



## Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul

*Bill Hybels*

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*Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled.* Sound familiar? Today's velocity of life can consume and control us . . . until our breakneck pace begins to feel normal and expected. That's where the danger lies: When we spend our lives doing things that keep us busy but don't really matter, we sacrifice the things that do.

What if your life could be different? What if you could be certain you were living the life God called you to live—and building a legacy for those you love? If you crave a simpler life anchored by the priorities that matter most, roll up your sleeves: Simplified living requires more than just cleaning out your closets or reorganizing your desk drawer. It requires uncluttering your soul. By eradicating the stuff that leaves your spirit drained, you can stop doing what doesn't matter—and start doing what does.

In *Simplify*, bestselling author Bill Hybels identifies the core issues that lure us into frenetic living—and offers searingly practical steps for sweeping the clutter from our souls.

## **Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul Details**

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## From Reader Review Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul for online ebook

### Jo Strode says

Some great principles to live by - focusing on the things that matter, and letting go of the things that don't. Lots of practical wisdom from Bill Hybels to apply to your life- no matter where you are on that journey.

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### Emilie Hendryx says

I was drawn to the title of this book. Simplify. Can't we all use some simplification in our lives? I know I can!

Bill approached the idea of "practices to unclutter your soul" with a light and intuitive perspective that I found refreshing. He used real life examples drawing from his own life and ministry as well as the lives of others he's interacted with. I also enjoyed how he included specific action points at the end of each chapter. For those willing to dig in deeper, he has provided a lot of great questions and activities to further growth.

The only thing that knocked it down from a solid 4 stars for me was that it really took me a long time to get through due to some lengthy, semi-surface level things. The overall approach Bill takes is great, but I found some parts dragging. There was definitely scripture incorporated, but I would have liked to see more exposition and drawing from Jesus' ministry to today. That may just be a personal preference thing for me when reviewing faith/theology based books.

I'd still definitely recommend it to any one interesting in decluttering their life. For those willing to take stock and be very practical about approaching simplification, they will find Simplify. a great resource and starting point.

Rating: 3.8\*

Original post: <http://eahendryx.blogspot.com/2015/03...>

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I received a free copy of this book for review purposes, but was under no obligation to read the book or post a review. I do so under my own motivation and the opinions I have expressed in this review are honest and entirely my own.

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### Bridget says

Repetitive, overexplained, with a nugget of wisdom. Or two.

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### Marnie says

Another take on simplifying your life, clearing out the clutter. Started out strong, lost a little steam along the way, stuck the landing.

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### **Renee says**

I'm not typically a Bill Hybels fan because he is so negative toward conservative Christians, but the title grabbed me, so I gave it a try. I'm glad I did!

He goes over your schedule, finances, work, forgiveness, fear, relationships, pruning friendships, choosing a life verse, identifying your current season of life.

A favorite quote was "You can greatly simplify your life just by recognizing when the season you're in is coming to a close; when it is time to move on." This rings so true!! We are often so stuck in something or a life that is OVER. Also, "In every season, God wants to teach you something specific." One season he emphasized was the season of loneliness which was very helpful.

The section on pruning friendships also really helped me. I was running ragged trying to keep up friendships with so many people spanning over 30 years and I was always the "instigator". I immediately changed my "people to invite to lunch list." He reminds us that Jesus had 12 disciples and 2 inner circles of 3 - Peter, James, and John, and then Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

I would recommend this book - it is not about simplifying your wardrobe or organizing your closets, but about simplifying your soul!

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### **Esther says**

Well written with practical applications. Most challenging thought for me as I read this book is, "If God made my schedule, what would it look like?" I wish I had realized this, 20 years ago when I had small children and was teaching school.

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### **Lauren says**

If you don't read any other chapter of this book, read the chapter on Forgiveness. Oh man, WOW.

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### **Justin Rosales says**

Lessons Learned:

\*Simple living starts with the strength to say no.

