



## Special Thanksgiving Edition of (dot) Stewardship

### Junk: Hoarders, Collectors and Givers

A morning meeting with the insurance agent was all about possessions. She encouraged me to buy a policy so that if anything happened, my family could replace our possessions. I thought to myself quietly, if she could see my possessions, she'd think losing them would significantly improve my quality of life.

Even though my junk is junk, it is my junk. Like most people, I'm attached to it; the Bible instructs us to not get too attached to our possessions. In God's Kingdom, ownership is about stewardship and is in the context of God's ownership of us. Christians are simply caretakers – stewards – of the Lord's possessions.

The Lord blesses us with resources. The blessed then steward or manage the resources. *"And remember, the land is mine, so you may not sell it permanently. You are merely my tenants and sharecroppers!"* (Leviticus 25:23, TLB)

Three kinds of behaviors are associated with possessions: hoarding, collecting and giving.

Hoarding is a sickness. Hoarders make themselves, as well as others around them, miserable. Hoarding is the acquisition of and failure to use or discard such a large number of possessions that it causes clutter and impairment to basic living activities. The hoarder feels best when piling up stacks of worthless stuff that makes life difficult and is in the way.

A new reality show on the A&E channel explores the lives of hoarders. The show captures the deep emotions of people whose attachments to worthless possessions seem irrational. It is scary, rather than entertaining, for someone like me who is borderline dysfunctional in this area. The devil would like to prey upon my weakness and make me a hoarder. Possessions can become precious beyond all reason.

Our possessions must not possess us. We are warned in the Bible, *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money,"* (Matthew 6:24, NIV). Jesus also instructed, *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions,"* (Luke 12:15, NIV).

A step removed from the hoarder is the collector. Collecting is a hobby. Collectors experience joy in ownership and perhaps share that with others. Collectors can spend years locating, acquiring, organizing and displaying items of interest.

I recently met a man who wanted to purchase a cast iron skillet that I owned. We negotiated a price and exchanged the skillet. I wished him well with his skillet and told him that it would make his bacon and eggs especially tasty. He informed me that he wouldn't be cooking with it, but would be adding it to his collection that already consisted of 5,000 cast iron skillets. My question, "If you already have 5,000 cast iron skillets, why mine?" was obvious. Apparently mine was rare because it had grooves in the bottom and dimples on the sides. He had never seen one like that.

For him, it was satisfying to find and own a rare skillet. For me, I now had enough money to buy a pound of bacon and a dozen eggs, which are just two eggs short of a Saturday morning breakfast in the Lail household.

Distinctively different than hoarders and collectors are givers. Giving is a lifestyle. Givers produce joy in themselves, in their recipients and often in others. Former president Bill Clinton wrote a book about them called "Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World." A gift is a transfer of property, without any need for compensation. Giving is a voluntary act that requires nothing in return.

Scientists have proven that the good feeling derived from giving is biological. The reward center of the human brain actually doles out a dose of euphoria called dopamine along with a hormone called oxytocin that stimulates love and trust. Most Christians don't need neurologists to explain the obvious – giving is enjoyable.

Giving feels great in most situations, but especially when possessions are shared with those in need. Christianity and generosity have walked hand-in-hand since the earliest days. *"And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, selling their possessions and dividing with those in need. They worshipped together regularly at the Temple each day, met in small groups in homes for Communion, and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness,"* (Acts 2:44-46, TLB).

Giving is spiritually healthy. It is in the nature of the redeemed to give with gracious hearts. Those who walk with Christ have possessions, but they put them in their proper place. Possessions aren't necessary for being happy and content. While possessions are a necessary fact of life, they don't have to be a distraction. Paul said, *"I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of contentment in every situation, whether it be a full stomach or hunger, plenty or want; for I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power,"* (Philippians 4:12-13, TLB).

I bought the insurance. Now, in the event of a catastrophe, I can replace the Lord's stuff.

--

Mark E. Lail  
Director

---

### **Thank You for Generations of Giving**

Let the stories of Philip, Lee and Gaby inspire your congregation to generosity for the global mission of the Church of the Nazarene this fall. The seasonal offering for World Evangelism Fund traditionally corresponds with Thanksgiving for churches in Canada and the United States.

Resources to help you promote generosity and support for the global mission can be found on the Nazarene Media Library (search: Thanksgiving Offering Resources). There are two versions (in Quicktime and Windows Media Player file formats) of a 2-minute short film featuring the personal testimonies of the significance of World Evangelism Fund in three Nazarenes' lives from around the world.

Additionally, there are two corresponding bulletin inserts (in color and BW) for tri-fold or half-fold bulletins or backs of pews. The colorful and educational bulletin inserts can be used individually or paired with the short film.

[Click here](#) to download the ZIP file containing the film and the PDF bulletin inserts. Note: this is a large file and may take some time to download; we think you will find the end result to be worthwhile.

--

Josh Jakobitz  
Creative Coordinator