

The Myth of Scarcity

It's easy, when times are tough, to think inward: to concentrate on ourselves. We often worry that we don't have enough of what we really need to be "comfortable" or "free." That, friends, is a myth ... the myth of scarcity. Look around. We are wealthy people, living lives of abundance.

Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament Scholar, writes and talks about the **myth of scarcity** and the **lyric of abundance**. The lyric of abundance is the idea that God has given us so much, and we can give so much more to God's people if we are willing to more fully use what we have been given. So the lyric of abundance is about taking care of **others**, and the myth of scarcity is about taking care of **us**.

Let's take a look at the things we spend money on TODAY that we didn't consider necessities 10 years ago.

One of the most significant changes in our world in the last 10 years (or even less) has been the rise of smartphones. Such phones, and other mobile devices, have contributed to greater connectivity with friends and family. Mobile devices have even influenced the movement of global events and revolutions. But they are more costly to own and operate than your flip phone of yore. Data plans potentially run \$30-50 more (or higher) per line, per month, and that's excluding device costs. For a big family, or even a smaller one, that's no small investment. Yet many of us now feel lost when we forget this device we survived without for years. Great great grandma and grandpa were able to guide the wagons without a phone featuring GPS navigation. Or any phone at all.

How about some other luxuries? Do you get a \$4 cup of coffee? Even just twice a week is \$32 per month and nearly \$400 a year.

Internet service: the rates vary, but you can easily spend over \$500 a year.

Then there are the video subscription services (such as Netflix and Hulu), or the latest tablet, or the new clothes and flashy car that we just need.

If you take a close look at your "taking care of yourself" spending, it's easily in the \$400 a month range, if not much more.

As you consider your commitment, think beyond your own neighborhood, your own city and state, your own country ... think globally, and keep in mind these two things: if you have money in your pocket right now, you are richer than 75 percent of the people on the planet. If you have money in the bank, you are wealthier than 94 percent of the people on the planet. At the same time, think locally. In this nation of great prosperity one in six people don't have enough to eat — not to mention those without medical care or enough to make rent.

We are a blessed people and congregation. Let's use our blessings and see those blessings grow here and for others! If what we are doing is of God, then God has given us more than adequate capacity to do it.

An Abundance Worksheet

If I reflect on my good fortune, and strive to discover all of the additional lifestyle spending, over and above what I spent on my lifestyle 10 years ago, I will see the amazing abundance of my life, and how much I can truly give.

My monthly coffee/soft drinks: \$ _____

My monthly internet service provider: \$ _____

My monthly TV and/or video subscription(s): \$ _____

My monthly spending on mobile phone(s): \$ _____

My monthly spending on technology and computer equipment: \$ _____

My monthly spending on sports activities/events: \$ _____

My monthly tips given for services: \$ _____

My monthly spending on _____ : \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

I will, with the help of God, live my life by the **lyric of abundance**, and pour out my gifts and financial contributions to advance God's work for the good of others.

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