

How Much Do I Need?

Recently I watched a series of short documentaries on minimalistic living and tiny houses. There was a man who lived in a “hobbit-like” house dug into the side of a hill. Another man lives in a 12 x 24 (288 sq. ft.) house he built in the West Texas desert. There were young people who built their 2-story tiny house on a 16 ft. utility trailer. It was quite interesting to see just how little it takes to get along and live very comfortably if one’s health and attitude allows.

Just how much “stuff” does a person really need? Growing up and living in a materialistic society has convinced most of us that we need a whole bunch of “stuff” in order to survive when the real truth is you only need food (including water), clothing and maybe shelter. I think about myself and just how much I have accumulated over my lifetime. If I took inventory I’m sure that I don’t need 98% of my “stuff” and that’s probably a conservative estimate.

As disciples of Jesus we need to be careful of the influence of materialism. We follow a Savior who had “nowhere to lay His head” (Luke 9:58) and refused an opportunity to possess “all the kingdoms of the world” (Matthew 4:9). Jesus taught that we need not worry about what we will eat, drink, or wear, but make seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness our priority and God will supply those life sustaining necessities to us. Our problem lies in that we believe a person who has only the basics of life is the poorest of poor and we pity them because of this perceived poverty. Yet that’s exactly the type of “man” that Jesus was.

The bible teaches that “*contentment with godliness is great gain*” and we should be content in the state of living we find ourselves in at the present time (1 Timothy 6:6; Philippians 4:11). So next time you think you just can’t get by without that gadget, appliance, vehicle or house then take a moment and ask yourself, “How much do I really need?”

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