

“5 Tips for Learning to Appreciate the *Simple Things* in Life”

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.

In the fast-paced “hurry up” society in which we live, most of us long for a simpler way of life. But why is simplicity such a difficult goal to achieve? Seriously, is it really all that challenging to keep our priorities in order?

Well, I for one was beginning to believe it was, until I had the opportunity to spend an hour recently with a woman who has learned a thing or two about learning to appreciate the *Simple Things* in life.

Amy Grant is an icon. She is easily the most recognizable name in the history of Contemporary Christian Music. Long before CCM went mainstream, Amy was the one who was getting the attention of the secular press. When she emerged on the CCM scene, she was young, attractive, talented – and – she loved the Lord. In fact, she never backed down from singing about her faith. She just did it in a way the world had never heard it before.

Amy struck a nerve with thousands of people, and has now sold more than 24 million albums in her career. But she’s also seen her personal life become fodder for supermarket tabloids, and has paid a dear price for her success. Divorce, remarriage and blending families is tough enough for those not in the public eye. But when two high-profile celebrities go through it, *everyone* pays attention.

But, through it all, Amy Grant proved to her millions of fans that Romans 8:28 is, in fact, true. And the experiences of her first 42 years here on earth have led her to appreciate the simplicity of saving faith in Jesus Christ.

She reflects on that discovery in her album called, *Simple Things*... 10 heartfelt songs about coming to the realization that the really “big things” in life are actually a collection of meaningful “small things” – an affirmation that, in God’s economy, the whole is definitely greater than the sum of the parts.

The first time I listened to *Simple Things*, I was taken with five principles that seemed to jump out at my through the speakers of my sound system. So, with appreciation to Amy Grant for her inspiration, take a look at the following list of the “5 Tips for Learning to Appreciate the *Simple Things* in Life:”

1. **No one can ever “have it all.”** Did you know that it’s physically impossible for everyone to live the “American Dream?” Well, that doesn’t keep many folks from trying to achieve it. But the Son of God – our Savior -- said, “I have overcome the world.” So, don’t waste your time trying to accumulate things you don’t need. As long as you have salvation by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, you have everything you need!
2. **Certain things in life are “non-negotiable.”** Maturity is the process by which we come to realize that there are some things we can put off until tomorrow... but the truly important things must be dealt with first and foremost. Too often, I fear that we invest considerable time, effort and money mistaking the “negotiable” for the “non-negotiable.” Learning to “put first things first” will help you see life more clearly – and appreciate the simplicity of the power of God’s love in our lives.
3. **Failure is not final.** Now, I realize this isn’t an original thought. But think for just a moment about the things in your life you *haven’t* done – or those goals you *haven’t* pursued – simply because a past failure has left you feeling as though you either can’t achieve them or don’t deserve to. Well, if you have the Lord in your life, you may stumble... but you will never fall! So keep moving forward! (And remember... your kids will learn from your example.)
4. **Sometimes it’s better to be kind than right.** And this is something that happens only by God’s grace. Now, of course, the Father doesn’t expect us to sit idly by when someone is being wronged, and it’s within our ability to right the wrong. But, think about the relationships that are most important to you. Are you gracious with those you love? Are you willing to be misunderstood or overlooked from time to time for Christ’s sake? Remember, we are saved by *grace* – *not* by having all the right answers on a “Salvation Test.”
5. **Remember that you “live in the Light.”** Why is it that so often we live our lives as if we can keep secrets from God? The first step to finding freedom from shame is to bring our faults into the light. Confession is good for the soul. Ask God for forgiveness. And make sure you have at least *one* person in your life that you can admit your shortcomings to. What is it they say? “A friend is someone who knows all about you – and still loves you anyway!”

Learning to appreciate the simplicity of our faith is an essential component of effective Christian living. So, take time to enjoy the *Simple Things* – in your faith, your family and your friendships. Though He’s omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, having a relationship with God really isn’t all that *complicated*!

([Click here](#) for information on how you can purchase a copy of Amy Grant’s CD, *Simple Things*.)

