
You Cannot Carry Them With You

Hymn: [Improve the Shining Moments, Hymn 226](#) or [Simple Gifts](#)

Scriptures and Quotes

[Luke 12:15](#) “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

[Acts 20:35](#) “I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

[Alma 39:14](#) “Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world; for behold, you cannot carry them with you.”

“With our ever increasing population and the depletion of our natural resources, our great hope is to become more efficient in utilizing that which the Lord has given to us and in eliminating the waste so prevalent in our society.” L. Tom Perry

Overview:

Jesus taught that we should “lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.” How do we switch our focus from earthly treasures to heavenly treasure? How do we find balance in meeting our needs and satisfying our wants without getting caught up in consumptive behaviors?

While it is fine to have material possessions, we should be mindful of what we buy and consume. In our quest to satisfy the need for more things, we often toss out the stuff we no longer want. This behavior creates a cycle that is wasteful and eventually puts stress on landfills and oceans.

[L. Tom Perry said](#), “Materialism started to give us more satisfaction than religion. Soon we found ourselves without that same patriotic spirit that had propelled us out of the world to help save it and to build a better place for all mankind. We divided ourselves into special interest groups and were selfish and self-centered. Our chief interest became centered on having a big home, two cars in the garage, campers, trailers, boats, foreign vacations, fancy bars, rich food, etc. We were convinced that there was no end to that which we could produce to supply our never-ending appetites. Waste became a way of life.”

As good stewards of the earth, we should be thoughtful about our wants and needs, remembering that what we use and dispose of must go somewhere. Showing gratitude and care for what we already possess is a good way to slow down our desire for more. Living simply is better for the Earth.

Activity Ideas

For young children:

Watch [this scene](#) from Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. Explain how Ariel's desire to collect "stuff" wasn't enough to make her content. Explain how she wanted human connection. Talk about what things bring you lasting joy.

For older children:

Together, look through your child's belongings and see what they don't use any more. Talk about what prompted them to buy it. Explain that the desire for some things disappears after we have acquired it. Discuss some of their future wants and evaluate if there are things they can do without.

For all:

Set a goal not to buy anything that isn't a "need" during a period of time (e.g. one week, one month).

Treat Ideas

Pick a treat that is simple or that you can make together as a family.

Easy:

Make S'mores or [Indoor S'mores](#).

Advanced:

Try your hand at homemade pretzels with [this recipe](#).

Additional Resources

- Read the entirety of Elder Perry's speech [To What Purpose Is This Waste](#).
- Learn about Five Tips for Tackling Materialism in this [2010 New Era article](#).
- From the Church website [this article by Richard Olsen](#) discusses how consumerism is driving pollution.
- [10 Ways to Teach Children That Less is More](#)
- [How to Teach Kids to Be Grateful](#)
- [How to Raise Generous Kids](#)