Possessions

**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures buried in the ground,**

**a place where rust and moth destroy**

**and where thieves break through and steal.**

**But lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven,**

**where neither rust nor moth destroys**

**and where thieves do not break through and steal.
*(St. Matthew 6:19-20)***

**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,**

**and all these things shall be added to you.**

***(St. Matthew 6:33)***

**For one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.**

***(St. Luke 12:15)***

**For all things are yours: the world or life or death**

**or the present or the future, all are yours.**

***(1 Corinthians 3:21-22)***

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**An American will build a house in which to pass his old age and sell it before the roof is on. *(Alexis de Tocqueville)***

**Americans are buried in stuff. As Sara Solovitch reports in The Washington Post this week, up to 6 percent of the population -- about 19 million people -- could be categorized as compulsive hoarders. These folks feel compelled to collect and store things, piling up items in their homes that most of us would consider junk, like old newspapers, food packaging, and shampoo bottles. One hoarder, 72-year-old Sandy Stark, told Solovitch that she kept adding "treasures" to the trash heaps around her apartment because each new addition gave her a brief high. "But it's also to fill a void," she admitted. A similar hoarding instinct can be seen at work in the Panama Papers, leaked documents that show how the world's wealthy and powerful have stashed billions of dollars in secretive Caribbean tax havens. Some of those named in the documents are crooks and kleptocrats hiding their ill-gotten gains from prying eyes. But many are law-abiding citizens who feel a compulsion to amass vast sums of money -- and don't want their treasure diminished in any way, including paying the tax man. Psychologists have found that hoarding is often triggered by a trauma. Since the traumatic 2008 financial crash, financial hoarding has only intensified. One recent survey showed that people with investible assets of $1 million or more now keep nearly 26 percent of their portfolios in cash deposits -- about double pre-crisis levels. This kind of behavior poses a problem for capitalism which needs the wealthy to spend and reinvest profits in new economic ventures, which in turn help generate new jobs, wealth, and growth. But if the superrich cling to their cash like an emotional security blanket, and put it out of play in Panama or a Cayman Island fund, nothing trickles down. So c'mon, you billionaires, declutter your hidden assets. You'll feel so much better afterward. *(Theunis Bates, in The Week magazine, April 22, 2016)***

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**He who makes a paradise of his bread makes a hell of his hunger. *(Antonio Porchia)***

**The best things in life aren't things. *(Art Buchwald)***

**There is, of course, a difference between what a man seizes and what he really possesses. *(Pearl Buck, novelist)***

**It’s good to have money and the things money can buy, but it’s good to check once in a while and make sure you haven’t lost the things that money can’t buy. *(George Horace Lorimer, in The Best of BITS & PIECES, p. 128)***

**Many consumer goods thought of as luxuries 10 years ago are now considered necessities, a Pew Research Center study found. Among them: cell phones, home computers, and microwave ovens. “The more of these goods you have and the more available they are,” says Pew’s Paul Taylor, “the more you feel you need.” *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 29, 2006 – January 12, 2007)***

**Money and possessions are like diet soda – they satisfy momentarily, but they do not nourish. *(Kevin Anderson, in Divinity in Disguise)***

**I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I want to move in with them. *(Phyllis Diller, actress and comedian*)**

**I am a marvelous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man, I keep his house. *(Zsa Zsa Gabor, Hungarian American actress)***

**You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. *(Kahlil Gibran, poet)***

**The greatest possession is self-possession. *(Ethel Watts Mumford, author)***

**Don’t try to have it all. Where would you put it? *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Our frustration is greater when we have much and want more than when we have nothing and want some. *(Eric Hoffer, philosopher)***

**Since the recession, Millennials have steered clear of home ownership more than any other age group. From 2006 through 2011, the number of 25- to 34-year-old renters grew by more than 1 million, while the number who owned homes fell by nearly 1.4 million. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 27, 2013)***

**Those things people work for, our possessions – both material goods and the immaterial past – weigh life down. That mark of success, a large house, doesn’t bring pleasure. The bigger the house, the more pipes there are to burst, the more plaster to crack, the more wallpaper for children to peel off. My house has a big front yard, and friends say I am fortunate to have it for the children to play in. I am not sure. The grass not being so green as I wanted it, I spent $52.34 on fertilizer. Now I have the best crop of weeds in the neighborhood and have to buy weed killer. Once the weeds are dead, I will harrow up the yard, rake, scatter grass seed, and cover everything with straw. Then watering begins. During the whole process, the children won’t be allowed to play on the lawn. *(Samuel F. Pickering, Jr., in The Right Distance)***

**We work to become, not to acquire. *(Elbert Hubbard, author)***

**Jesus wasn’t saying that we should not have money. What He was testing for was to determine if the man had possessions or if he was possessed by them. *(Dr. Eric Butterworth, Unity Minister, in Spiritual Economics , p. 147)***

**The movie Selma could not use the actual words of Martin Luther King's historic speeches because the King family holds the copyright on the speeches and sells rights to use them. The family has sued networks, newspapers, and documentary makers for using those speeches. *(Politico.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 30, 2015)***

