



# BOOK DETAILS



*Free: Spending Your Time and Money on What Matters Most*  
Available August 2013  
\$16, 192 pages, paperback  
978-0-8308-3649-9

## Have Less. Live More.

People everywhere are waking up to the reality that the American dream is, well, not so dreamy. Having a bigger house, super-size portions and all the latest toys can lead to an unsustainable mortgage, poor health and crushing debt. And it's not just rampant spending that's the problem; we don't seem to be able to manage our time very effectively either. As Americans we are near the top of the heap in wealth and productivity, but somehow we still feel strapped. What is going on?

"The scripts we've inherited about material prosperity are wearing us out, robbing our joy and destroying the planet," explains Mark Scandrette, founding director of ReIMAGINE, a center for integral Christian practice based in San Francisco.

So is another way possible? The life of Mark and his wife, Lisa, demonstrates the answer is yes. The Scandrettes managed to buy a home, raise a family and finally live debt-free in the most expensive city in the United States, and they exude a refreshing hopefulness about the possibility of actually living out the "abundant life" Jesus offers to his followers.

"Simplicity is one of the vows of the intentional community we helped form and participate in," Mark explains. "Seven years ago we began leading workshops on simple living and invited participants into practice-based groups where they were supported as they took steps to simplify their lives. Over the years we developed and refined the six-week curriculum used in those groups, which is the basis for the tasks and exercises contained in these pages."

Embracing simplicity in order to live a life worth living is the theme that animates *Free: Spending Your Time and Money on What Matters Most*, Mark and Lisa's eminently practical guide to developing greater financial freedom, a more sustainable lifestyle and the ability to pursue a life of deeper meaning and purpose. Mark and Lisa outline seven steps to help readers clarify their own life vision and values and develop the practical skills needed to align their time and money with their deeper longings:

1. Name what matters most to you.
2. Value and align your time.
3. Practice gratitude and trust.
4. Believe you have enough.
5. Create a spending plan.
6. Maximize your resources.
7. Live generously and spend wisely.

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**Mark Scandrette** is the founding director of ReIMAGINE, a center for integral Christian practice based in San Francisco, where he leads an annual series of retreats, learning labs, conversations and projects designed to help participants integrate the teachings of Jesus into every aspect of life through shared practices and community experiments. A sought-after voice for creative, radical and embodied Christian practice, he speaks nationally and internationally at conferences, universities and churches, offering training and coaching to leaders and organizations. Mark is also the author of *Practicing the Way of Jesus* (IVP, 2011) and *Soul Graffiti* (Jossey-Bass 2007).

**Lisa Scandrette** makes a life in the Mission District of San Francisco with Mark, Hailey, Noah and Isaiah. She spends her time teaching kids, facilitating workshops and doing administrative work with ReIMAGINE, and creating with her hands. She specializes in living simply and offering care and hospitality.

Each step has its own chapter that includes exercises, experiments and tasks that will require readers to begin to think and live differently. Exercises such as self-evaluations and journaling will prepare readers to complete the tasks, specific assignments that lead to developing a tangible plan for spending time and money. In the spirit of *Practicing the Way of Jesus* (IVP, 2011), experiments are included to help readers take playful risks and move from fear and worry to trust, contentment and generosity. Experiments range from voluntary fasting or practicing the Sabbath to giving away half of what you own. Given that groups can provide crucial encouragement and accountability, reflection questions are also included to facilitate group discussion.

“We can’t have it all—the prevailing level of consumption, a life of deeper meaning and relationships, and global equity and sustainability. To realize these good dreams we must adjust our values and practices and seek creative solutions,” Mark challenges us.

As an adventurous “simplicity boot camp,” *Free* will empower readers to forsake the lie of the American dream to embrace what matters most.

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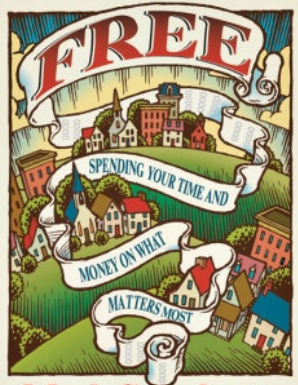


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## People Everywhere Just Wanna Be Free

We live in one of the wealthiest economies on earth. Yet many of us feel crunched for time, stressed in our finances or perplexed about what makes life meaningful. Our culture is driven by a sense of scarcity, fear and an unquenchable quest for more. If we don't make conscious choices to resist these impulses, the force of a materialistic and consumeristic society will make most of our decisions for us. . . .

Our challenge is to pursue a standard of living that can be shared by all. To love our neighbors as ourselves we have to consider how our individual actions affect our sister across the street and our brother on another continent. We might not be able to fully grasp the scope of the problem or offer a complete solution, but we can wrestle with the weight of our relative privilege and disproportionate consumption. For the sake of our global neighbors, the planet and future generations, we've got to find a way to be less wasteful and consumptive, discovering a more sustainable version of the American Dream.

We are encouraged by the growing awareness among people of faith that the gospel of Jesus is holistic and touches every aspect of our lives. We see Christians of every variety desiring a life of faith that includes being a good neighbor, valuing relationships, cultivating an inner life, caring about people affected by poverty and consciously becoming better stewards of creation. However, this good vision for the church will remain largely unrealized unless practical realities and competencies are addressed. Many of us are too busy or distracted to sustain a life of compassionate engagement. We live lives of hurry, worry and striving, finding little satisfaction in our manic work and recreational activities. Instead of being free to create beauty, nurture relationships and seek the greater good, many of us feel stuck in lives dictated by the need to pay bills or maintain a certain (often consumptive) standard of living. . . .