\*Simple success starts with your schedule.

\*We work 1/3 of our lives... Pursue your passions. If necessary, supplement your pay.

Noteworthy:

\*Your schedule should be less about what you have to get done, and more about who you want to become.

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### **Jan Donegani says**

A book about uncluttering the soul, but a bit more complicated and prescriptive than I had hoped. I skim read most of it but did find the following interesting.

Seven paths that distract us from following the Lord and being satisfied (paths for chasing after the wind): Physical health and longevity; education; pleasure; work; wealth; sex; fame

The chapter on forgiveness was helpful - identifying three levels of being hurt and the way to respond to each. Summary below:

#### 1. Minor offenses – normal irritations of relationships

Ask yourself if you are too easily provoked or offended, and pray for forgiveness

- Examine the triggers
- Fill your heart with God's grace and love so forgiveness is easier
- Ask for God's help to let go of the perceived offence , reach out to those who have received your irritated response

#### 2. Legitimate wounds - someone disappoints you, abuses you, betrays a confidence, breaks a promise. Matt 18:15, Ro 12:18

- Go to them
- Go alone
- Go to restore the relationship
- Go now
- Let it go – if they do not respond as you hoped

#### 3. Life shattering injustices – murder of a close person, injury caused by another, adultery. The Holy Spirit will give you the power to forgive, in time, if you offer Him your desire to do so

- Be honest with yourself and God about what has happened (identify the other person who was at fault) – what someone did to you - don't stop here though
- Identify your sadness - what YOU lost as a result
- Be open to forgiveness. Release your right to revenge, pray that God would help you to forgive

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### **Demetrius Rogers says**

I'd give this a 2.5. There were some good stuff here, but my goodness I felt the book was way over-written.

Simplify needed to be simplified. It could have easily have been 1/5 of the length and been just as effective, and even more. I felt like Hybels re-told the same story different ways just to drive the same point home over and over again.

But the main gist was excellent - keep your soul clutter-free by simplifying your life. There is a price that comes from depletion, so we have to fight for ways to keep our lives replenished. We need to protect our energy reserves to be the best version of who we are. Sometimes this requires saying 'no,' maybe even disappointing people. But, it comes down to knowing our purpose and maintaining our focus. Hybels explores different areas of life where this can happen: occupationally, financially, relationally, and spiritually. He is a big fan of having a life-verse. Good concepts here, but I feel the book loses traction with too much filler.

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### **Beth says**

I enjoyed this book by the pastor at megachurch Willow Creek in Barrington, IL. He offers a somewhat different take on simplifying your life, from a Christian perspective. One of the ideas I liked was his concept of needing to refill your energy buckets and looking for things that do this for you (e.g., exercise, hobbies, time spent with children/grandchildren, time in nature, vacations, etc.), and also being aware of things that empty your buckets and burn you out and minimizing them. He talked about setting priorities and taking control of your calendar, not just eliminating things that aren't essential but figuring out when your best times to work are and adapting your schedule. For instance he spends a few hours working at home and quiet time each morning before heading to the office around 11:00am. Not everyone would be able to do this, of course, but it is food for thought. He mentioned getting finances in order as something that contributes to a saner life. I liked his section on assessing problems. He says that problems are either category 1 (minor, things like spilling your coffee or being cut off in traffic and other little annoyances), category 2 (legitimate wounds, things like broken promises or hurt feelings, etc.), and category 3 (life-shattering injustices, e.g., losing a loved one in a tragic death, having a spouse commit adultery, being abused or suffering injustice). For some of the category 2 and 3 things, he talks about the power of forgiveness, reconciling when possible, and letting go when able. I especially found his take on category 1 offenses to be helpful since that's what most stuff is. He talked about fears and the difference between constructive fear (e.g., of dangerous situations) and destructive fears that can be irrational or hold you back. He talked about the importance of friends and close relationships and assessing these (I found his comments about pruning out friendships rather cold-hearted, however). He discussed looking for your calling in life and recommends choosing a life verse, a Bible verse that speaks to you, to keep you focused (suggested verses are included in an appendix). I enjoyed his discussion of different seasons of life and learning to recognize where you are, and when you are moving (or should move) from one season to another. Overall, I thought the book had many good points.