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**I spoke with a Bedouin man who was tending olive trees, from which he had just harvested a basket of olives. "Do you own this land?" I asked. He shook his head. "The lands belongs to Allah," he said. "What about the trees?" I asked. "The trees, too, are Allah's." I marveled at the man, who seemed unencumbered by material considerations, when he suddenly added, "Of course, I own the olives!" *(Harvey Arden, in National Geographic magazine)***

**Bill Gates is now the top private-farmland owner in America, with more than 242,000 acres across 18 states. Cable billionaire John Malone is still the country’s biggest landowner, with 2.2 million acres of ranches and forests. Amazon’s Jeff Bezos is also investing in land and owns more than 420,000 acres, mostly in West Texas. (Forbes.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)**

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**Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither. *(C. S. Lewis)***

**John Burgoyne, a British general in the Revolutionary War, packed a lot of luggage. For example, into the Battle of Saratoga he packed 30 cartloads of personal possessions. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A luxury automatically becomes a necessity when you find you can charge it. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Why nothing matters: There must be more to life than having everything. (Maurice Sendak, in Catholic Digest)**

Riches do not consist in the possession of treasures, but in the use made of them. (Napoleon Bonaparte)

A necessity is something you can get along without to buy something you simply must have. (Franklin P. Jones)

**Popes have had varying amounts of personal wealth, but probably no pope has had as little as Pope John XXIII. Before he assumed the papal throne, Cardinal Roncalli managed to accumulate enough money for his family to buy back the house in which he and his brothers had been born so that the Roncalli clan could once again live under the same roof. Dr. Piero Mazzoni, the Roman physician who attended Pope John in his dying days, discovered that a fountain pen was one of John’s very few personal possessions of value. “Take this pen,” whispered the pontiff to his doctor on his deathbed. “It’s all I have with which to repay you for your care and devotion. It’s almost new, for I’ve hardly ever used it.” The only other possession John left behind was his pectoral cross, which he gave to Franz Cardinal Koenig, then the archbishop of Vienna, who wore it at special events. (Nino Lo Bello, in The Incredible Book of Vatican Facts and Papal Curiosities, p. 42)**

**The average size of a new rental apartment in the U.S. shrank more than 5 percent over the past decade, going from 993 to 941 square feet, according to a study from RentCafe. (The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 11, 2019)**

**The most luxurious possession, the richest treasure anybody has, is his personal dignity. *(Jackie Robinson)***

**Buy land. They ain’t making any more of the stuff. *(Will Rogers)***

**To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness. (Bertrand Russell)**

**Place me in a very rich house that abounds with gold and silver; I shall not, on account of these things, admire myself; for though they are with me, they are not within me. Such external treasures do not touch the nature of man; and though they dazzle the eye by their great splendor, they improve him neither in health nor in the form of his body, and least of all in the qualities of his mind. *(Seneca)***

**A wild Australian sheep that could barely walk because of its unshorn fleece yielded a record-breaking 89 pounds of wool -- enough to make 30 sweaters. The merino ram, bred to produce a maximum amount of wool, spent five years in the wild before being spotted by a hiker. An animal welfare charity took him in, dubbed him Chris, and gave him the epic haircut. "He looks like a new man," charity official Tammy Ven Dange said of the now 97-pound sheep. "He's only half the weight he used to be." *(The Week magazine, December 25, 2015)***

**If you possess something but you can't give it away, then you don't possess it; it possesses you. (Frank Sinatra)**

**The median size of a new single-family home reached nearly 2,500 square feet in 2015, its highest level on record. Four decades ago, the median newly built house was two-thirds that size. (The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2016)**

**The U.S. now has 2.3 billion square feet of self-storage space, constituting more than 7 square feet for every citizen. *(The New York Times Magazine, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 18, 2009)***

**The most important things in life aren’t things. *(Quoted in bulletin of Fairfield, Illinois, First Christian Church)***

**To provide a modern person with the necessities – and luxuries -- of his or her accustomed life, at least twenty tons of raw materials must be dug from the earth every year. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 327)***

**I’ve always been after the trappings of great luxury you see, I really, really have. But all I’ve got hold of are the trappings of great poverty. I’ve got hold of the wrong load of trappings, and a rotten load of trappings they are too, ones I could have very well done without. *(Peter Cook)***

**Bad week for: Traveling light, after Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz set out for a nine-day trip to Indonesia with more than 500 tons of luggage. An airfreight company used 572 workers to carry the load, which included two Mercedes-Benz limousines and a pair of specialty escalators. *(The Week magazine, March 10, 2017)***

**Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by taping sandwiches all over your body*. (Roger Corless, Buddhist scholar)***

**Civilization is a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities. *(Mark Twain)***

**I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own. *(Andy Warhol)***

**We spend the first part of our human experience avidly accumulating things and the other half wondering what in the world we're going to do with all the stuff. *(Margret E. Keatts)***

**Let me be surrounded by luxury; I can do without the necessities. *(Oscar Wilde)***

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