

The best things in life  
aren't things j essay



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I've read both of them in the last couple of months.

One is entitled, Real Prosperity, by Gene Gets. Biblical principles of material positions. If you ever read anything about Gene Gets or read any of his books, and I think Eve read almost all of them, and consider him to be an excellent writer. Gene always does a good job biblically pulling a lot of material together.

Whenever you read a book by Gene Gets, he's really done a lot of work as far as biblical foundation and this is true in Real Prosperity.

He has several chapters in there that kind of give us a biblical perspective. Then another book that I'm really excited about and in fact, Barbara my secretary had put me on this one..

. And it's by Patrick Morley who wrote as you know, the book for men, Man in the Mirror, which is kind of hit the country by storm in the last few months. I've read that one and Eve read this one and think this one is better. This one is entitled, I Surrender. Submitting to Christ in the details of life.

I'm here to tell you, this is an outstanding book on lordship and consecration.

And I really, thoroughly have enjoyed both of those books and the reason I share with you those books, is because, some of the material I'm going to give you today is out of those books, but importantly, I think what I'm going to share with you today, if you go pick up those two books, it will really enhance this lesson. So I just really, strongly encourage you, I think that both of those books you'll find to be a real blessing to you. Let's get started.

.. Managing editor of Money Magazine, summing up a study that his magazine did concluded that money has become the number one obsession of Americans.

Money has become the new sex in this country. Newsweek magazine has described Americans as having achieved a plan of a unconsciously, a plane of consciousness, called ' transcendental acquisition.

' and advertising convinces us that we need it all and a Mastered promises that can have it all. Every one of you in San Diego on, seen it on bumper sticker many times the one who dies with the most toys wins. And that I suppose as blatant as any as far as what materialism will do to us. Webster defines materialism as a pre occupation with tendency to seek after or stress material rather than spiritual things.

One more dictionary, and that is a definition of person who cares too much for the things of this world and neglects the spiritual things. Well, Jesus said it, said beware and be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his positions. Let me share with you today as I wrote this lesson I basically wrote down several truths about things as I think about them. And I think you'll relate to them today.

The first truth about things is that we all struggle with materialism.

I believe that's true with every person in this room. Think we all struggle with materialism. I think sometimes we think that this is an issue of people that have a lot. But I don't think that its an issue of people that have a lot at all.

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In fact, I think the poor struggle with materialism because they ask the question, why don't I have enough? And I think the rich struggle with materialism because they ask the question, how much is enough? And I so I don't think its a rich/poor issue.

Think its an issue that all of us have to face. Read this recently, I want to pass it on to you.

You can win if you run after money you're materialistic, and if you don't get it, you're a loser. If you get it and keep it, Holder a ? If you don't try to get it, you lack ambition. If you get and spend it, you're? And if you still have it after a life time of work, you're a LOL who never got any fun out of it. You really can't win, it said on materialism.

Some good truths there. The second thing about materialism is that we really don't feel comfortable I believe with the struggle. I believe Christians, when they feel this tension or this struggle of materialism, I think it leaves them uncomfortable feeling in our lives.

And think the reason that we don't feel comfortable with the struggle is because we realize that the demands of Christ and discipleship and lordship, and we're constantly asking our self the question..

. Where does it fit in? In fact, Jesus said no one can seer. ' e two masters. Hate the one and love the other, or hold one despite the other. You cannot serve god and man.

And if you'll remember a couple weeks when I was doing a stewardship series here at the church, I shared with the congregation the fact that we can't both.

And it's not an issue of choice, of trying to serve both, or trying to assimilate both in your life, it's just the fact that Jesus said we really cannot serve both. ' we cannot maintain a good life, extravagance, and good conscious simultaneously. One or the other has to be sacrificed, either we reduce our affluence by giving generously and helping those in need, or we keep our effluence smother our conscious. You have to choose between man and god.

Jesus said that. The third thing I want to share with you, the third truth about things is that they will never satisfy our significant needs.

They can satisfy daily needs, they can put daily bread on the table, but the significant needs of mankind, the significant needs that you and have, will never be satisfied by things. It is good to buy things that money can buy, but it's better to have things that money cannot buy. And in your section, I have all kind of things that money cannot buy. Money can buy medicine, but not health.

Money can buy a souse, but not a home. Money can buy companionship, but not friends. Money can buy entertainment, but not happiness. It can buy food, but not an appetite.

It can buy a bed, but not sleep.

Money can buy an agreement, but not peace. A book, but not knowledge.

Pleasure, but not a purpose. A good life, but not eternal life.

