



## **More Than Enough: Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess**

*Lee Hull Moses*

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Ever look around your life and feel overwhelmed with gratitude for everything you have? Sure, nothing is perfect, but if you have a safe place to live, food on the table, and clothes to wear, the reality is that life is pretty good. That's not true for many people in the world, and you may wonder, How do we live in a way that honors God and shows gratitude for the good life we are living in the midst of a world full of pain and brokenness?

All our daily choices have an impact on the earth and the people around us: choices about where we shop, what we eat, what we give away. But can we really do anything to help? Can we find joy in our own lives when there is so much pain in the world? Sorting out the answers gets overwhelming and complicated very quickly.

With a blend of practical reflection and insight on topics from guilt to delight, "More than Enough" goes beyond a call to gratitude and generosity and invites the reader to a new way of life, one that is grounded in the hope and grace of God."

## More Than Enough: Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess Details

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## From Reader Review More Than Enough: Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess for online ebook

### Chrys Jones says

More Than Enough by Lee Hull Moses is a discussion of very pertinent topics for both Christians and Non-Christians alike. Moses discusses topics such as: simple living, use of financial resources, sustainable use of energy and water, growing our own food, and even making our clothes! She explains that these things may or may not be easily changed or even possible for most people—including herself. Readers are reminded that hypocrisy is inevitable in some ways because we can never perfectly grasp the complex issues that are related to wealth and sustainable living. More Than Enough is one woman's attempt to live a more sustainable life in a country that is riddled with excess and materialistic tendencies.

The positive aspects of this book are numerous. Moses presents very convicting questions and facts about the complexities of life, our use of money, the amount of stuff we have piled up, doing good things for our neighbors (wherever they may be), and using our voices to make a change in local and federal government issues. She is very honest and open when she says, "I know that I can't ignore the broken world just because my life is good, and also—though this has taken along time coming—I know that just because the world is broken doesn't mean I can't enjoy my good, sweet, holy life". It is a difficult road to consider the riches of being a middle or upper class American and trying to live a lifestyle which doesn't crush the people in the world around us. The reality, she says, is that "most of us are not going to figure out how to live self-sustainably". Moses' aim is clear in the opening pages as she asks: "So how do we make faithful choices in those everyday tasks of living in the world?" She continues, "I'm not going to tell you what choices to make or how to live. I'll tell you what I've learned and what my family has tried—and sometimes what we've been meaning to try but haven't." Her aim is to give stories, examples, and biblical hope for people seeking change in their materially abundant lives. The point of this book is not that rich people should have less, but that everyone should have enough. For those who have more than enough, she is urging that they find a way to be satisfied with enough and give to those who have less than that.

Though the previous aspects of the book make it a good read for people interested in these issues, I would recommend reading this book very cautiously or finding alternative books which work through these issues. One issue I had with this book came in the form of Moses' subtle—or maybe not so subtle—nudges in the liberal evangelical direction. Being a reformed, conservative evangelical, I found it a bit alarming that the author nonchalantly mentions participation in yoga classes, support of female pastors, the practice of mindfulness, and what seems to be a supportive stance on the legalization of gay marriage (she says, "gay marriage is finally legal" in a seemingly positive light). I also felt that this book was heavy on social justice and lighter on the essence of the gospel. The gospel is mainly about sinful people being restored to a right relationship with the loving God of the universe so that they may dwell with Him for all eternity in joyful worship and adoration. Christians are indeed called to live as lights in a dark world and bring change. They are also called to make disciples until Christ returns. I feel that a more gospel centered emphasis is important in preventing people from a self-centered, legalistic pursuit of change that must begin on a heart level.

If you read More Than Enough you will surely gain some very valuable insights into social justice, sustainable living, and being agents of change in this world. These are certainly issues that the Church as a whole needs to think through. However, there are more conservative books such as: Radical, Follow Me, or Counter Culture by David Platt which offer a more balanced view of how to bring change in the world by keeping the gospel central and leaving out the liberal aspects discussed above.

I received an advance copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Caroline says**

As a pastor who leads several small-groups, I am so thrilled to have the possibility of a book like *More Than Enough* to add to our discussions. As a mom and a wife and a consumer, I am grateful for the practical and challenging reflections by Lee Hull Moses about living faithfully in our present culture of excess. Her tone is spot-on: realistic and questioning and hopeful at the same time. The way that Lee weaves her personal stories alongside thoughtful biblical and theological reflections truly makes the book accessible as well as thought-provoking. Be prepared for it to move you to pray about and ask yourself some good and hard questions about the way you are living.

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### **Julianna says**

Reviewed for THC Reviews

"4.5 stars" *More Than Enough* was recommended by Erin Wathen, the former pastor of the church I attend, when we Skyped with her during our regular book club meeting after reading her new book. As a result *More Than Enough* was chosen as our latest book club read. I'm not quite sure why I had this impression, but when I picked it up, I thought it was going to be more of a book with tips and suggestions for simpler living. So, if this is an impression that you've gotten, too, know that it isn't that type of book at all. It's more of a compilation of essays on taking a deeper look at how we're living and making intentional choices on ways we could do better. That's not to say that I was disappointed in the book. I wasn't, because the author had a lot of good and thoughtful things to say. So overall, I enjoyed it even if it wasn't quite what I was expecting.

The author explains in her introduction exactly how the book is set up: "For the most part, the odd-numbered chapters are a little more practical. That is they examine hands-on topics like money, possessions, community service, and advocacy work. The even-numbered chapters are more theoretical; they explore ideas and practices that Christians have used for centuries to make sense of their lives and their relationship with God. All the chapters ultimately ask the question: *How should we live?*" The even-numbered chapters have one-word titles: Enough, Lament, Confession, Sabbath, Hope, Delight. They take a more philosophical approach to examining our lives on a deeper level, while as the author says, the odd-numbered ones are a little more practical. