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## The Next Best Thing

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Gaming systems, clothing, cars ... The list goes on and on. Every year we hear stories of mobs at stores during the holidays looking for the newest toys for their kids. But the truth is that, in many cases, we are often looking for hot new toys for ourselves. Objects keep changing, getting updated and modified all the time, and the masses run to the stores looking for the next big thing.

Everybody is looking for something more clever, more fast, more unique, more hard to find, more desirable. The old things just aren't looking as good anymore. They aren't shiny anymore. The scratches on little Mikey's toys are seen as imperfections; rather than seeing the bumps and etchings on the plastic and recalling memories and fantastic playtime stories, we see a worn item. The clothes fit OK, but they are last season's tailoring. Even though your car runs great, that dent in the side makes the car seem worthless. The old things just aren't impressive anymore. At least not in the same way the new ones are.

The objects vary in size and expense and usually have much in common with their latter versions. But the old things just plain aren't new, and they aren't highly desirable anymore. Everyone has the old model or something like it, and it isn't a big deal anymore. There's a big commercialized push forward to stay on the edge of all the latest new toys for kids and adults.

Usually each next big thing is a modified copy of the past big thing. It's a little different, but the same. It's a sleeker, more modern model, but ultimately, it really is the same thing. A car is still a car, and a pair of jeans is still, well, a pair of jeans. You can still play with old toys; walkmans still play music; your beat-up car can still get you from point-A to point-B, and those jeans that don't have holes in them, yet still fit and might even be more stylish if you wore them out a little bit more.

Matthew 6:28-34 teaches us not to worry about the clothes we wear. And though it doesn't specifically say not to worry about getting a brand new car out of the lot or an X-Box 360, maybe we should take that teaching and apply to these wants in our lives.

Even if you hop into the race thinking getting the next big thing might make you happy, it doesn't seem like the next big thing ever really satisfies. We get it, and then automatically begin looking for something different, better, more appealing. This is because new things start becoming old the second you get them.

On top of all this often times people spend money they haven't earned yet. And that's where the credit cards come into play, because we now live in a world where if you can't afford it now, you can still have it. If we want to be wise stewards of our resources, we have to begin combating these habits

Even more dangerously, sometimes the "finding next best thing" game spills over outside of the commercial realm, and people become the object we are looking to upgrade. Friends and romantic endeavors get used and passed on, while on a search for the next best thing. Take an attractive guy or girl and size him/her up to yourself or your significant other. And then look for the next best thing: Someone prettier, funnier, smarter. It's just that simple, and it happens all the time. I think it becomes dangerous when we begin looking at people as if we have them all figured out, rather than engaging each other as unique interesting beings filled with ideas, stories and life experiences unlike our own.

I think one of the root problems with this “finding the next big thing” phenomena is that we are confusing *want* and *need*. Just because we want something doesn’t mean we need it. And just because we want it, doesn’t mean it’s a good idea to get it. We really have very few needs to survive and these needs can be obtained living a very simple life.

In the last year I’ve decided to lead a simpler life. I’m not saying taking these steps is for everyone, but it feels good to save money and pay off student loans. I’ve started to actually budget and watch where the money goes instead of just spending on whatever I want whenever I want it. And I have to say; it’s been satisfying. And the funny thing is I don’t feel like I am in want or need for everything. It’s been a full, rich year. Maybe taking a long look into yourself and coming to God for answers prayerfully will help you take the steps to lead a fuller, richer life also—even without the stuff.

Dig Deeper  
Luke 12:35-38  
Matthew 6:28-34