J. Paul Getty who died a few years ago, and you recognize the name because when he died think he was the wealthiest man in the world when he died. In the LA Times in January 1981 they did a little article on him and I read what he said. We're talking about the fact that money cannot take care of the significant needs off person's life. He said ' I've never been given to envy. The envy have for those people who have the ability have marriage work and endure happily.

It is an art that Eve never been able to master. My record, five marriages, five divorces. In short, five failures. And then the article continues, he turned the memories of his relationship with is five sons as painful. And much of his pain has been passed on with his money.

His most treasured offspring, Timothy, born when and died at 12 Of surgical complications after a sickly life, spent mostly separated from his father who was forever away on business. Other members of the Getty family also suffered from tragic circumstances. A grandson, J. Paul Getty III was kidnapped and held ransom for 2. 9 million.

You probably remember that. When Getty refused to pay, they held the boy for 5 months and eventually cut off his right ear. Getty's oldest son apparently committed suicide amidst strange circumstances. Another son, Gordon Paul Getty had committed suicide among strange circumstances and had a long tortured existence. And he ridiculed his father before his death.

And was his least favorite son. A perfect example of somebody who had so much, and yet had a lot of emptiness. What I want to do in this lesson today is want to help us monitor materialism. And think we can by asking ourselves several questions.

And as we ask these questions very simple ones, if we would answer yes behind them, I would think that would mean that we are beginning to be materialistic. Question number one, am envious or jealous of what others have? In others words, do I have myself caught up in envy or jealousy because of what other people have that I personally do not.

If so, if I would answer yes to that I think that would probably be in the grasp of materialism. Notice the quote, I love this quote, after a person makes his mark in the world, a lot people begin showing up with the erasers.

Boy is that true? Envy springs from a basic insecurity about our own self worth. And Elizabeth Conner has rightly noted, whenever a person is envious of another, you can be sure that individual has never fully recognized and accepted his/ her own gifts.

Good statement. I saw a cartoon of two pastors standing out in front of their church and they had with the big, you know, have some churches have sign boards out front where thefts have what they're message is going to be next Sunday and the usage on the sign board is ' thou shall not covet thy neighbors goods. And these to clergymen are talking and the pastor is going to preach that sermon its putting up that sign and says wows that? Very nice, as the two of them are walking one pastor says boy I wish we had a sign board like that in our church. You know, envy and covertness and <https://assignbuster.com/the-best-things-in-life-aren-t-things-j-essay/>

wanting something that somebody else has is not something that's just out there and in the world and it's not something we as Christians really sense.

I see, in fact, what really kind of I think is sad is I see it is much in the Christian community as I see it in the secular community. Onto, you think when you get the fence, where one side you have Christians, you would think that you would find less of it, but not necessarily true. All I'm saying is this, if we find ourselves jealous or envy's of what other people have, then we probably have a certain sense of materialism about us. Number two, second question that we need to ask ourselves..

. Is my appreciation for what god has given me, lessened. Good question. Is my appreciation or gratitude for what god has given me lessened? I find people that are gripped with materialism, the more they have, the less grateful they become.

It's almost like a sliding scale that the more that the person receives, if they're really grasped in the grasp of materialism, the less they are grateful for.

And there is a weakness of our age and that is our inability to distinguish between our needs and our greed's. That's for sure. Nash has a great poem, I don't read a lot of poetry, but always have enjoyed it. Always enjoy English lit when I was in HAS and I always enjoyed it very much. And this is a great poem, it's entitled, the outcome of Mr..

Mucosa's Gratitude. You may have read this. I remember reading this.



Anyway, pass it on to you, listen carefully, his is about appreciation and being grateful for what god has given us. When thanksgiving came twice, who walked proud, that optimist, Mr.

. McCollum Things you and would deeply deplore, McCollum found ways to be grateful for. And this was his conscientious attitude double thanksgiving, double gratitude. Whatever happened, no matter how hateful McCollum found excuses for being grateful. And to be grateful, he really strained his wits.

Had he hiccup, he was grateful it wasn't the fits. Had he hives, he was grateful it was measles.

Had he mice, he was grateful it was weasels. Had he roaches, he was grateful wasn't tarantulas. His wife go to San Francisco he was glad it wasn't LA. Mrs.

. McCollum on the other hand was always complaining to beat the band. If she had mumps, she found no tonic to be told to be grateful it was bubonic. If the crook walked out, she would scream like a mink instead of being grateful that she still has sink.

So she tired of her husband cheery note, and she stopped a silver tea tray down his throat. And he remarked from the floor where they found him reclining, I'm just a McCollum With silver lining.