In a holistic understanding of the gospel every part of life is sacred and integral to what it means to be a follower of Jesus. This means we must learn to talk more honestly and openly about the details of our financial lives as an essential aspect of Christian discipleship.

The current generation coming of age is hopeful and motivated to seek solutions to the world's greatest problems. Students today are passionate about issues of global justice, including poverty and human trafficking, and want to make a difference. Often these dreams are in conflict with family expectations: "We didn't spend \$150,000 on your education so that you could waste your life as a nonprofit worker living in a slum." Often the impediments are more personal and practical. Students today make financial decisions between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four that will largely shape how they will spend the next thirty to forty years of their lives. Many will leave school with significant debt. Some will go on to graduate school, incurring further debt. Most will unconsciously adopt the

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culture's habits of consumption. We've sadly watched many young people who had amazing and creative ambitions settle into dream-killing debt-maintenance jobs. We believe that with strategic action this pattern can be changed. . . .

The gospel invites us into a life of radical contentment, generosity, gratitude, trust and simplicity. We can reimagine our assumptions about time, money and material possession to pursue a life of greater freedom, leveraging our time and resources toward what matters most.

Three core beliefs have shaped the development of this book:

"We can reimagine our assumptions about time, money and material possession to pursue a life of greater freedom, leveraging our time and resources toward what matters most."

1. We were created with a purpose, to seek the greater good of God's loving reign. Human beings long for a deeper sense of purpose. According to Jesus, we "are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), created to do and bring good to this world (Ephesians 2:10). The wisdom of this teaching encourages us to stretch beyond the mundane concerns of our lives to be animated by a calling to be agents of healing and restoration.
2. We have enough. The ancient voices of Scripture affirm that we live in a world of abundance, where the Creator provides all that we need. "You [God] . . . satisfy the desires of every living thing" (Psalm 145:16). Rain falls and sun shines on the earth, producing the goods that sustain us. We are invited to celebrate this abundance with thanks, to trust God for what we need, to be content with what we have and to share with those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and lonely.
3. We can make intentional choices about how we spend our time and money. We've been given incredible power to imagine, learn, grow and choose how we want to live. Living well requires vision, self-awareness, discipline and the development of practical skills. As those created just "a little lower than the angels and crowned . . . with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:5), we can make choices to become more content and free to spend our time and resources on what matters most. We think that to make life-giving changes that last, we need a source of energy and love greater than our own. The promise of the gospel of life is that if we do what we can, God will help us do what we cannot under our own strength (Philippians 2:12-13). . . .

We can choose to pursue meaning, value people, engage the world's needs and move toward a rate of consumption that is more globally sustainable and equitable. We can be free to spend our time and money on what matters most.

— Adapted from Chapter 1, "Why We Wrote This Book"

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# ENDORSEMENTS



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## What People Are Saying

“In a word? REFRESHING! Mark and Lisa remind us of the seismic power in radical contentment, gratitude and generosity. You don’t see that message in many places. Here is wisdom for the complexity of these issues and a simplicity that enables action. The result: free indeed.”

—Nancy Ortberg, author of *Looking for God*

“This book is an invitation to embrace the radical way of Jesus, to repent and rejoice, to foster simplicity and generosity, to open our lives to love, and ultimately to be free. The Scandrettes have produced the kind of practical guidebook to simplicity that we could return to again and again over the coming years.”

—Michael Frost, author of *The Road to Missional*

“My wife and I, along with ten of our friends, spent eight weeks working through *Free* and, quite honestly, it changed all of our lives. Unlike other books that simply offer time and money management techniques, this book takes readers on a journey of depth and reflection that reconciles our deepest values with practical steps on how we spend time and money. Mark and Lisa share from their deep well of experience and wisdom in a new and refreshing way.”

—Ben Younan, Solomon’s Porch facility manager

“I find that a growing number of people in our churches are under daunting financial and time pressures and can’t find resources to help. Here is a masterful resource to enable people of faith to put first things first. Recently I had the opportunity to meet with Mark and Lisa and their congregation in San Francisco. I have never been with a group of Christians that have helped one another more in becoming faithful stewards of their lives and resources. Mark’s new book is not only a must-read, it is a must-study resource for every congregation that wants to enable their members to live more fully and compassionately in times like these.”

—Tom Sine, author of *The New Conspirators*

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# AUTHOR BIO



**Mark Scandrette** is passionate about taking risks to follow the revolutionary teachings of Jesus, and shares stories from his personal experiences. In 1998 he and his family moved to inner-city San Francisco to pioneer a neighborhood Christian community. He is the founding director of ReIMAGINE, a center for integral Christian practice based in San Francisco, where he leads an annual series of retreats, learning labs, conversations and projects designed to help participants integrate the teachings of Jesus into every aspect of life. A sought after voice for creative, radical and embodied Christian practice, Mark speaks nationally and internationally at conferences, universities and churches, offering training and coaching to leaders and organizations. Wherever Mark travels and speaks he hopes to inspire groups to take a more active and creative approach to spiritual formation and missional engagement. He is also the author of *Practicing the Way of Jesus* (InterVarsity Press, 2011) and *Soul Graffiti* (Jossey-Bass, 2007) and contributor to the Animate:FAITH formation video series (Augsburg Fortress). [www.markscandrette.com](http://www.markscandrette.com)



**Lisa Scandrette** makes a life in the Mission District of San Francisco with Mark, Hailey, Noah and Isaiah. She spends her time teaching kids, facilitating workshops and doing administrative work with ReIMAGINE, and creating with her hands. She specializes in living simply and offering care and hospitality.

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