



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Last night, after the kids had all been tucked in, prayed over, and kissed goodnight, Jackie and I sat at our dining room table sipping hot cocoa.

"What do you want for Christmas?" she finally asked.

"Nothing," I said idly. "I've got everything I want."

Thinking I was stalling, she pushed a pencil and note pad across the table at me. "Pretend I'm your fairy godmother," she grinned. "I'm giving you unlimited wishes. List all the things you want. Start with that house in the country. Then that airplane you've missed since you had to sell yours. List everything, no matter how ridiculous it may seem. At least that will give me some idea."

I took the pencil and paper. "Okay," I said. "You asked for it."

But as I sat in the stillness of the dining room, chewing on the tip of my pencil, I slowly realized I had been right to begin with. I couldn't think of a single thing I wanted.

I used to want a house in the country, but that was before I realized that living in the subdivision, among people, was far more rewarding than selfishly isolating myself away from humanity.

I used to want an airplane, but now my travel expenses are paid. The money it would take to fiddle around with an expensive toy can go to help a missionary pilot friend make ends meet in South America.

Our one-hundred-thousand-mile-plus station wagon has a few rust holes and dents, but it's still good transportation. I'd much rather have it than a \$100-a-month debt for the next three years.

I have two electric shavers, neither of which I use because they chew up the tender skin under my chin. I'm perfectly satisfied with my 89 cent safety razor.

I have eight (I just counted them this morning) bottles of shaving lotion — most left over from Christmases back. The English Leather is almost gone, the Russian Leather is half gone and the Spanish Leather smells more like a bottle of sweat. Besides, since I'm no longer trying to impress people with my smell, I much prefer clean cold water.

My underwear has holes in it, but as long as it's soft and comfortable I care not what anyone else thinks. I only have half dozen decent ties, but since I seldom stay very long where people judge me on what I wear rather than who I am, that's all I need.

I have friends all over the world who love me enough to die for me (and me for them, too), five healthy children of whom I am extremely proud, a wife who adores me, a good typewriter and case of bond paper. I even have my two front teeth. What more could a man want? And it's all from God, who has given us a cup that continually overflows and a larder which is constantly replenished with such things as goodness and mercy.

I finally looked up at Jackie. She was sitting quietly reading her Bible. "This may sound crazy," I said, "but the only thing I want is for everyone else in the world to share the same peace I have."

She smiled and pushed the Phillips Bible across the table to me, her finger resting on a verse. "Glory to God in the highest Heaven! Peace upon earth among men of goodwill."

"Peace," she said, "indicates you've entered His Kingdom. And in that kingdom you have everything your heart desires."