Attitude of gratitude. All I'm saying is, as we have more if our gratitude lessens, we're are in the grasp of materialism. Question number three. Have lost the joy of giving? You see, that's another indicator.

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If we say yes, you know I used to love to give more than now. The reason we've lost the joy of giving is because materialism is become prominent in our life. Richard Foster in his book, *Money, Sex, and Power*, said, and this is think his best quote in that book...

Giving with glad and generous hearts has a way routing out the tough old miser within us. Even the poor need to know that they can give.

Just the very act of letting go of money, or some other treasure, does something within us. It destroys the demon greed.

Isn't that good? How true that is that giving has a tremendous help in helping us to overcome a materialism. One of my favorite stories about the guy who went him and his wife to county fair... And they've got this old by plane that they're taking up people for rides for 10 ten dollars.

So this guy was kind of an old miser and he wasn't a giver, that's for sure. And they want to kind of go on the ride and want to see if get a discount on the price. So went up to the guy and said, can we go for 5 dollars Of ten?

And the guy says no, its going to be 10 dollars. And the guy said, but we're both crowding'?? The guy would not negotiate, finally the lot said I'll take you up in the air if you don't say one word the whole trip when I come back down and land, I'll refund your entire ten dollars.

The old miser, said that's worth it. And he took him up on the deal, shook hands, three of them get in the plane, up they go, you know what happens. This pilot is going to do everything he can to make him scream and scare

him. So he does flips and twists and turns and dives, does all the things normal people would be totally scared and praying and screaming.

And not a word, not a word, and finally the guy lands this little plane and gets out and he's kind of cozy and reaches in pocket and pulls out the ten dollars and gives it to the man, and said sir, I cannot believe, I thought for sure I'd scare it out of you. I thought you would say something, he said you held up your end of the bargain, here is your ten dollars back. And the old boy said, I almost said something when my wife fell out. Almost said something when she fell out.

Have I lost the joy of giving. Number four, am I preoccupied with things in my life?

Am I, in other words, am I spending a lot of time just thinking about things or trying to define them? Here one of the quotes that Patrick Morley gives in that book that I commend that the beginning of the lesson, I Surrender, listen to this...

Truth be known, many of us live for the world that is going more than the world is coming. It takes time, lost of time to manage all the things that we accumulate and time in the final analysis is the ultimate resource. Where are you spending your time? Pleasing god or managing your assets. The lord said, I would you to be free from concern. You see, a materialist is preoccupied with things.

Materialism is not possession, but obsession. Wanting things more than god is a sign of materialism. Ask yourself, do I put ore effort and energy in

getting more of god, or getting more of the world? Question number five, this is a good question. Do I place my value and hope on possessions? Do I receive self esteem from what I have? Do I place my personal word on what I personally own? First Timothy 6: 17 is a great quote, a great verse, it says...

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches but on god who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

Now, Paul did not say instruct those who are rich in the present world to get rid of the wealth. He didn't say instruct those who are rich in this present world to feel guilty about their wealth. No, he said, just instruct those who are rich in this world, not to fix their hope on the wealth.

You see, materialism is putting hope in riches or in possessions, not in god. So materialism when you think about it, really, materialism is an issue of priorities, not possessions. Where do my possessions fit in my priorities of life?

In other words, it's possible for us since materialism is an issue of priorities, not possessions, it's possible for us to have very little, but have such a high priority on receiving more, than a person who has little materialism, where as a person who has much maybe doesn't really doesn't take great pleasure in those things. So materialism isn't how much money we have, or what kind of things we have, it's where our priorities are with those. Question number six, do I think things will make me happy? Good question.

If think that things will make me happy, am likely materialistic. Andrew Carnegie said, millionaires seldom smile.

Wow. John Rockefeller said, I've made millions, but they have brought me no happiness, I would barter them all for the days I sat on an office stool in Cleveland and counted myself rich on three dollars a week. Vanderbilt said that care of 200 million dollars is too great a load for any brain or back to bare. It is enough to kill anyone, there is absolutely no pleasure in it.

A couple years ago I was flying somewhere, whenever I'm gone I always read USA Today because don't want to read to the local news. But there was an ad that I clipped out, it was a for a BMW automobile, and the ad begins like this... Deedless to say, you can't buy happiness, but for a mere 299 a month, you can lease exhilaration.

Simply visit your authorized BMW dealer before September 30 and lease a new BMW. Then after strolling all the virtues of Bum's the ad concludes like this...

For a program of spiritual uplift on easy monthly terms, we recommend a participating BMW dealer. I like that...

A program of spiritual uplift on easy monthly terms... Huh? There are a lot of people who just basically think that they'll find happiness in those things.

