

# ENOUGH

FINDING MORE BY  
LIVING WITH LESS



WILL DAVIS JR.

“I’ve always been a big fan of Will Davis’s preaching, and he writes in the same down-to-earth voice that makes you feel like you’re having a heart-to-heart conversation with a friend. If you’ve ever been guilty of searching for *enough* in all the wrong places (ahem, like me!), I dare you to read this book. Be warned that it will make you squirm in places, but in a good way—a very good way.”

—Vicki Courtney, author of *5 Conversations You Must Have with Your Daughter*

“I’m a Will Davis fan! I have all his books and have been impacted by his message. Succinct, empowering, and inspiring—that’s the pen of Will Davis. His message of *enough* convicts me and yet causes me to see blessings through mature eyes. I’m blessed to be a blessing. Let this book take you into the deep things of God.”

—Randy Phillips of Phillips, Craig, and Dean;  
lead pastor of PromiseLand Church

“I am so thankful for this book. I have been thinking about downsizing my lifestyle and freeing myself from the maintenance of too much accumulated stuff! After reading Will’s book, I am convicted to actually *do* it and not think about it any longer. Simplifying my life means I can be available and ready to go when God calls me to serve and take care of his loved ones, wherever and however that might be!”

—Nancy Turner, host of *This Is the Day* for Moody Radio

“As usual, Will Davis Jr. has challenged me at a deep level. I am truly inspired to rethink my perspective on working, money, and the pursuit of the American dream. I highly recommend *Enough* for every American!”

—Debbie Chavez, talk show host at [www.faithplace.org](http://www.faithplace.org);  
women’s conference speaker

“What can I say outside of the fact that Will’s books always make me better? *Enough* gives us access to the mind and heart of an authentic Christ-follower. Clear biblical teaching, compelling illustrations, and life-impacting coaching. God spoke to me through *Enough*. I bet he’ll speak to you as well.”

—Jeff Young, spiritual development pastor at  
Prestonwood Church, Plano, Texas

“*Enough* challenges the status quo pursuit of the American dream, which has produced less-than-stellar results. If your goal is actually *feeling* wealthy, secure, and as though you finally have enough, then Will’s book is a must-read!”

—John Burke, author of *No Perfect People Allowed*

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**WILL DAVIS JR.**



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# Introduction

Your purpose in life isn't to make money. It isn't to live a comfortable lifestyle, to prepare for your retirement, or even to provide well for your family. Believe it or not, you're designed for something far better and much more exhilarating. If you limit your life's purpose to acquiring wealth or living comfortably, then you'll never have enough and you'll never be satisfied.

Meet Mike. From all outward appearances, he has it made. He and his beautiful family live in an affluent part of Austin. He's a Christian who loves his wife and kids and is sincerely committed to giving them the very best of everything—the best home, the best education, the best traveling experiences, the best sports and recreational opportunities, the best clothes, the best medical care—everything. As a result of that lofty goal, Mike works sixty-plus hours a week, the bulk of which he spends on the road away from home.

Recently, I caught up with Mike on one of the few days he's actually in Austin. Over breakfast tacos and coffee we

talked about his goals, his frantic schedule, and his overall spiritual health. Mike confessed that he wasn't doing well. He was tired all the time and lonely on the road. He missed his wife and kids, and the relentless travel had taken a toll on their relationships, especially on his marriage. He also confessed that he and his wife were up to their ears in debt and weren't giving financially to the church, even though they knew they should be and that they were clearly living an affluent lifestyle. They simply had too much debt and overhead to be able to write checks to their church.

I asked Mike if there was any end in sight to his long workweeks, if he saw a finish line in the future where he had enough, had accomplished enough, and could back off the travel. He didn't. Then I asked him what he would have when he was at that finish line, wherever it was. "Security," he responded. I hated to burst Mike's bubble, but I had to tell him that the goal of security he was pursuing was a myth. Not only was it unattainable, but pursuing it might actually be killing the very things he was trying to protect.

