

Simple Living

"We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like."

– Dave Ramsey

For morning devotions one day a few summers ago, one of our riders spoke about her realization that each cup of coffee she bought at Starbucks was \$5 less that she could have been giving to help someone in need. She decided to give up coffee and challenged the other cyclists to think about what they might be able to forego.

Her actions exemplify our commitment to the principle of Simple Living. Living simply allows us to escape unnecessary distractions so that we have the opportunity to focus on one another, the people we meet, those with whom we serve, and the work at hand. As we try to "Live Simply so that others can Simply Live," we encourage the participants to try to do without many of the luxuries in our ordinary lives that most of the world cannot enjoy.

For instance, to live simply in community we:

- shower and stay in churches and community centers
- sleep on the floors (with camping pads), couches, or cots of local churches
- reduce our time watching TV, playing video games, or using the internet
- try to "live off the land" by eating food that is donated or provided by our hosts before purchasing food
- create our own fun, rather than organizing expensive tours in the cities we visit.

Besides the philosophical reasons, there are some very practical results. Living simply causes us to be more creative than we otherwise would be, and to bond together as a group. It lowers the cost of the trip, which directly allows us to help and serve more people around the world. It moves our focus from entertaining ourselves to engaging the community and world around us.

Of course, because of the nature of our event, there are some natural limitations. We're very committed to ensuring that the riders are well fed. We don't sacrifice safety, so we hope everyone carries a cell phone. We don't expect you to give up all technology and correspondence with the outside world. The Trip Leaders and Media Team carry all kinds of technology to do their jobs well.

So what's our point? We're not going to get legalistic about this and make it into a bunch of rules, but to make the most of this special experience, we will be encouraging you to take this opportunity to challenge yourself to live more simply.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich...Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need." – 2 Corinthians 8:9, 13-14

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." – Philippians 4:11-13