

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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How Much Is Enough?

Speaking of Israel's watchmen God says, "They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain. 'Come,' each one cries, 'let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better'" (Isaiah 56:12, NIV).

How much is enough? Thanksgiving and Christmas are traditional feast days, and feasting is by no means forbidden in Scripture. Rather, we are enjoined to rejoice and be glad. Who that know Jesus Christ have not great cause for celebrating? It is not my purpose to put a damper on Thanksgiving or Christmas feasts but to be reminded of Jesus' words to Martha, who was worried and troubled about many things when only *one* thing was needed. That one thing would have sufficed.

My husband and I were invited, along with six or eight others, to the home of a very wealthy lady in Texas. The menu? A large and delicious salad. Nothing else, as I recall, except perhaps coffee. She explained that she had been studying that passage in Luke 10. An unforgettable meal and an unforgettable lesson—it was enough.

Here in America most of us have far, far *more* than enough. Some families have agreed together to scale down gift-giving in order to be more generous to those who are in real need. The proliferation of garage sales indicates that people do eventually come to the realization that they have Too Much Stuff. They put it out for sale and along come folks who, although they are very likely in need of nothing, find something irresistible. They lug it home—but do they set about dealing with what they can now get rid of?

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, took stock each year of all his possessions. Anything which he had not used for a year he felt duty-bound to give to someone who could make good use of it. If you haven't used it for a year, you don't need it! How many suits or dresses does a man or woman really need? Have you counted up the T-shirts or shoes you haven't worn for more than

a year? The pens that clutter the back of that drawer? The tapes and CDs you never listen to? The stuff in the hall closet, the basement, or the trunk of the car?

It took Lars and me a few years to wake up to the fact that we could travel much more lightly than most of the people we see in airports. Why, we asked, does anyone want to be burdened with so much stuff? It's enough to make you want to stay home! What, I wonder, would be my response if the Lord Jesus said to me what He said to those He sent out to the harvest field: "Do not take a purse or bag or sandals"?

As faithful stewards of what we have, ought we not to give earnest thought to our staggering surplus? Remember God's words, "If there is a poor man among your brothers. . . do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted towards your poor brother" (Deut. 15:7, NIV). The word *steward* is an interesting one, derived from the word *sty*, a pen for pigs, and *ward*, one who guards. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us that "each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (NIV) "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (KJV).

A Note on Old Age

"(The righteous) will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him'" (Psalm 92:12, 14, 15, NIV).

My oldest brother, Phil Howard, was a missionary to the Indians in Northwest Territory, Canada, for forty years or so. Now seventy-six, he lives in Edmonton, Alberta, but continues his linguistic work, now under the Canadian government. He sent me this poem, sure that it would speak to me as it has to him. It did.

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown.

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be thou my strength and stay.

Be near me when all else is from me drifting—
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father! let Thy Spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place;

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows forever through heaven's green
 expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There from the music round about me stealing
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long. Amen.

Moods

My daughter Valerie Shepard, on one of those days when she felt particularly inadequate as the mother of eight (four are still homeschooled), found help in these wise words from Oswald Chambers:

“There are certain things we must not pray about—moods, for instance. Moods never go by praying, moods go by kicking. A mood nearly always has its seat in the physical condition, not in the moral. It is a continual effort not to listen to the moods which arise from a physical condition, never submit to them for a second. We have to take ourselves by the scruff of the neck and shake ourselves, and we will find that we can do what we said we could not. The curse with most of us is that we won't. The Christian life is one of incarnate spiritual pluck” (*My Utmost for His Highest*).

Parents' Role

It was Job's regular custom, when his children had had a feast, to sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts” (Job 1:5).

In my mother's Little Red Book (meditations from her quiet time) she wrote,

“When our children are adults what is the role of the parent? They seldom come to us for help or advice. It is wonderful if they do. Then out of our experience and perhaps the spiritual wisdom God may give us, we may be able to give wise counsel. Seldom, if ever, do they ask advice concerning the training of children. It is a blessing when they ask for prayer for themselves or their children, and this is usually the sole recourse of the grandparent, except for one tremendous duty: we can do as Job did. We have the one great sacrifice to plead—the Blood of Jesus Christ! May we be faithful in this duty and privilege for those we love!!”

Imagine how sorry I am that *I did not much more often seek my godly parents' counsel!*

Prayer

O my Father, I have moments of deep unrest—moments when I know not what to ask by reason of the very excess of my wants. I have in these hours no words for Thee, no conscious prayers for Thee. My cry seems purely worldly; I want only the wings of a dove that I may flee away. Yet all the time Thou hast accepted my unrest as a prayer. Thou hast interpreted its cry for a dove's wings as a cry for Thee, Thou hast received the nameless longings of my heart as the intercessions of Thy Spirit. They are not yet the intercessions of my spirit; I know not what I ask. But Thou knowest what I ask, O my God. Thou knowest the name of that need which lies beneath my speechless groan. Thou knowest that, because I am made in Thine image, I can find rest

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only in what gives rest to Thee; therefore Thou hast counted my unrest unto me for righteousness, and hast called my groaning Thy Spirit's prayer.—Amen.