It's a bit ironic, isn't it? Mike wouldn't tell you that the purpose of his life is to be rich or allow his family to live comfortably, even though he is and they do. He would tell you that he's only trying to do what God expects him to do, what any good Christian man should do—work as hard as he can and provide as much as he can for his family. He would tell you that the goals of his life are to honor God and to love his family. The ironic part is that he's working so much he simply doesn't have the time or energy to do either.

Mike is one of millions of Americans and billions of others around the world who somehow think that more matters. They've never really stopped to ask the question, "When is

*enough* enough?” Maybe, at least in Western culture, it’s due to our capitalistic drive. Maybe it’s because our celebrity role models in government, sports, and Hollywood—and perhaps even the couple next door—all spend money like it’s limitless. Or maybe it’s caused by the cultural mantra that claims if we spend enough money and have enough stuff we really will find peace, prosperity, security, and happiness. It’s hard to not want to try and keep up. There’s only one problem—it’s all a lie.

The Bible offers a better way. In the wisdom of God, the Bible includes countless verses about money and wealth, and the futility of pursuing either. The Bible teaches that it’s foolish to try to satisfy the needs of a priceless, eternal human soul by throwing stuff at it. Beyond that, it tells us that we are going to be held accountable for how we manage what God has given us—specifically, our money and other resources. It tells us that we are to care for the poor, the widows, and orphans, and to help spread the hope-giving message of Jesus Christ. And it promises that there is great joy and contentment to be found in living with less, giving more, and seeking to serve others by using what God has given us. While Mike hasn’t yet discovered how to have more by living with less, many others have.

Now don’t panic. I’m not asking you to take a vow of poverty, and more importantly, the Bible doesn’t either. I am asking you to consider the Bible’s promises to those who willingly choose to live with less. I know it’s counterintuitive, but the Bible actually says you’ll be richer if you scale back what you have. It says your life will be fuller. You’ll have less stress, more time for the things that matter, the potential for better relationships, and more joy. Bottom line: in the language of our culture, you’ll be happier.

That alone is reason enough to keep reading.

Consider Tom and Kristin. Tom is a financial planner and Kristin a personal trainer. They make a good living and are successful by just about anyone's standard—beautiful kids, nice neighborhood, comfortable house, and financial security. However, as Tom and Kristin continued to grow in their discipleship, and specifically as they got involved with their church's missions ministry, they both began to sense that God wanted them to rethink their lifestyle. They came to see the disparity between how they were living, what they were modeling for their kids, and what the Scriptures taught about giving and living with *enough*.

As a result of the Spirit's leading in their lives, Tom and Kristin started making changes. They sold their house and moved into a smaller one in the same area. They increased their giving and reduced their respective workloads so they could spend more time serving. Their lives have done a complete 180-degree turn . . . and they couldn't be happier. Tom and Kristin have discovered the biblical secret of living with less. They find their hope and joy in following Jesus and in living to bless others. They have rejected the cultural notion that more matters.

In other words, they don't buy into what marketers want us to believe, the "money equals happiness" promise. Tom and Kristin are pushing back on the pressure many of us feel to spend money like there's no tomorrow, almost as if it's our duty. They don't feel obligated to keep spending money so that our nation will have a strong and thriving economy. They also understand that what they have or don't have doesn't in any way define who they are or reflect their value. They've decided to radically embrace the biblical teaching that they

don't own anything—that they really are just managers of what God has entrusted to them. And they're experiencing firsthand the Bible's promises that those who live with less and give more will have all that they need—physically, spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. You can too.

Tom and Kristin are not unusual. I believe there is an *enough* revolution brewing in our culture, and I've got countless examples to prove it. A significant number of Christ-followers are coming to the conclusion that more doesn't matter and that you really can have joy, peace, and blessing by living with less. Becoming an *enough* Christian isn't as hard as it seems and not nearly as painful as your instincts may tell you. In fact, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to live with less. You'll even wonder how you got by all those years with so much. Less matters. Less really is more.

