



The cake is frosted, the guests have arrived, and the gifts are piled high. One by one, the packages are opened, and one by one, the child reaches for another. Who among us hasn't seen a

child who appears crestfallen when the gifts run out? Even the abundance isn't quite enough. Today's Gospel tackles a key question in the spiritual life - grateful or greedy?

"There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest." We all recognize the need to be practical. Raising a family, there's need to save for all sorts of things beyond normal day-to-day costs - medical bills, family vacations, private school, rainy day funds, retirement. Jesus doesn't critique the rich man for simply having an abundant harvest. It's his mentality. Does the rich man sell off the extra to make the needed repairs to the back fence or to invest in some additional livestock to grow the business? Perhaps donate some of the excess to the poor? No. "You have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!" The man wants to hoard and indulge with no concern for others.

Jesus doesn't condemn prudent saving or owning necessary items. He calls us to purify our attitudes. "Guard against all greed... one's life does not consist of possessions." We are called to be good stewards. This means being practical. It also means remaining open to God's invitation with our resources. Are we tithing to our parish? Do we give alms to the poor? Does our weekly entertainment far outstrip what we offer to others? Life is not about "stor[ing] up treasure for [our]selves." The more we grow in gratitude and generosity, the more we become "rich in what matters to God."

CATHOLIC QUOTES - WORDS TO INSPIRE THE FAITHFUL

"Just take everything exactly as it is,
put it in God's hands, and leave it with Him."

- Edith Stein

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

How preoccupied and anxious are you over preserving and maintaining a particular standard of wealth? It is easy to develop an unhealthy relationship with our possessions and invest ourselves more in their protection and growth than in our relationship with God. Greed can overtake us, often without our immediate notice. Anxiety of heart can find us living more with sorrow and grief than with freedom and joy. We can never allow things to replace God, and we always have to keep our possessions and wealth in proper perspective. Once they begin to control us, we have a problem. Anxiety and worry can become our greatest sins. There is a joyful life to be discovered when we discover true faith!

KIDS' CORNER

When you put Jesus first in your life, you will have everything you need.

Having a lot of stuff won't really make you or God happy. God doesn't want you to keep your blessings to yourself. God wants you to share what he has given you. Be "rich" in only the things that God cares about. The closer you grow with God, the happier you will be.

Dear God, help me to remember what is really important to you.



EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - Recognize God in Your Ordinary Moments
God Gives Us What We Need - A few months back, my wife and I helped move my oldest son into his first real apartment. He was moving to start his first real job and was excited and cautious at the same time. Moving him in reminded me of when his mother and I were first starting out. We received an old couch from her aunt, some kitchen supplies from my mom, and many other things from friends and relatives so we could begin this new journey in our lives. We didn't have much. But we had one another, and we had love. Looking back, those were great times. Sometimes, we think material possessions give evidence of a life lived well. Artifacts from our travels, collections that take time to amass and provide clues to our interests, and various pictures and prints that adorn our walls. However, those who have lived lives of hardship and pain have many of the same items. Not only doesn't all our stuff amount to real evidence of what our life has really been like, but it doesn't make our lives better either. What makes a life well lived will be the love and compassion that we have experienced, primarily with God who loves us so deeply. Due to that love, God gives to us what we need, not always what we want. More stuff will never amount to anything in comparison to what God provides to us. If we reflected on that truth more, perhaps we would spend less time accumulating things and more time simply loving. On that moving day, I wanted to give my son more material things than was possible. However, what he really needs then, now, and always is my love.



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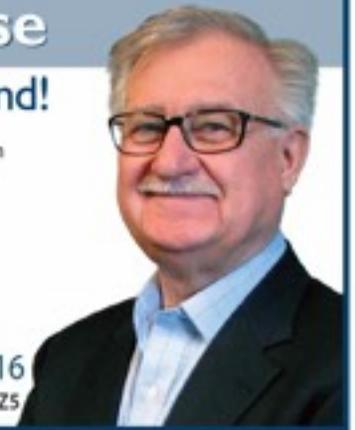
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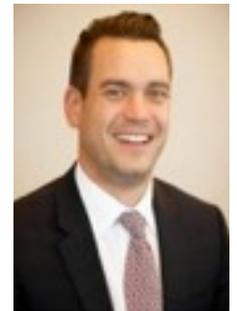
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