

FAITH REFLECTION

— *how much is enough?*

How do the people of God define ‘the good life’ and compare it to our dominant culture’s definition?

How much is enough for each of us so that all inhabitants of this good earth may share in the abundance God offers?

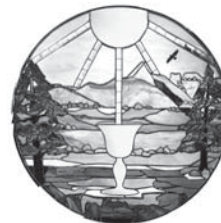
G.K. Chesterton, the nineteenth century British author, suggested that there are two ways to have enough: one is to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less. Graceful living is about finding an answer to the question, ‘How much is enough?’ The answer grows out of our love for God, neighbor and for all of God’s creation. It means letting our faith and the values derived from that faith drive our consumption patterns—not advertising or the spread of global capitalism that seem to put the dream of ‘the good life’—measured by material possessions and social status—within easy reach.

While most of us will continue to experience the tension created by living in a consumer society while trying to live as the people of God, it is possible to deal with that tension and resolve it to a large extent in the decisions we make about our lifestyles. How we spend, save or give away our money, our time and our God-given gifts reflects our faith and values.

Graceful living begins with an alternative vision of how you’d like to live. Now is the time to dream a dream of your own. What is ‘the good life’ for you and your loved ones? How much of what you want for yourselves is part of the American Dream and how much is related to the Dream of God?

*What would it be like to opt out
of excessive materialism and develop a lifestyle
that reflects the core values of your faith?*

To help in your ongoing search for a lifestyle consistent with your faith and values, I want to suggest seven key graceful living concepts that grow out of faith in a gracious God. These concepts are abundance, frugality, simplicity, generosity, sustainability, justice and Sabbath. Creating a lifestyle based on these core values challenges our culture’s most basic assumptions about what constitutes a life well lived, and yet taken together, they are consistent with God’s dream that all shall have enough.



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