

“STASH”

Once upon a time a poor family lived in an old shack back in the woods. Their clothes were worn and torn. They lived off the land and discovered how to make the most of what they had. They learned to hunt and fish and garden and farm. They shared their resources and talents to help one another. But if you ventured into their “poor world”, you would discover that, although they lacked money, they were rich in spirit. They lived each day with a thankful heart. They knew that all they had was a gift from God. So they thanked God for all He had given them, and they freely shared what they had been given. They showed up when someone needed a helping hand. And they took in people who were hungry or homeless.

But when the poor family would walk to town, the “community” would pick on them. People made up jokes and stories to get people laughing at the poor family. ‘Til one day, one of the poor kids, we’ll call him “Stash”, had had enough, and he hauled off and punched a taunting boy right in the nose. Stash was sick of being poor and sick of being picked on. He decided to go off and get a real job, make a real living, end his family cycle of poverty. He landed a job as a lumberjack. And in time, Stash built up strength and money, and he built himself a nice log cabin in the woods. Because he was looking out for #1, Stash bought the best of everything. He had a nice stash of Dewalt tools. He drove his Hummer into town to *The Grille* every Friday night for prime rib. His bulging muscles attracted the gorgeous girls from town. But whenever Stash started to feel sad or lonely or hurt, he always had a stash of something in his cabin to make him feel good. And he always had a stash of money to spend on whatever he wanted. But when his family asked for his help, he turned a deaf ear.

One day, Stash was deep in the woods cutting down trees, when he received a call on his Dewalt cell phone saying that his mother had fallen and hit her head, and she needed immediate medical attention. Stash jumped into his Hummer and flew over to his family’s shack. He lifted his mother into his brawny arms and rushed her to the hospital. While Stash was waiting at the hospital for his mother to come out of surgery, Stash began to reflect on what had become of his life.

Although he grew up to be big and strong, his muscles and women didn’t really make him happy. His cabin and vehicle and tools didn’t really satisfy him. Nothing he ate or drank or bought made him feel good for very long. In fact, when he looked at his life, and he reflected on his mother and family, Stash put his head in hands and began to sob. He said to himself, “What a fool I am. I threw away my home, my family, and my faith to chase after money. What a wretched man am I! What a mess I have made of my life. I abandoned my family. I have no real friends. I have everything I thought I wanted, but I have nothing. And all the stash in the world can do nothing to help my mom!”

At that very moment, Stash’s family, who walked all the way to the hospital, walked over to Stash and began to hug and encourage him. He tried to talk through his tears and apologize for being such a money hungry jerk, but they continued to lavish their love upon him. As Stash was being restored to his family, he remembered his mom and one of her favorite sayings,

“Whoever loves money never has enough.”

- How did you relate to the story of Stash?
- What happens when we focus on what we don’t have?
- Why is it that some of the “**poorest**” people in the world have more joy than we do?
- What happens when we start “**stashing**” and living just for ourselves?
- Does having **more** money make you happy?
- When was the last time you **gave** money or help to someone who really needed it?