, we don't mind missing out on a few things—hey, even missing out on a lot of things—because we're satisfied with what we have and where we are.

But desiring contentment and achieving it are two different things. Clearing my calendar and selling my stuff may simplify my life in some ways, but it won't make me content. Contentment is an attitude I can't achieve on my own.

But in Christ everything changes. I find a contentment in Him that circumstances can't alter. It's a satisfaction that rests in the fact that Christ has already given and promised me everything I truly need. This may sound all "pie in the sky" and out of touch with reality, but it is a contentment that cannot be understood by those who've never "lost themselves" in a full-on commitment to Christ.

- "If they listen and serve him, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in happiness" (Job 36:11).
- "Those who seek the Lord will not lack any good thing" (Ps. 34:10).
- "I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:12-13).
- "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

When we're content in Christ, we can live simply. We need not fear we're missing out; we have all we need in Him.