

How Much Is Enough?

By Susan Vogt



Money presents an age-old temptation and conundrum. Jesus tells the story of the rich young man who was reluctant to give up his riches. Yet living in destitution is not something to be sought. Spend some time, if you dare, reflecting on how many possessions are enough for you – and what might be too much.

For

Adult, Couple

Season

Winter

Needed

An honest attitude, eyes to look around

Prepare in Advance

Nothing necessary. If, however, your decisions might impact others in your family, you might want to invite them to join you.

Activity Plan

1. As always, begin in prayer. Quiet yourself by saying something like:

Dear generous God who knows our every need, we put ourselves and our lifestyle before you today. We honestly don't know where this prayer time will lead us because it's hard to know how much is enough or how much is too much. Yet, we offer you this time and ask you to speak to our hearts. Amen.

2. Read and ponder the Parable of the Rich Fool, Luke 12:15-21:

And he [Jesus] said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

3. Know yourself. It's risky to consider how much is enough or how much is too much stuff. On one hand the scrupulously conscientious person may feel that he or she needs to live a Mother Theresa



lifestyle. On the other hand, there is the temptation to think that “too much” is always a little more than I currently have. Rate yourself on the following scale

Scrupulously hard on myself

1

2

3

4

5

Easily rationalize my needs

4. Apply the Scripture passage to your life. Consider whether you have enough stuff already in your life? Are you ever tempted to buy a bigger “barn” or create more storage space? Are you being called to live more lightly? The following questions might help.
 - As I look around my home, does it look cluttered to me?
 - If a visitor from a developing country looked around my home, what things would seem extravagant?
 - Are there any things that I’m saving for “some day, one day” that a neighbor could use right now (remember how Jesus defines a “neighbor”)?
 - Do any of my possessions encumber my life? (Think of things you have to clean, dust, keep safe, worry about losing...)
5. Take Action. Identify several items (at least 1 but up to 10) that might fall into the category of “more than enough” for you. Honor one of your “neighbors” by passing on your bounty. See the [Living Lightly](#) blog for additional inspiration.
6. Closing Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for the opportunities and gifts you have given us. No matter how hard we may have worked for them, we know that you are the source of life and our ability to be generous to others. May our offerings bless others and bring us closer to your will.