Question number seven... Do I continually want more? I guess question we have to our self is...

Owe much is enough? And when are we going to be satisfied? DO I continually want more? Some statistician has pointed out that the average man today has 484 wants or desires compared to 72 a century ago. Of these, 94 can be classified as necessities compared to 16, one hundred year ago. Our society has gotten complex. We have more necessities..

. But watch this... There were only 200 articles being offered for sale back a 1 00 years ago, while today the total is well over 32 thousand different articles.

Huh? You know, Albert Sweetie of course who died back in 1965 was a great humanitarian.

At the age of 90. Doctor who gave up his life and of course went to Africa and..

. His standard attire was a white ? Helmet, white shirt, and white pants and then a black tie. In fact, his hat he wore for over 40 years..

. ND a tie for over twenty. And somebody was talking about the fact that somebody dozens of neck ties, and Albert Sweetie, with only one neck? He kind of blew his mind, got one neck, I guess how many ties do we need? Number eight...

Question number eight, am I enslaved to debt? Am I enslaved to debt? Can I probably not do a lot of things because of my debt?

Most people would be happy to pay as they go if only they could catch up on where they've been. Isn't that true? Number nine... Questions that we can ask.

If we get too many yes's we're probably in trouble. Do I buy a lot on credit? Do you buy a lot on credit? People can be divided into 3 classes... Haves/have not's/and have not paid for what they have.

Bill Earl said if your outcome exceeds your income then your upkeep will be your downfall. Chambers, let me read one paragraph of his. He said, most financial problems are related to one of the biggest psychological faults in most of us.

And that is, our inability to delay gratification. We are so anxious for the fruit that we pick it, that we pick it before it is ripe.

In fact, he defined lust as 'I must have it now.' and how true that is for most of us. ? For our financial unhappiness is the installment yester, which for most of having the benefits before you can afford the price. Our greed for things, our envious things of those who have acquired them before us, steals our joy and causes to go into debt. Number ten.

.. Have I less of a desire to serve god because of things? In other words, what god has blessed me with...

Have seen god bless people materially. And the very god that blessed them and gave them so many things, that became the wall between them and god. Timothy, when Paul wrote to Timothy in chapter 0, he talked about the fact that this can happen, he said, some people eager for money, have

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wondered from their that. And placed themselves with many grieves. Often I've used this definition of sin that John Wesley received from his mother when he was at Oxford university..

. He wrote one time and asked her what she thought sin was...

And here is what she said... Whatever weakens your reason impairs the tenderness of your conscious, obscures your sense of god and takes off the relish of spiritual things. Whatever increases the austerity of your body over your mind.

That thing for you, is sin. ' How easy it is for things to do that to us. Well, lets talk about some choices that we make that can bring contentment n our life. Lets start with a passage that Paul gives Philipians 4 10-13. How grateful, he said, I am, and I praise the lord that you are helping me again.

In other words, Paul was receiving some materialistic help from another church. Now that you have always been anxious to send what you could, but for awhile you didn't have the chance. Not that was ever in need, for I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. Have learned the secret of contentment in every situation.

Whether to be a full stomach or hungry plenty r want, for can do everything god asks me, with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power. And twice Paul in this passage, takes about how he learned how to be content and so... Contentment is not a characteristic or temperament. UN into people all of the time who think that person is naturally contented.



No, you aren't naturally contented/discontented... You choose contentment. I refuse to make it a temperament, that's because think that is an easy way for us to hide behind contentment. If you're not contented, its not my fault, its your fault.

Would totally not take responsibility for nobody's contentment. Its an issue and choice that you need to make that I need to make. Now, there are several, I think choices that will help us to become contented that we can make if we understand them.

And let me give them to you..

. Number one, understand timing. Ecclesiastic writers said, there is a right time for everything. And Paul understood that in Philippians 4 , if there is anything pick up what Paul is saying, he said realized that there are times in my life when things are going tot go well, not going to go well, there are times when I'm going to get a good pay check/not good, I understand just like he tide of the ocean, I understand these things and because I understand timing and understand seasons, I'm able to be content in both.

I find this, people who do not understand seasons of life, are never contented. I can tell you I can always tell, people who do not understand seasons of life are always wishing they were either back there, or go back or want to go forward.

You show me a person, I can tell you, it's not most of the time, its always a fact that people who do not understand seasons of life are always wishing for another time accept the time that theft in right now. When they're monger,

they don't appreciate their college days because they've got to study and all of that stuff.

And they think, boy when I get out of college, I'm going to be happy, etc..

