

TASTE & SEE



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The
CHOSEN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 9

PART I: The Simple Life 11

- Sabbath 15
- The Good Portion 23
- Tools of the Trade 31
- Wellspring 33
- Staples 37
- Hospitality Matters 49
- Mind Your P's and Q's 53
- Pass the Salt 55
- A Pomegranate Moment 57

PART II: Gatherings 67

- The Reason We Gather 69
 - Presence 77
- A Guide to Feasts 80
- The Thing About Weddings 107
 - A Family Affair 111
 - Sitting Shiva 113
 - 5 Loaves & 2 Fish 119
 - Leftovers 125

PART III:

Open Homes and Useful Gardens 131

- Prayers and Blessings 136
 - A Praying Life 167
 - Doorposts 169
- The Significance of Gardens 173
 - Fig Trees and Fruit 179
 - Pruning 187
 - Abiding 189
 - The Olive Press 193
 - First-Century Flower Arranging 197
 - Making Jesus Your Centerpiece Peace 204

PART IV:

A Chosen Gathering 209

- Your Turn 217
- All for Jesus 223
- Master Grocery List 229
- Recipe Index 233
- About the Creators 236



INTRODUCTION



Taste and see. It's an interesting invitation, especially for those of us who prefer to look at our food *before* we eat it. But this is a summons to a divine taste test. A call to take God at His word that (1) He is good, (2) His promises are real, and (3) we won't be disappointed.

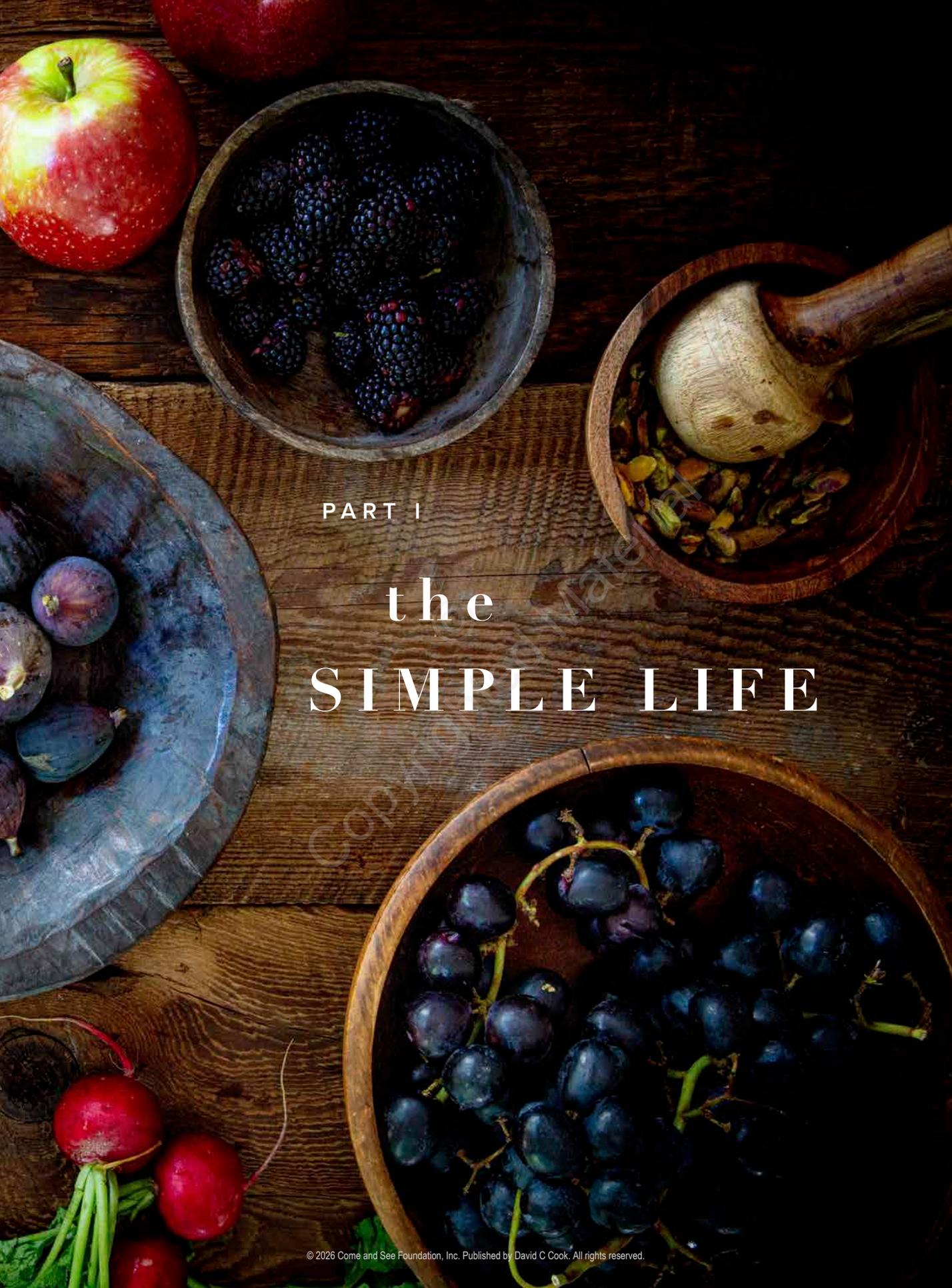
Taste and see. It's a familiar invitation because it's similar to what Jesus said to His first followers: "Come and you will see" (John 1:39). And what Philip said to Nathanael when trying to convince him they'd found the Messiah: "Come and see" (John 1:46). And what the woman at the well said to all the townspeople after having her own life radically changed: "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!" (John 4:29 NLT).