I invite you to join the *enough* revolution. In the pages that follow, you'll discover what it means to “move toward *enough*.” You'll learn to recognize the myth of more and experience the joy of living with less. And you'll be gripped by the practical reality of Jesus' words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).



Section 1

# Enough Is Enough

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*Give me enough food  
to live on, neither too  
much nor too little.*

Agur, as quoted in  
Proverbs 30:8 (Message)

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# 1

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## How Much Is Enough?

*Enough.* It's a curious word, isn't it? Why don't you say it out loud a few times—*enough, enough, enough.* I bet you can even define the word without looking it up: the condition or state of having plenty; to be full or filled; without lack. *Enough.*

We use the word *enough* many times each day without even thinking. I have *enough* gas to get home. Do you have *enough* money for the movie? We've got *enough* time for just two more questions. I don't have *enough* sugar for the recipe. We don't have *enough* money to pay our taxes. I've had just about *enough* of your back talk. I think I've got *enough* room for one more helping of cobbler.

*Enough.* Whatever *enough* is, we instinctively know when we do or do not have enough of it.

Except when it comes to things and money. Why is it that so many of us don't know how to define *enough* when dealing

with the material and/or financial aspects of our lives? You would think that those boundaries of *enough* would be the easiest to figure out. You just define it by what you need, right? If you need \$10 for a movie and you have \$10, then you have *enough*. If it costs \$35 to fill up your gas tank and you have \$35, then you've got *enough*.

But it isn't really that simple, is it? When it comes to stuff, we wrestle with all kinds of questions about what is and isn't *enough*. How many square feet—bedrooms, bathrooms, garage, kitchen, dining room, breakfast nook, exercise room, entertainment room, workroom, and study—will make up *enough* house for us? How much car—new or used; lease or own; cloth, vinyl, or leather interior; single- or multi-CD player; V-6 or V-8 engine; GPS, speaker phone, TV, and DVD player; sun roof and/or moon roof—will be *enough* car for me? How much money—five figures (as long as the first figure is an 8 or a 9), six figures, or even seven figures—do I need to meet my needs? To feel secure? To be happy? To feel like I have *enough*? You get the point.

How can we so readily define *enough* when it comes to filling up our gas tanks but we can't define it when it comes to filling up our lives? As far as stuff is concerned, when is *enough* enough?

## Beautiful Things

Victoria Frances (not her full name) believes that she was born to shop. As the editor of a Manhattan-based interior design magazine, Frances feels some sort of moral obligation to know the latest trends in home décor. Every Saturday morning Frances hits what she calls the Four B's—"Barney's,

Bendel's, Bergdorf's, and Bloomies." But her buying, as she readily admits, isn't completely job related. For more than a decade, Frances has spent thousands of dollars a week on stuff—clothes, jewelry, furniture, shoes, etc. Finding pleasure through her possessions is a key part of her sense of self-love. Frances commented, "I love to be surrounded by beautiful and exotic things."<sup>1</sup>

So how does Victoria Frances know when she has *enough*?

Consider Brittney and Gregg Peters, the Georgia couple who decided to sell most of their worldly possessions on eBay to cover their two kids' mounting medical expenses. After a Texas family offered them a \$20,000 gift on the condition that the Peters family not sell off their possessions, Brittney and Gregg decided to downsize anyway. They chose to sell or give away most of what they had. The result was overwhelming. The Peters family was inundated with interview requests and received media coverage from all over the United States. Brittney Peters finds all the attention to be a little disheartening. She commented, "It says a lot [about] the materialistic society we live in that a family selling everything they own would make national news."<sup>2</sup>

How and when will the Peters family know that they have *enough*?

## Lessons from Agur

How do I know when I have *enough*? Can *enough* even be quantified? Shouldn't the real definition of *enough* be left up to each person to figure out? Don't we in the United States have a constitutional right to determine our own *enough* as we pursue life, liberty, and happiness? For some, *enough*

might be living in a mobile home park; for others, it might require a house in the Hamptons. Who's to say, and how can we really know?