I see it all of the time. People who are not contented, do not understand that time in things, because the timing of things and the seasons that we're in will definitely change the values that we have. A great illustration is the Titanic when it went down.

.. The lady who went to the life boat and asked for just a few extra minutes. And they gave her 10-15, and she ran back to her cabin, very wealthy, what did she do? Did she pick up all of her jewelry? NO, she went back and picked up 3 oranges.

Hours before that ship hit that iceberg, she wouldn't have traded all of her diamonds for oranges. But the timing... All of the sudden she realized what timing changed and she understood the value of something that previously would not have been. I can personally, in my own life, it's not a bragging point, it's one I'm very ashamed of.

There was a time in my life where I put my work before my family. There was a time where I just said wow, this is the most important thing I've ever got, and my family wasn't first. It happened with me.

Fortunately I've got a good wife who is strong and sit down and look me in the eye, let me talk to you boy, yes mama.

Let me talk to you about death due us part and talk about commitment and somebody that book isn't going to be a book any more, sermon isn't going to be sermon anymore, someday you're going to forget who you were, and they will forget you, the whole process... It really helped me, that was a, but there was a time when I didn't understand the timing and the value of this seasons and what and I think probably the best gift I have today is I really understand it.

I wouldn't go back and wouldn't go reward.

Just enjoy what I have right now. Where I am and what's happening. Every season going to be different. And now I look forward to leaving work and going home and not taking work home with me, and last night put bucket in the garage and hung it from the, everyday we come home he doesn't' something, so we always come home with great surprise. And he'd got a little basketball and he is playing basketball. And slammed dunked and played horse and cow.

.. Oh know, sadly there was a time in my life and I'd have sat there and thrown a couple of balls and grabbed my briefcase and gone off in my room. And its just a times in our life when I think we begin to understand what really is important to us. Second area that will help us in this commitment factor, and contentment being contented is putting first. Think that the most contented people in life are people who put other people first.

You know, in second Timothy 3, first five verses...

Paul talks about the things that are going to happen in the last days. In fact, he said, in that first verse, in the last days, it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian.

And I begin to underline things. He says in verse two, for people will love only themselves and they're money. And he talks about the fact that they'll be disobedient, ungrateful, he talks that they'll never give into others, that they sneer at those who are trying to be good. They will betray their friends, and when I thought about that, how true this is of society.

And think there is a relationship between all of those things that were doing and not putting other people first, and the lack of contentment that we have in our life that only putting other people first and truly being a servant of others will bring us. Number three.

.. Develop a habit of giving things away. Think that choice itself will bring contentment.

Develop of habit of giving things away. Jesus said, freely you have received, freely give. Andrew Carnegie, who was the great steel king, wrote in his essay, gospel of wealth... I love this, that the life of a rich man should fall into 2 periods.

First, that of acquiring wealth, second, that of redistributing it. Good statement. Giving again, loosens the grasp of greed upon our life. Number four, the fourth choice that brings contentment is believe learning to enjoy things without owning them. Learning just to enjoy them without owning them.

And I think again in our culture, there is a tendency that we want to own everything. Richard said owning things is obsession in our culture, if we own it, we feel that we can control it. And if we can control it, we feel that it will give us more pleasure.

And this idea is an illusion. Many things in life can be enjoyed without possessing or controlling them. Share things, enjoy the beach without owning a piece of it.

Enjoy public parks and libraries and goes on. Number five, the fifth choice that brings contentment. Cut down on things that control you. If you sense that there is something that is begging to control your life, cut down on it. Money is a wonderful servant but a terrible master.

If it gets on top and you get under it, you will become its slave. A lot of truth there isn't it.

Let me read again what Chamberlain says, contentment is the secret of inward peace and it remembers the stark truth that we brought nothing to the world, and we can take nothing out of it. Life, in fact is a pilgrimage from one moment of nakedness to another. So we should travel light and life simply in our enemy is not possessions but excess.

Our battle cry is not nothing, but enough. One of the most helpful disciplines ever given he said, to me, was this statement... Sit loose on things. Own them, enjoy them, expect them, walk them in, and when they come, but sit still, sit loose on them.

That way if they go, they do not carry us with them. Things are to own, and people are to love...

Rather than things to love, and people to own. Sit loose on things. Great story. Herman and Mary are riding along in their shiny new car and Mary says, you know what Herman? She said, if it wouldn't be for my money, we wouldn't have this car. And Herman didn't say anything, he just kind of nodded and grunted. They pulled in the garage, beautiful garage, big home.

She said, Herman, if it weren't for my money, we wouldn't have this home.

Herman said nothing.