Taste and see. Come and see. Both involve a dash of faith and a dose of obedience (see what we did there?), but the reward is so much greater than any sacrifice we might make. Because when we respond to God's invitation, we experience what our souls were made for:

A personal, life-altering, peace-securing, hope-ensuring, soul-satisfying relationship with Jesus.

And what could be better than that?





PART I

the
SIMPLE LIFE



Ah. The simple life.

Most of us long for it to some degree. Some of us have even pursued it by unplugging phones, turning off computers, adjusting schedules, organizing junk drawers, cleaning out closets—there are lots of ways we try. But why is simplicity both alluring and so hard to attain?

Because our “simple life” desires are usually thwarted from within. Rather than finding contentment in Jesus, we find ourselves buying more stuff, booking more vacations, or pining after the buying and bookings of others (thanks for that, social media).

Indeed, our hearts are prone to wander from Jesus. And instead of building our lives on the things He values—like caring and sharing and enjoying and resting—we spend our time comparing and striving and griping and regretting.

We have complicated the simple life and we have missed the better things of God.

Things like welcoming and receiving in the name of the One we follow.

Things like togetherness and memory-making.

Things like thankfulness and stillness.

Things like peace and love and joy and hope.

Stick a fork in that.

When Jesus was a boy, His life in Nazareth revolved around the rhythms of an agrarian society. It wasn't an easy life, but it was a simpler life. Early to bed. Early to rise. And roosters were the only alarm clocks.

During daybreak and before temperatures soared, farmers would feed and care for their livestock, then they'd make their way to the marketplace to set up their wares.

Every village had one. Residents gathered to buy, sell, barter, trade—and socialize. Marketplaces were especially busy on Fridays before Sabbath. And all God's people would hustle home before sundown to prepare the prescribed meals meant to celebrate His appointed day of rest.

A day, mind you, where the things of God became more attainable.



SABBATH



Typically, we equate rest with sleep. While our eyes are open, we go a hundred miles an hour, often measuring the value of our days by how much we can accomplish. Good days are busy ones full of going, seeing, doing, exploring, conquering, and completing. And then at night, when we're no longer physically capable of doing all the things, we stop for a moment to "rest."

But then there's the Sabbath, which is one of the Ten Commandments.

And also a gift of mercy.

Shabbat:
the Hebrew word
for Sabbath,
pronounced
shuh-baat.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8–11).

Indeed, the Sabbath was and is a day of observance that God's people do together, primarily marked by abstinence from work—though that's not all it's about. Having a day off each week is a perk, for sure, and God built it into His system because He's gracious to His creation and intimately in tune with our needs. We *need* a day off to hit the reset button, attend church, and spend time with the people we love—because of course we do. And we need to quiet our minds, hearts, and schedules to allow for more time with the Lord, and to remember and practice our dependence on Him.

While Jesus followers are not under the same obligations the ancient Israelites were, the biblical call to simplify remains. Which means we should contemplate our need for rest. We should consider how we might benefit from a reset. And maybe even start thinking about the next time we'll sit around a table with people we love.

“Listen, if we
don't make time
for friends, we
won't have any.”