If you're a Christian, you don't have to wonder. God knew that we would have a difficult time defining *enough*. We do well with recipes and car payments, when we know exactly how much sugar or money we need. But when it's up to us, when it comes to establishing a standard of living with *enough*, we have a hard time drawing the line.

So God gave us a standard. His Word offers us several clear and, I might add, simple definitions of *enough*. The bad news is that God's definition of *enough* and mine don't typically line up. I'm afraid that God's *enough* is much less than my *enough*.

Let's begin in Proverbs—the Old Testament book of wisdom. Written and/or edited mostly by Solomon, the Proverbs also contain a few sayings offered by relatively obscure biblical characters. One such character is Agur, the son of Jakeh. I'm sure his name rings a bell. I mean, he's right up there with Moses, David, and Paul. I'm sure you're thinking, “Oh yeah, Agur son of Jakeh. He's one of my favorite biblical writers!”

Thirty-three verses—that's Agur's entire contribution to the Old Testament. Not really what I'd call a biblical heavy hitter. But what Agur lacks in verbosity he makes up for in veracity. His words pack quite a punch, and it's the obscure Agur who offers us our first real biblical definition of *enough*. Here's what he wrote:

O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die. First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.

For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the LORD?”  
And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy  
name. (Prov. 30:7–9 NLT)

Since this isn’t a book on truth telling, I’ll skip Agur’s first request. It’s his second petition that speaks so poignantly to our topic of *enough*. Agur must have been a very wise man. He had the sense to pray not only that he wouldn’t live in poverty—poverty is a terrible condition for any human to endure—but also that he wouldn’t be rich. That’s where he loses me. I can honestly confess that I’ve never prayed that I wouldn’t be rich. I mean, how can you seriously not want to be rich? Isn’t that the great American dream? Isn’t that the secret of happiness? Doesn’t money guarantee security and comfort? No, at least not according to Agur. And you can bet that as a king, he’d been around the block a few times. He’d probably had up-close looks at both poverty and riches.

What does Agur pray for? In a word, *enough*. In a phrase, “just enough to satisfy my needs.” And that begs the first million-dollar question, doesn’t it? What do I need?

## Daily Bread

“What do I need?” If you can figure that one out, you can skip the rest of the book and move on to much lighter subjects. I need food. I need air. I need water. But I also need clothes. I need a place to live. I need income. I need transportation. So what do I really *need*? And when does *need* move over into the much more exciting world of *want*? I need food, but I want pizza. I need water, but I want it to be from the

Rockies, or at least from an Arkansas spring. I need clothes, but I want Levi's jeans and Ariat boots. On and on it goes. That's why we have such a difficult time defining *enough*. In the increasingly gray area between wants and needs, finding *enough* can prove to be very elusive.

Enter Jesus. The man we worship as King of Kings and Lord of Lords never struggled with the concept of *enough*. The God who left heaven to live as a slave, the King of the universe who had no earthly place to lay his head, the Creator of all things who died with absolutely nothing, never once struggled to figure out what *enough* meant. And he didn't hesitate to make the meaning clear to his disciples.

When the disciples asked him to teach them to pray, Jesus gave them the brief yet profound model of the Lord's Prayer. In it, he included a line about seeking God's provision. I'm sure you can quote it: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). In one sweeping statement, Jesus presented his followers with a clear picture of what he considered to be *enough*. Jesus' daily bread reference no doubt harkens back to the account of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, where God gave them daily provision of manna and quail for forty years.

In Jesus' mind, that's all God promises. He promises to give us what we need today. He doesn't promise to provide for tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. He doesn't promise to provide in advance for our retirement. All he offers is today. According to God, today is all you need. And you know what's really interesting? If we lived on what Jesus says is *enough*, if we lived with just *enough* to meet our immediate needs, most of us would think we were poor. But we wouldn't be. We'd simply have *enough*.

## Traveling Light

Under the obvious direction of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul also chimed in on the discussion of *enough*. In his first letter to his young disciple Timothy, Paul offered a series of teachings to those who were wealthy. At the end of his teaching, Paul shared his own understanding of *enough*. He wrote, “If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Tim. 6:8).

