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Every Good Gift by Teresa Hampton

There was a man named Joe, who graciously allowed another man, Jim, and his family to temporarily live in one of the houses he owned. Things went well for a time. Jim made sure the grass was mowed. Shrubs trimmed. His wife kept the interior clean. The children respectfully kept their play things in the back yard.

As time passed, however, Jim and his family began to view the house as theirs and the arrangement as long-term. He devoted time to care for *his* house. His wife enjoyed decorating *her* home and cooking in *her* kitchen. The children loved playing in *their* yard. They forgot that the house they had been allowed to live in was not theirs. It was Joe's. Strange as it seems, if a person uses or occupies something that belongs to another, as time passes, it may begin to feel like it is theirs to use as they please.

You might say, "I would never do that," but consider this. *Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights* (Jas. 1:17). God graciously gives us everything we need to live a productive, physical and spiritual life. Do we ever assume ownership of these things? *Our* house. *My* car. *Our* food and clothing, purchased with the money *we* earned. *My* computer. *My* phone. *My* time. Do we view them as ours, to do with as we please?

God gives us these things and so much more, even the hours of each day. We own nothing! God has loaned everything to us for a temporary time, and he expects us to be good stewards of what he has entrusted to us. A faithful steward devotes everything he possesses to serve the Lord. Tangible things, like houses, cars, food, and money can be used to serve others, giving glory to God. Intangible things, like using our minds to know God through diligent Bible study, and using our words to tell others about salvation in Christ, can be used to grow the kingdom of the Lord.

Summed up, our life on earth is temporary, all that we possess belongs to God, we must use what he has loaned us to serve those in need and share with others the most precious gift he has given us, redemption through Jesus.

Today's Verse: Jesus spoke a parable to them saying, *The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods... But God said to him, "Fool, this night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"* (Luke 12:16-18, 20).

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