—JESUS, SEASON 2, EPISODE 2

Sample of a First-Century Shabbat Meal

FRIDAY EVENING

- ✦ Starter/Appetizer: Olives, figs, dates, fresh herbs
- ✦ Bread & Wine: Two loaves of bread and wine for the Kiddush (see page 70), which was a Sabbath blessing traditionally recited by the head of a Jewish household
- ✦ Main Dish: Lentil or chickpea stew or roasted fish
- ✦ Side: Salad of cucumbers, onions, and olive oil
- ✦ Dessert: Fresh or dried fruit

SATURDAY LUNCH

- ✦ Main Dish: Stew with grains, legumes, and vegetables, possibly with leftover fish or meat
- ✦ Sides: Simple boiled greens, herbs, and olive oil
- ✦ Bread & Wine: Two loaves of bread and wine

SATURDAY LATE AFTERNOON

- ✦ Simple bread, olives, fruit, and leftovers from earlier meals





KOSHER VS. NON-KOSHER



Kosher (כֹּשֶׁר, *kasher*) is a Hebrew word that literally means “fit,” “proper,” or “appropriate.” In Jewish tradition, when food is called *kosher*, it means that it meets the requirements of **kashrut**, the set of Jewish dietary laws laid out in the Torah (especially in Leviticus and Deuteronomy) and expanded upon in the Talmud and later rabbinic writings.

This guide provides a simple overview of what makes food kosher or non-kosher according to Jewish dietary law (*kashrut*).

CATEGORY	KOSHER (Allowed)	NON-KOSHER (Forbidden)	BIBLICAL BASIS
Land Animals	Must chew cud AND have split hooves (cows, sheep, goats, deer)	Pigs, camels, rabbits, horses, etc.	Leviticus 11:2–3; Deuteronomy 14:6–8
Seafood	Fish with fins & scales (salmon, tuna, cod)	Shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab), catfish, shark, eel	Leviticus 11:9–12; Deuteronomy 14:9–10
Birds	Non-predatory, traditionally accepted (chicken, turkey, duck, goose)	Birds of prey (eagles, hawks, owls, bats)	Leviticus 11:13–19; Deuteronomy 14:11–18
Insects	Certain winged insects with jointed legs (locusts, crickets, grasshoppers)	All other swarming or crawling insects	Leviticus 11:20–23, 41–44
Plants	All fruits, veggies, grains, nuts, seeds (after bug check)	None (except if contaminated with insects or non-kosher additives)	Leviticus 19:23–25*
Processed Foods	With kosher certification	Without certification	

*Disclaimer: Many kosher charts blend biblical commands with later Jewish traditions. The above chart gives a general overview, but is not exhaustive.



SPICY LENTIL AND VEGETABLE STEW

MAKES: 6 servings
PREP TIME: 10 minutes
COOK TIME: 45 minutes



1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery; cook 6–7 minutes until softened. Stir in garlic and cook 1 more minute.
2. Add in the spices: Stir in cumin, coriander, turmeric, oregano, cinnamon, and crushed red pepper. Toast for about 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add lentils, diced tomatoes, broth, honey (if using), bay leaf, salt, and black pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer. Cook uncovered 30–35 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender and stew thickens.
4. Remove the bay leaf and stir in lemon juice. Add salt to taste (if needed). Garnish with fresh cilantro.

NOTES

- ✦ This hearty lentil stew brings together the timeless ingredients of the biblical world with the rich, savory flavors we know and love today. While tomatoes weren't present in the biblical era, their addition here creates a flavorful, warming broth that pairs beautifully with the earthy lentils, vegetables, and fragrant spices common to the Middle East and Mediterranean.
- ✦ Lentils were a staple food in ancient times and mentioned throughout Scripture as a humble yet nourishing part of daily life.
- ✦ Packed with onion, celery, carrots, and warming seasonings, this stew is both simple and deeply satisfying. Serve it with warm flatbread or rice for a nourishing dish that's perfect for both weeknights and gatherings.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, diced
2 carrots, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1½ cups dried lentils (green or brown), rinsed
1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes
6 cups vegetable broth
2 tablespoons honey (optional, for subtle sweetness)
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1–2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes (adjust for heat)
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon sea salt + more to taste
½ teaspoon black pepper
Juice of 1 lemon (to finish)
Cilantro for garnish

Nutrition Information Estimated Totals Per Serving | Calories: 295 kcal | Protein: 14 g | Fat: 5 g | Carbohydrates: 47 g | Fiber: 14 g