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### **Elizabeth says**

I admit that I expected this book to be a bit boring. Simplify. Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul by Bill Hybels has a very simple cover. I totally judged it by the cover.

My goodness! Once I started reading it I was nodding my head along to several paragraphs. I grabbed a notebook to write down quotes and Bible verses and notes. I got SO MUCH out of this book!

I liked it so much, in fact, that I brought it along to Bible Study and shared it with the class. While it is not really a devotional (though I hear a devotional to go along with the book is in the works!!!), it teaches so much that our Bible Study decided to use this as our next book.

There are ten topics covered in the book; the most helpful for me were finances, forgiveness, and friendship. Bill goes in depth with each topic but not in a heavy way - the way he writes is wonderfully easy to read and makes so much sense.

If you only buy one book this year to change your life I think this one should be it! I highly recommend it.

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## **James says**

I am not a mega-church guy. The churches I have been a part of have been small; however I am not a mega-hater either. I recognize big churches often have resources that smaller churches do not and are doing Kingdom work. I recognize my life's call is different but I appreciate several mega-church pastors. One such pastor I respect is Bill Hybels, founding pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois. He is a clear and effective communicator, a follower of Jesus and a pastor with nearly forty years of experience. I admit that I have a bias for smaller more organic models of church, but you have to respect that kind of faithful longevity in ministry!

Hybel's new book Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul shares practical insights for having a lifestyle of freedom in Christ. These are insights that Hybel's has learned personally and through his experience as a pastor: They include:

Replenishing your energy reserves.

Organizing your schedule to reflect who you want to become instead of what you need to get done.

Managing your finances

Refining your working world (doing what you were made to do!).

Making room for forgiveness.

Conquering your fears.

Deepening your friendships and relational circles.

Claiming God's call on your life by finding a life verse to give you focus.

Welcoming new seasons into your life.

Leaving a godly legacy.

Many of the practices that Hybels suggests correspond to advice you would find in self-help books; yet this is not just a self-help book with a Christian veneer. Hybels wants people to experience all that God has for them in Christ. So when Hybels talks about organizing your life, he isn't just talking about time management that will make you healthier, happier and more productive. He is hoping to help you become what you were meant to be a Christ follower (35). And when he shares about choosing a life verse he isn't just giving us the Christian version of a personal vision statement. A life verse is a passage of scripture chosen to reflect God's purpose for your life so that you can focus on what matters most. In each of these cases what Hybels is pressing us to pursue is something far deeper and richer than its secular equivalent.

Along the way Hybels dispenses lot of helpful tidbits. Regarding forgiveness, he gives detailed pastoral advice on how to let go of the small stuff (level one offenses), and work towards reconciliation and healing when there has been a real wrong done (level two offenses) or when there is profound damage done (level three offenses). He doesn't offer easy answers (simple doesn't always mean easy) but gives guidance which

helps us to pursue wholeness and healing. Hybels helps us attend to the health of our relationships and deepening our connection with other believers. I personally found his discussion of organization and finances to be insightful because he takes the two most coveted commodities in our culture (time and money) and illustrates how managing these well helps you experience the deep joy and serve God better.

Anyone could read this book profitably but Christians will find it particularly useful. I underlined and dog marked several pages which I plan to return to personally, and also because I think that Hybels illustrates well about how to talk about issues with others. Hybels is gracious in what he says and how he says it and I think I can learn from that. I give this book four stars.

Notice of material connection: I received this book from Tyndale so that I could share with you my honest review.

