

“I got tired of it...”

By Bob Young

I recently wrote about the \$500,000 pickup. Today I consider a couple of related stories—at least the principle is similar.

I talked to a Christian last month who had just purchased a new car. (I will call this Christian AB—Abby.) I was a little surprised—the car that Abby currently owned was very nice, only a couple of years old and had very few miles on it. Further, the car Abby purchased was fairly expensive. When I asked about any problems with the previous car and the reason for the new car purchase, Abby said, “I got tired of the other one.” Abby had two choices: purchase a new car to help out with boredom, or put a native missionary in the mission field until Jesus returns. Somehow we who minister and serve and seek to advance the ministry and mission cause of the Master around the world must do a better job of communicating values and priorities in the midst of the extreme wealth with which God has blessed us.

Coincidentally, on the same day as the previous conversation, a church member told me of an experience she and her granddaughter had shared. (I will call this church member ED—Edie.) Edie’s granddaughter had come to visit for the weekend, and in the course of making up the bed together, Edie mentioned that she would like to replace the bedspread. Edie’s granddaughter responded by saying that she liked the bedspread and asking what was wrong with it. Edie said, “I’m tired of it and would like something different.” Edie’s granddaughter’s response shows how deeply ingrained consumerism is in our society: “I’ll be glad when I get old enough and rich enough to be able to change the things I’m tired of.” Edie confided to me as our conversation closed, “Of course, I’ll never replace that bedspread—I’m too ‘tight’ to get rid of something that is perfectly good.”

Without being harsh or judgmental (hopefully), and while recognizing that we all have our own luxuries and wasteful moments in the abundance of our country, I ask how we Christians can help one another make better decisions about how and how much to share of the blessings God has showered upon us. We are blessed to live where we do. Did God bless us for a reason? Are we doing what God wants? When we live in a country where the average person makes 100 times what our brothers or sisters earn in a poorer country, perhaps the question is not what we have to give to God, but how little can be we by on.

I remember another Christian. I’ll call him Al. Al was committed to giving to God as much as he kept for himself. It was not just talk—he was doing it! I suspect you and I could also do it. I am confident we could live on much less than we do.

My sermon text last Sunday dealt with laying up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Am I? Are you? Are we? What is your treasure? Where is it? What are you investing in? What are our priorities? The text (Matthew 6:19-24) is as much about trust as it is about treasures. Hopefully we can grow to where our most intense desires in life are greater than meeting our own wants and making ourselves feel good!