

# More Than Enough

*Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess*

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## A DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## *Introduction to the Discussion Guide*

*More than Enough: Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess* addresses questions with which many North American Christians struggle. This Discussion Guide is designed to help congregations, individuals, and groups discuss the ideas presented in the book and make connections to their own lives.

A note to preachers and worship planners: Go to [www.wjkbooks.com/MoreThanEnough](http://www.wjkbooks.com/MoreThanEnough) to check out the accompanying Worship Planning Guide for ideas about building a worship series around themes in this book.

The following material can be used by individuals who want to read the book on their own or by small groups and book clubs who want to discuss the book together. Groups could meet once to discuss the whole book, or over a period of weeks to explore specific chapters. A “Learn and Do” section at the end of this guide offers suggestions for action items that can be done after reading the whole book, or throughout the series.

If the group is meeting once, use these general questions to begin the conversation, then explore specific chapters as time and interest allow.

- What does it mean to live abundantly?
- What makes a well-lived life?
- Who are your role models for faithful, responsible living? What have you learned from them?
- What ideas in this book made you think differently about something?
- What inspired you? What challenged you?
- What might you do differently after reading this book?

If the group plans to meet over a period of time, choose or adapt one of these outlines.

*If you have eight weeks or more:*

1. Introduction
2. Chapters 1 and 2
3. Chapters 3 and 4
4. Chapters 5 and 6
5. Chapters 7 and 8
6. Chapters 9 and 10
7. Chapters 11 and 12
8. Chapter 13 and conclusion

*If you are meeting during the six weeks of Lent, or another shorter season:*

1. Introduction, chapter 1, and chapter 2
2. Chapters 3, 4, and 5
3. Chapters 6 and 7
4. Chapters 8 and 9
5. Chapters 10 and 11
6. Chapter 12, 13, and conclusion

To get the conversation going, use the questions provided for each chapter, come up with your own, or let the group set it's own direction.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



# Introduction



- 
- Do you resonate with the questions the author raises in the introduction?
  - Name some things you are grateful for in your life.
  - Name some places in your community you are aware of that showcase inequality.
  - What privileges do you have that others don't? Do you consider yourself rich? Why or why not?

# Chapter 1



## LIVE IT WELL: BUILDING HOUSES AND HANGING HAMMOCKS

- How did you come to live where you live?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What intentional choices have you made about where and how you live your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What are the challenges keeping you from making more sustainable, responsible, faithful choices about your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Toward the end of this chapter (pp. 7-8), the author suggests some faithful and not-so-faithful ways to live. Do you agree?



## Chapter 2



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### ENOUGH

- Make a list of tangible and intangible things in your life of which you have enough. Not enough? More than enough? Too much?
  
- When you think about your life, how do you define “enough”?
  
- The author says, “God calls us to lives of enough” (p. 14). What do you think that means?

## Chapter 3



### THE COMPLICATED LIFE: SIMPLE LIVING JUST ISN'T

- Throughout the chapter, the author suggests several definitions of “simple living.” Which makes the most sense to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What steps have you taken to simplify your life? What would you like to try?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In what ways is *simple* more complicated? Is it worth it? Why?

## Chapter 4



### LAMENT

- What problems in your community or in the world seem insurmountable?
- When are you most drawn to despair? Can you imagine how the practice of lament could be helpful?
- Look up the psalms mentioned in this chapter and read them aloud.
- Write your own psalm of lament.

## Chapter 5



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### THE VIEW FROM THE SYCAMORE TREE: A RICH MAN, A SHORT MAN, AND MUCH ADO ABOUT MONEY

- Make a list of the ways you have interacted with money today or in the past week.
  
- What values do you and your family hold about money? How did you develop those values?
  
- This chapter includes the stories of the rich young ruler and Zaccheaus (p. 39). How do these two men respond differently to Jesus? What can we learn from them?