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### **Jenny Wright says**

Instead of doing New Year's Resolutions, I pick a theme I want to work on for each year. Last year my theme was focus. The goal was to simplify my life so my energy would be focused at a few critical goals instead of dispersed among many good, but not so important goals. Ever since I finished the year of focus, I've been interested in continuing to explore a simpler life. Because of this, I was eager to read Bill Hybel's book, *Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul*.

This book is excellent, except I'm not sure the title does the book justice. Yes, much of the content in the book deals with simplifying life, but the magic of this book is the many years of life experience that Bill Hybel's shares with his readers. He doesn't present it in a memoir form, but through much of the book, especially the chapter on friendship, it's obvious these are ideas and principles he's lived through. Especially being someone in ministry, I appreciated this life advice from someone who is walking a similar path to the one I'm walking down. I also appreciate the broadness of the categories he presented, from work, to relationships, to time management. I feel like I have a real treasure in my hands when I read this book. The wisdom contained in it is well worth the price.

I recommend this book to any Christian who is looking to make adjustments in their life. I especially recommend it to anyone in the ministry who simply needs a simpler life.

I was provided a copy of this book by Tyndale House Publishers in return for my honest review.

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### **George P. says**

Bill Hybels, *Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2014). Hardcover / Kindle

This past summer was exhausting. Between work, chauffeuring our son to three sports on four different days, shuttling our oldest foster daughter to daycare and speech care, waking up several times a night to bottle feed our youngest foster daughter, and church and other activities, my wife and I felt tapped out. And so, when

Bill Hybels mentioned the words “*exhausted, overwhelmed, overscheduled, anxious, isolated, dissatisfied*” on page 1 of his new book, he immediately grabbed my attention.

“Simplified living is about more than doing less,” Hybels writes. “It’s being who God called us to be, with a wholehearted, single-minded focus. It’s walking away from innumerable lesser opportunities in favor of the few to which we’ve been called and for which we’ve been created. It’s a lifestyle that allows us, when our heads hit the pillow at night, to reflect with gratitude that our day was well invested and the varied responsibilities of our lives are in order” (pp. 2–3). He goes on to write, “Simplified life requires more than just organizing your closets or cleaning out your desk drawers. It requires *uncluttering your soul*” (p. 3, emphasis in original).

Hybels shares Bible-based, experience-tested advice about how to do this in the book’s ten chapters. He shows you how to move from

exhausted to energized by replenishing your energy,  
overscheduled to organized by prioritizing your calendar,  
overwhelmed to in control by mastering your finances,  
restless to fulfilled by refining your career choices,  
wounded to whole by practicing forgiveness,  
anxious to peaceful by confronting your fears,  
isolated to connected by deepening your friendships,  
drifting to focused by choosing and then living out your life verse,  
stuck to moving on by welcoming new seasons in your life,  
and from meaningless to satisfied by choosing to live now in the light of eternity.

Different readers will be attracted to different sections of this book. At this season in my life—feeling busy and tired all the time—I was especially interested in the first two chapters dealing with energy and calendar. As I read the book, however, I found myself reading the chapter on friendships with closer attention. Could it be that my life has too few deep relationships with non-family members? Whatever your interests or needs, my guess is that several of these chapters will address felt needs in your life.

So, what’s the best way to make use of this book? First, it’s tailor-made for individual use. Each chapter ends with an action step for readers to journal about. Page 311 gives a URL and promo code for online resources that readers can access for 90 days. Second, there is a DVD-based small group curriculum that can be used alongside the book. And third, I can imagine enterprising pastors using the book and DVD curriculum as elements of a multiweek sermon series campaign.

Now that I’ve read the book, I intend to read it again with my wife, working through those chapters that address issues we are experiencing in our current season of life. “We get one shot at this life,” Hybels writes in conclusion. “Choose a purposeful, God-first life, and you will reap rewards for today and for eternity” (p. 282).

P.S. If you found this review helpful, please vote “Yes” on my Amazon.com review page.

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