

The Essence of Life

By current U.S. standards, my financial means are modest. I'm comfortable, but my lifestyle isn't lavish. I'm a typical middle-class American.

Yet compared to other times and places, I am pampered beyond measure. My luxuries far outstrip what the world's wealthiest could imagine just a few years ago.

I live in a comfortable, climate-controlled environment.

I enjoy virtually instant communication with almost anyone, anytime, anywhere.

With careful planning, I can travel nearly anywhere in the world. And compared to earlier years, travel today is quick, comfortable, and reliable.

I live in relative safety - the best civilization can provide. I live in a strong, stable country where the government works to protect its citizens from a wide variety of dangers.

I have ready access to virtually any educational information I desire.

I have a comfortable home, meaningful work, and a wonderful family. I am in good health and have affordable access to excellent health care. A wide variety of nourishing foods is always at my fingertips.

Freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to go where I want, leisure time, a whole range of entertainments, a strong, active church—all these luxuries and more surround me every day. I have virtually every good thing the human imagination can conceive.

Yet with all this, my happiness is determined not by what I have, but by what I give. It is measured not by what I possess, but by the love I give out and live out day by day.

I look at my life. I look honestly at my daily happiness, and I see that it is so.

Specifically, my happiness is determined by my response to what Jesus called life's two greatest commandments:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30, 31, NIV).

Love shapes my happiness. Not material goods. Not comfort. Not the finest luxuries. Love.

Hymn: [The Rich Young Ruler](#)

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