Really? Food and clothing? That’s not a lot to live on. Where’s the big screen TV? Where are my electronic gadgets? Where’s my retirement plan? Paul wasn’t saying that these things are bad, just that they aren’t necessary. Paul added a new word to our working definition of *enough*—contentment. By doing so, he lowered the bar dramatically on what the Bible says we need—food and covering. Basically, if we have food in our stomachs, clothes on our backs, and a roof over our heads, we’re good.

Can you see the obvious tension that exists between how so many of us live and what the Bible says is really necessary? Do you see the great distance between how our culture defines *enough* and how Agur, Jesus, and Paul defined it? What do we do with that? Are we sinning because we have savings accounts? Am I out of God’s will because I live in more than a one-bedroom house? And what if you don’t feel content with just food and clothing? What if you think you need more? What do you do then?

## Top Ten Benefits of Living with Enough

Before we answer those questions, let’s think about some of the advantages of living with *enough*. How can mere daily provisions really be better than surplus? Why shouldn’t we

want a little more of what we have? For folks like you and me, who most likely will never be really rich by our culture's standards, but who know that having a little more money in the bank would be very helpful when paying bills, a life with *more than enough* can sound downright dreamy.

So why downsize? Why scale back? Why pray for *just enough* like Agur did? Let me state the question in a more contemporary way: If you choose to pursue the elusive concept of *enough*, if you limit how you live and what you spend, what's in it for you? Why should you and I embrace the radical lifestyle of living with less? Here are ten great reasons to live with *enough*:

1. *You'll have more time.* Stuff and money require managing. Things break or need cleaning or dusting or servicing or upgrading. Money requires management. It has to be invested and reinvested. And all of that takes time. The irony of having more is that when you finally get what you think you want, you still won't be satisfied. And your "stuff" will cause you to spend more of what you can't get back—time.
2. *You'll have more peace.* Curiously, having *more than enough* rarely brings more peace. Money can't shield you from cancer and wealth can't prevent a miscarriage. Living in a nice house or driving a new car won't make your marriage better. In fact, having *more than enough* often increases your stress and distracts you from the things in life that really matter—pursuing God and loving the people he has placed in your life.
3. *You'll help your relationships.* Living with *enough* will actually help your relational world. You'll have more

time and emotional energy to invest in your loved ones and even in those friends, neighbors, and co-workers whom God might be calling you to serve. Think about it—if wealth and material comfort really brought happiness, then nations that enjoy prosperity ought to have the healthiest relationships on the planet. We all know better. Couples with six-figure incomes typically have the same or higher divorce rates and the same relational difficulties as those with smaller incomes. Susie and I have watched our income increase dramatically over the last twenty years, but it hasn't helped our marriage one iota. If anything, our increased earnings have increased our stress and conflict.

4. *You'll be more content.* Are you tired of trying to keep up with the Joneses? (By the way, have you ever talked to the Joneses? They're not content either. If they were, they wouldn't need to be kept up with. Think about it.) If you're in the habit of collecting, chasing, pursuing, and admiring more stuff, then there is always going to be something else you want. There will always be something messing with your contentment. But when you declare that you have *enough*, suddenly contentment will become much more second nature to you. When you stop looking, stop longing, and stop lusting for other things, you set yourself up to be much more at peace with where you are in life and with what you have.
5. *You'll have less or no debt.* If you stop spending money on stuff, you'll have less debt and eventually will be debt free. If you're not buying things and spending money all the time, you'll have the cash reserves necessary to

fix the broken dishwasher, replace the dead hot water heater, or even handle the college tuition for the kids. Less spending means less debt, and less debt means less stress.