—George Matheson, author of
“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

A Call to Matchmakers

For some years I have been watching with dismay the way young people are going about finding a mate. It's not working. It's a mess. Most of the world for most of human history has accepted matchmakers. That method worked. I'm trying it, without apology, for young people who are willing to have some help. Of course it is mostly women who ask me, but here's a letter from a man in Brisbane, Australia, who was heartbroken when he heard some tapes on which I had laid most of the blame on men, as though they were immature, uncommitted, stealers of virginity, brutal. Alas. Was I so insensitive? God help me. He writes:

“There are numerous men in my church who are going on forty and find the same problem. Our church teaches genuine biblical principles of discipline and the roles of women, yet we have hardly any single women in our church because of this. I can't tell you the heartache and pain that both those around me and I have faced in seeking a godly wife. It seems that in all the churches I have been in so far, it isn't the men who go out and lose their purity, it's the women.... God has made me more aware that as Christians we must surrender all to Him as in Matthew 10. As John MacArthur put it, 'As Christians we don't have rights, only duty.'”

A Single Woman Writes

“The Lord is filling my life with Himself, and providing unique and rewarding opportunities to be of service for Him. Through the avenues of students, overseas mission experiences, music ministry, Pregnancy Care Center counseling, etc. I am discovering the deep satisfaction of losing my life in Christ and thereby, truly, finding it. The dreams and longings of my heart have become 'material for sacrifice,' subservient to His high and holy purposes. I have released, relinquished and renounced my personal rights and have

placed my entire being in His all-wise and loving hands. My heart's cry is to be abandoned to my Master—to be emptied of all encumbering weights and residual holdings and be continually filled with the fullness of His Spirit. My supreme desire is to radiate His purity, presence and power.... I share one stanza of a hymn which has become my prayer:

“Take Thou myself, dear Lord, heart, mind, and will;

Through my surrendered soul, Thy plans fulfill.

I yield myself to Thee—time, talents, all—I hear,
and henceforth heed, Thy Sovereign call.”

—William Foulkes

Valerie's Recipe

On the night before, put two bagfuls of red kidney beans in deep pot, cover with water two inches above beans. In the morning, bring to a boil, turn heat down to *low* and cook all day, adding water if necessary. One hour or so before supper sauté onions, garlic, celery, and green peppers in skillet with a little olive oil. Remove vegetables, sauté sliced link sausage. Pour off fat. Add all to beanpot for the last hour. Then cook up lots of rice. Just before serving season beans with Worcestershire, Tabasco, and garlic salt. Walt loves this meal—terrific for a crowd of 12–14. Serve with rice, French bread, and an enormous salad.

An Interview With Mother Teresa

Dan Rather once asked Mother Teresa, “What do you say to God when you pray?” Her reply: “I listen.” “Well, then,” said Rather, somewhat puzzled, “what does God say?” She smiled. “He listens.”

What Is Worship?

In many churches today, the word *worship* means exclusively *music*, often led by women on a platform holding microphones. The word means a great deal more. It is a noun meaning reverence. Chaucer spoke of “a man of worship,” meaning excellence of character, dignity, and worth. Shakespeare used it as a title of honor, as in “my father desires your worship's

company." Milton used it as something held as sacred with a reputed connection to God.

Worship is also a verb meaning to revere, to reverence with supreme respect, to adore, to pay divine honors to. It takes many forms. When we wake up in the morning we might immediately worship God in silence for giving us a new, unsullied day—a solitary act of worship which pleases Him. As we begin our praying we might sing, "When Morning Gilds the Skies," or "New every morning is the love our waking and uprising prove." Perhaps we offer ourselves again, "Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it unto me according to Thy word." Hence we have *worshipped* by praying, singing, and by once more surrendering ourselves completely to God for whatever the day may hold, even if we have only a small amount of time at our disposal. We may worship while driving a truck or by doing the laundry as we offer our ordinary tasks to God.

In church we may worship by simply being there, hearing instrumental music and listening to the choir, and by joining in congregational singing, by listening to the Word of God as it is read and expounded, by praying, giving tithes and offerings, by receiving the Bread of God, by greeting one another in peace, and in other ways.

May we always remember that Jesus did *not* say, "If you love Me, sing about it, pray about it, write a poem about it, talk about it." He said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command.... If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him"

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Travel Schedule

November–December 1999

November 11 Thousand Oaks, Calif. Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, Simi Valley Calvary Chapel, Craig Brewer, (805)527-0199.

November 12 Torrance, Calif., Calvary Chapel South Bay, Susie Sullivan, (310)352-3333.

November 13 Diamond Bar, Calif., Calvary Chapel Diamond Bar, 22324 Golden Springs Dr., Linda Barela, (909)396-1884.

November 14 Laguna Beach, Calif., Calvary Chapel, Cindy Bond, (949)362-7475.

December 3 Costa Mesa, Calif., Calvary Chapel Christmas Coffee, Kathy Gilbert, (714)979-4422.

December 3 Moreno Valley, Calif., Calvary Chapel, Jeanne Edwards, (909)485-6080.

December 4 Riverside, Calif., Harvest Women's Ministries, Janis Vance, (909)687-6902.

(John 14:15, 23, NIV). In 2 John we find, "This is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands."

May we never forget that the highest form of *worship* is *OBEDIENCE*.

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