## Chapter 6



### CONFESSION

- This chapter explores the relationship between guilt and confession. How do these terms make you feel? What good can guilt and confession do?
  
- The author suggests that sometimes we are “pretty comfortable in [our] discomfort” (p. 51). Is that true for you?
  
- In what ways does your church community use the practice of confession?

## Chapter 7



### BLESSING AND CURSE: WHAT'S WITH ALL THIS STUFF?

- In sixty seconds, how many material possessions can you list?
- Which of your possessions are blessings? Which are curses? Which are both?
- What are some things you have done—or would like to do—to limit your acquisition of things?
- The author lays out some ideas for “choosing life” with our stuff. What would you add to or change about these ideas?

# Chapter 8



## SABBATH

- Where do you most find rest?
- Do you have a weekly routine that allows for regular Sabbath time? Why or why not?
- The author says “Sabbath rest is not just a practice of self-care, but also care for creation and care for neighbor” (p. 78). Do you agree? In what ways is your Sabbath a work day for someone else?
- How could you incorporate Sabbath time into your week?

## Chapter 9



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### STRANGER TO NEIGHBOR: GO AND DO LIKEWISE

- Have you been on a mission trip, either in the United States or internationally? What was your experience?
  
- Do you think mission trips are good things? Why or why not?
  
- In what ways has your life been challenged or inspired by people from a culture different from yours?
  
- What do you think of the notion that we are called to work “with” our neighbors instead of “for” them (p. 87)? In what ways is that a different approach from what you or your church have done in the past?



## Chapter 10



### HOPE

- The author suggests that John 1:5 sums up the Christian faith (p. 94). Do you agree? Why or why not?
  
- Where have you seen God bringing “new life into a dead-end story” (p. 97) in our time?
  
- Where do you find hope in the face of the world’s inequalities and injustices?

# Chapter 11



## TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: VOICES AND VOTES

- Do you think politics and faith should be kept separated? Or do you agree with Doris Janzen Longacre that “conserving resources at home and taking on economic and political issues are as inseparable as the yolk and white of a scrambled egg” (p. 104-5)?
  
- In what ways have you engaged with the political process in your community? In what ways would you like to get involved?
  
- The author says that “charity is just a stopgap measure to hold things together until we work out God’s real justice” (p. 106). Do you agree? What does God’s justice look like?

## Chapter 12



### DELIGHT

- Make a list of moments of delight you’ve experienced recently.
- Do you struggle with the balance between “savoring” and “improving” the world? How or how not?
- The author talks about her overseas trip as a luxury (p. 119-20). How do you decide when it’s OK to do something extravagant?
- What role does delight play in living an abundant life?

# Chapter 13



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## A NEW SONG TO SING: KEEPERS OF AN OLD, OLD STORY

- If you are part of a church community, why? What does the church offer that other communities don't?
  
- The author says that the stories of the church hold the truth that “the empire will not win; that there is enough to go around’ that we can, and should, change” (p. 126). Do you agree? Why or why not?
  
- Do you think Christianity is counter-cultural? Should it be?
  
- In what ways does the Christian story call you to live life differently?

## Conclusion



- The author says there’s “no specific blueprint for living a faithful life” (p. 130) and then lists things we can do. What would you add to or change about that list?
- In what ways has this book challenged or inspired you?
- What changes will you make in your life as a result of reading this book?

## *Learn and Do*

Individually or with your group, use these activities to connect what you've learned in the book with your own life and your community.

- Learn about the business practices of your bank. Consider looking into a local bank or credit union.
- Explore microcredit lending institutions, like Oikocredit or Kiva.
- Learn about fair-trade clothing and goods.
- For a period of time—a week, a month, a year—try not to buy anything new.
- The next time you need to buy something, check out a local thrift store first.
- Learn about how your church or denomination does mission work in other countries.
- Find an organization that fosters relationships across cultural lines and find a way to get involved.
- Watch the film *A Place at the Table* and learn about how hunger policies affect people in your community.