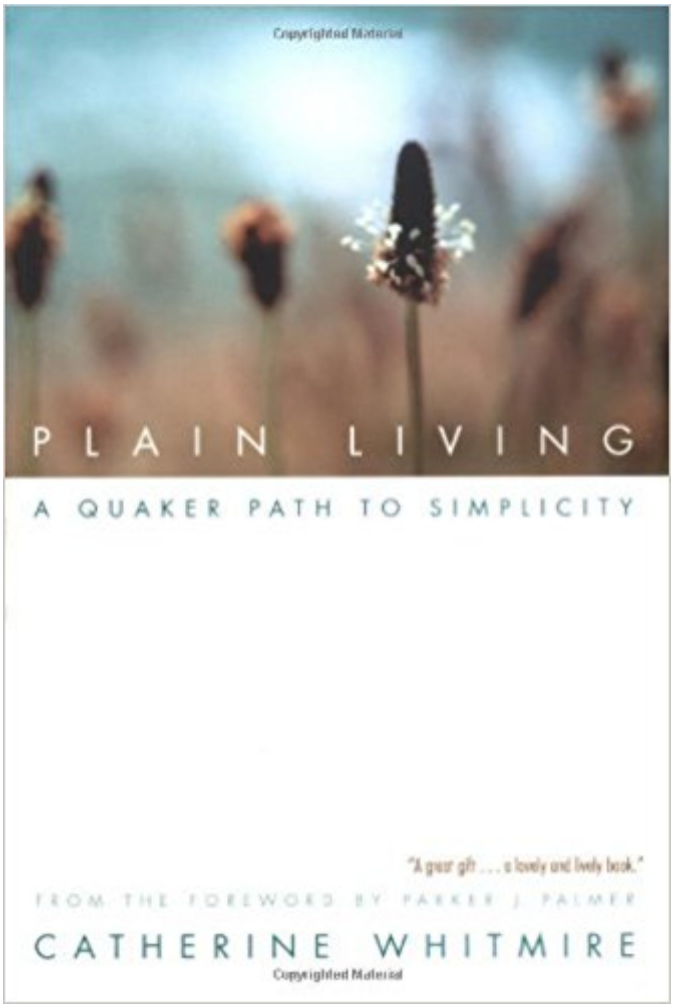
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Plain Living: A Quaker Path To Simplicity



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Synopsis

Most of us living in this complex and time-pressured era have moments when we wish we were living simpler, more meaningful lives. Sometimes these wishes are fleeting desires, but for many today the search for a life of greater simplicity and meaning has developed into a deep longing. There are many routes to simplicity. This book focuses on and provides direction to the gimmick-free spiritual path followed by Quakers. For over three centuries Quakers have been living out of a spiritual center in a way of life they call "plain living." Their accumulated experiences and distilled wisdom have much to offer anyone seeking greater simplicity today. Plain Living is not about sacrifice. It’s about choosing the life you really want, a form of inward simplicity that leads us to listen for the "still, small voice" of God. This book goes beyond the merely trendy to make the by now well-worn Quaker path to plain living accessible to everyone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Catherine Whitmire’s book of contemporary and historic Quaker voices reads like an antidote to consumer-driven despair. We all know the spiritual downfall of compulsively acquiring material goods (or what Quakers refer to as "cumber"); how it leads to a frantic-paced lifestyle built around working long hours so we can buy more stuff. In assembling Plain Living, a collection of paragraph-long quotes, Whitmire offers readers a simple and soothing alternative--the path that Quakers call "plain living." "We have chosen lives that crowd our appointment books, fill our email boxes, and overload our answering machines, even as we long for a plainer way of living--one that

will free us from the strain and activity of these times," writes Whitmire. "The Spirit is speaking through the whirlwind of modern life, and if we listen quietly to the cool, calm Center within, there is an invitation to plain living awaiting us." In the early chapters readers will find inspiration for laying down their interior and exterior cumber. The book's wisdom eventually expands into other important Quaker values, such as "Parenting and Mentoring," "Practicing Non-Violence," and "Listening to the Earth." Ultimately, this is a book with a long shelf life, offering timeless quotations on living the life worth living. --Gail Hudson

"Living--just plain living--is the finest thing of all, and this good, good book will help all who read it stay centered on that truth."

Mostly a ministers view of Quaker spirituality. A lot of poetry written by a variety of Quakers and others. The chapters are well titled but the content was pleasant but rambling. There are better writing about Quaker spirituality by non-ministers. Always better to go to George Fox and John Woolman's writing. Many Quaker pamphlets from Pendle Hill Publishing give more specifics on current practice. Quaker spirituality is better experienced directly from the Spirit as opposed to someone else writing about it. Non-programmed meetings give the best exposure to what the founders of the Quaker movement meant to achieve. Most religions focus on books, ministers, ceremonies, rituals and music as a path to God. Quakers focus on direct intimate experience with Spirit and Peace Testimony that creates peace within, peace with others and peace with God. Quakerism, A Theology for Our Time by Patricia A. Williams is a better overview of traditional unprogrammed meetings although she does not discuss newer Quaker programmed meetings.

We used this book at our Lutheran/Episcopal Church for a book study during Lent. The many different quotations and questions at the end sparked much conversation and ensured there were gems of inspiration for a wide variety of people. The book takes the Quaker inside out approach to simplicity. You won't find "10 ways to declutter your cupboards" in here. Instead, you will be challenged and inspired to a higher awareness of God's values and inspired to constantly be asking yourself, "What is God calling me to do in this moment."For those not familiar with the Quaker/Friends tradition, this made a very interesting and suitable first glance. Be aware, however, that the tradition emphasizes a theocentric view of spirituality verses a Christocentric one. Christ is talked about, but the Spirit and the Light are talked about much more. And this tradition emphasizes a practical spirituality over a core theology or set of doctrines. Some will find these ideas challenging

and that can lead away from examining the topics at hand.All in all, it was a good read, inspiring and challenging us in the spiritual discipline of simplicity and introducing us to the Friends/Quaker Christian tradition.

You know, as a so-called unprogrammed Quaker, I have to say, I really respect Friend Whitmire's writings. I have several of her books, and her approach is compassionate, peaceful, respectful, and wise, without delving into the mired politics that sometimes pervade modern Friends' writings. I'm always very suspicious of political hijacking of religion, because the bold reality is that conservative politics aren't always greedy and hardline, and liberal politics aren't always constructive and compassionate. The point being, as Quakers, we should take a step beyond politics to the space where real compassion and inclusiveness are possible, without the need to resort to political tribalism.With that rant over, I return back to my original point that Whitmire's writings are mature and nonsectarian while simultaneously being compassionate and constructive. She's an excellent author and I recommend her books to anyone, Quaker or not.

This is a book of quotes which doesn't flow very well. I'm very disappointed with this purchase. Catherine Whitmire should not be considered the "author" of this book. Don't waste your money. Buy anything from Philip Gulley instead.

This was a lovely calming read. I'm not religious in a formal, organized sense but this book spoke to me. Essentially, it is about conversations between you and your God. Private, with the goal of stripping away your various rationalizations on "why" you do this or that. And ultimately, it isn't the "why's" that matter. It is about your heart, or gut responses, in that you know, deep down, what is "right". Pleasant because there are no moralizing "should's" or prescriptions for salvation - again, it is about having an honest relationship with yourself and your God. And growth and change.Well, at least that is what it said to me. :)

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