

# CSI: Part II

A Word for 2019 & Beyond  
25 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 10 FEB 2019

**Text:** “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ”—2 Cor. 11:3

**Theme:** God wants you to live a simple life of listening to him.

**Intro:** Last week I began to share the word God gave me for 2019 and beyond. I talked about the ‘C’ in CSI. God wants us to **celebrate** him everyday. And I taught you how to do continual **CT Scans**. Continually scan for how you can **celebrate** and **thank** God (CT).

Today, I want us to focus on the ‘S’ in the CSI acronym. The ‘S’ stands for **simplify**. I heard God say, “Simplify in 2019.” I will also share the heart of what God spoke to me on my prayer retreat. It was a Word that came with fear and trembling, and it’s for all of us at this church and all of God’s people.

## 1) Simplify (2 Cor. 11:3; Jer. 9:23-24)

- In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul is **deeply concerned** that the Corinthians would be **led away** from **simple** and **pure** devotion to Christ.
- Paul reminds us of **Eve** (Gen. 3:17). The **goodness** of the **tree** led her away from God’s Word.
  - It’s really good to be **wise** and **know the difference between good and evil**.
    - But eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **wasn’t God’s Word or way**.
  - God is **always concerned** about the **way**, **not** just the **destination**.
    - The **way to wisdom** is through **intimacy** with God—**knowing** him, **listening** to his Word and **obeying** what he says (Jer. 9:23-24).
      - God doesn’t want your **blind obedience**; he longs for you to **understand** and **know** him. We need to ask him, “*Why are you saying what you are saying?*”
  - Be **careful not** to **base** your life on what **looks good, pleasurable and desirable**.
    - **Appearances** deceive. First **opinions** and **impressions** often deceive as well.
    - These are the things that **Satan** uses as **bait**.
  - You need to **discern** between what is **good** and what is **God**.
  - The word **simplicity** (ἀπλότης) in this verse means “**single**, not having an **ulterior** or **double motive**. Simplicity, purity, sincerity, faithfulness.”
    - **Goodness without God** leaves us **stripped** naked—vulnerable, undignified and afraid of God’s very presence.
      - God wants to **prune** away all the **dead works** of our lives.
- *Have you heard of Marie Kondo?*
  - Right now it seems the whole world is on a **tidying craze** due to Marie Kondo’s new Netflix show and books.
  - Consequently, 2nd hand shops and charities are **overloaded** with donations and many of them are saying they can’t take any more donations.
- Simply put, Marie Kondo’s philosophy is to get rid of things that don’t **spark joy**.
  - I went through my wardrobe and found out that most of my clothes did not spark joy :-).
  - I gave about six bags of clothes and shoes to the local Op Shop.
    - For some reason, I had all this stuff that was old and didn’t fit any more.
    - I said to Anna, “None of my clothes spark joy!”
    - But, if I threw away everything that didn’t spark joy, I would have nothing to wear :-).
- God is also on a **mission** to **declutter** your life.
  - He’s sick of all the **emotional, mental and spiritual stuff** that we are holding on to.
  - He’s sick of all the **good things** we do that he has not spoken of us to do. The good works we do to **please people** and **earn God’s attention**.

- He wants us to get back to that **simple devotion to Jesus**.
- Let me say something that may offend you.
  - God is not so interested in us **winning the world**.
  - The main thing he wants is **our souls won** over to him.
  - The world will be won if we stop trying to win the world and just **focus** on being in **love** with Jesus and **listening** to what he said.
  - What's the purpose of **winning** the world if we **lose our own soul?** (Luke 9:25).
- *How do you simplify your life, your family and your ministry?*

## 2) Listen (John 10:14, 27; Jer. 23:18)

- As I waited for the **train** to go on my prayer retreat, I felt a deep **sadness** about leaving behind my wife, Anna, and the children.
  - The Lord spoke to me, “A **small sacrifice** for a **big reward**.”
- While on that train ride the Lord said to me, “Lay down your own **agenda** and **listen** to me.”
  - Then, God began to speak to me about the **importance of listening**. And it all came from the **context** of the Lord **caring** for our souls.
- **Simplify** your life so that you **listen** to **one voice**—the voice of the Good Shepherd. Everything you hear pass through his **filter** (John 10:14, 27).
  - Learn to follow and **listen** to the Shepherd, **not trends, fads, pressure and expectations**. Learn to listen to **one voice**, not the **fickle multitude**.
- This is one of the main things he spoke to me: “You will care for their souls if you tell them to **slow down** and go **deep** in me. I am not looking for their **performance**. I am not looking for them to run ‘**here and there**’ doing ministry. I am looking for them to **understand** and know me.
- “I am desiring them to **strip down** everything and only do what I desire. They must learn to **live** by **hearing** my voice. When **Abraham** did his own will—not listening to my voice—he produced Ishmael. I blessed his intentions, but it was not my perfect will. My people must wait till they hear my voice. I don’t want their own works; I want them to obey my voice. They must not just hear what to do, but **how** to do it—**my strategies**.”
- “Remember **Joshua’s encounter** with the **Captain**. I am not for you or your enemies. You are made for me—I am the Captain, Lord, Commander and King. You must wait, stilling your soul to hear from me. Don’t **assume**. Don’t base your life on **old teaching** and **old manna**. You must listen to me because I have the strategies. It’s my will that matters.
- “When you listen I will speak to you about other things—not the things you are seeking, but the things I am seeking. I may not answer your questions as you desire. Your job is to find out what **I am asking** and what **I am seeking**. Do not **assume**. Do not **presume**. Instead, **LISTEN**<sup>1</sup>. My people are not listening because they are too **busy running here and there**. They think they know what is good and right—but **THEY DON’T KNOW**, unless they **LISTEN** to my voice. Listen and live, says the Lord.”
- **Jeremiah 9:23-24**
- **Jeremiah 23:18**
- **Test** all things. Test if you are hearing correctly.
  - **Warning:** What God says will agree with his written Word. The best way to listen is through the written Word.
  - **Warning:** Test what you hear through mature men and women of God who know and live the Scriptures.
- When I am talking about **simplify**, I mean **doing God’s will**. I mean listening to him and **pruning away things** that are not his will for you. Don’t do what **appears** to be **good**, do what **God wants** you to do.
  - **Ephesians 5:15-17**

## 3) Care for your soul (Jer. 23:3-4)

- **God cares** for you soul. **You** also have to **care** for your soul **with God**.
- I also heard this: “I want my people to learn to **care for their souls**. If their souls are **not healthy**, their witness will be **polluted**—they will **MISREPRESENT** me.”

<sup>1</sup> The CAPS are not God shouting, but him emphasizing in a strong way. “Don’t miss this.”

- “My people run ‘**here and there**’ doing good works, endeavoring to please family and friends—but they forget **ME**. They do not care for their own souls. They lack the **richness** and **deepness** that reflects me and my children. I’d rather them do one thing with richness, then ten things with shallowness.”
- Care for your soul by continually going to the SPA
  - S - Soak in Scripture
  - P - Permeate yourself with his Presence
  - A - Ask for an abundance of knowledge, strength and understanding.

**Conclusion:** Simplify your life by listening to God. Don’t get deceived by what appears good, rather know God’s will. By listening to God you will care for your soul.