6. *You'll be prepared for tough financial times.* I'm writing this the day after the US stock market took another five-hundred-point dive. Other markets around the world took similar hits. I don't know what your economy will be like when you read this, but I do know that world economies are going to ebb and flow. Natural disasters, war, poor leadership, and other economic factors are going to cause the values of our respective currencies to wax and wane. Interest rates are going to climb, gas prices will increase, the cost of goods and services will go up, and then—maybe—they'll come back down. You do not want to be in debt and have significant financial overhead when those difficult days come calling. The big house, the nice car, or the time-share in Aspen might become the albatross around your neck that wrecks your marriage or keeps you from being able to retire when you want to. But if you're living with *enough*, you're much more likely to have the financial means to navigate those difficult times.
7. *You'll be better equipped to respond to need.* Even though Israel was a homeless group of former slaves for over forty years, God still expected them to care for the poor and needy among them. He expects the same of us. But curiously and tragically, having wealth doesn't typically increase one's benevolence. Statistics still show that the most generous people among us are those who have less, not more. If you're waiting until

you hit a certain level of income before you start giving or helping others, stop waiting. God wants you to enjoy the fruits and joys of helping others right now. He wants you to be like Joseph and the Egyptians when the seven-year famine hit. Not only will you have what you need, but you'll be in a position to help others as well.

8. *Your life will be simpler.* The Bible clearly affirms the value of simple living. As we've already seen, simplicity reduces stress and enhances relationships. It helps you focus on what matters and gives you the discernment to reject what doesn't. But the more complex your lifestyle becomes—specifically, the more material and financial overhead you have—the less simplicity you'll enjoy. Simplicity and stress have an inverse relationship: the more you have of the former, the less you'll have of the latter.
9. *You'll have better intimacy with God.* If living with *enough* breeds simplicity, and simplicity helps our relationships, then it stands to reason that living with *enough* will help our relationship with God as well. Actually, simplicity enhances spirituality; it creates an environment in which your relationship with God can thrive. That's why monks and others seeking to know more of God don't retreat to the Hamptons or Beverly Hills; they go to the desert. Riches and material things are spiritual distractions. They divert our attention not just from God but from spiritual matters entirely. Living with more sets your focus on earthly, material matters, and it's nearly impossible to grow spiritually when you've got your eyes on temporal things.

10. *You'll have more joy.* This is by far the best reason to embrace living with *enough*. Joy has nothing to do with circumstances, but it has everything to do with perspective. If riches brought joy (or even happiness), then those of us with *more than enough* would be the most joyous people on earth. If riches brought joy, then King Solomon (one of the wealthiest men in history) wouldn't have lamented in Ecclesiastes about the meaninglessness of his life. But the reality is that riches often sap the joy right out of us. They're a cheap substitute for the spiritual, soul-satisfying treasure of a life of intimacy with God. When Jesus promised to give us abundant life, he wasn't talking about wealth. If that were the case, he wouldn't have died for us; he could have just written each of us a check. Jesus' death shows us that what we need most is access to God, and that's something riches can never give us. Joy can't be bought, but it can be snuffed out. Joy thrives best in an environment of less, not more.

## Moving Toward Enough

From Melissa: As a single mom, simplicity is key for me. The idea of “less is more” is my way of life. I only buy used cars, which keeps my budget manageable—NO CAR PAYMENTS! Also I recently did a complete overhaul of my housing and downsized dramatically. It has been such a huge relief and has helped me see how I can be more efficient when I go shopping and in how I organize my life. My budget is simple: rent, electricity, phone, car insurance, child care, gas, food—like I said, simple! Keeping it simple takes a lot of stress out of

life for me. I am much better equipped to deal with life's curveballs. For me it is really about knowing that all I have comes from God, and taking care of what he has given me is really important. It is the least I can do.

### For Further Reflection

1. Read Matthew 6:11 seven times. Each time you read it, emphasize and reflect on the significance of one word (GIVE us this day; Give US this day; Give us THIS day; etc.).
2. Read Philippians 4:11–12 and think about how much Paul's statement does or does not reflect how you feel.
3. Considering where you are in your life right now (marriage and/or family, career, housing, retirement plans, etc.), how close are you to being able to declare that you have *enough*?