



What deeper reflection are we called to in our time? Why?

For God All Things Are Possible

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Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

- Matthew 19:21-22

In March 2007, the New York Times ran an article entitled [The Year Without Toilet Paper](#). It documented a year-long experiment, undertaken by a family in New York City, in living a low carbon emissions lifestyle. The family avoided fossil fuel-based transportation, ate only food grown in a 250-mile radius of their city using organic methods, and bought nothing except food. They also, as indicated by the article's title, refrained from buying paper products, used candles for light, washed their clothes in their apartment's bathtub and stopped watching television. Their year became the subject of news articles, [a blog](#), a book, and a newly-released documentary called "No Impact Man."

Is this our future? If we are to reduce our footprints on the earth in order to protect God's creation, will it be necessary to go to such extremes?

In Matthew 19, Jesus tells a wealthy young man that if he wants to achieve perfection he must get rid of all his possessions. The apostles are "greatly astounded" by what their teacher has to say and ask "Then who can be saved?" Jesus tells them the truth: "For mortals, it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

So here is some truth: we will not achieve perfection as we try to be better stewards of God's good earth. However, we are still called by God to tend all of creation and commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. So we need to make choices. For some that may mean eating locally; for others it means getting rid of their car and using public transit; for still others it means finding ways to use less energy in their homes by changing lightbulbs and limiting their use of TVs and computers. Some of these paths may be chosen for reasons unrelated to stewardship of the earth - less TV and more family time, lower electric bills, no car payments or car insurance bills. But all of them are choices that can make a difference to our lives and to God's

planet.

Jesus uses an extreme example to teach his disciples not to let possessions get in the way of their relationship with God. The extreme example of "No Impact Man" similarly teaches that although God does not expect perfection, we should not let our lifestyle get in the way of our stewardship of creation. So we need not go to extremes, but unlike the rich young man, we also should not grieve and do nothing.

A Prayer for the Journey

Demanding and loving Creator, we confess that we fall far short of perfection in caring for your creation. We admit that we forget the needs of our neighbors as we go about our busy lives. Teach us to live in your light, to protect your planet, to love your people. Help us to understand your possibilities, and to bring about your Kingdom here on earth.

Amen.

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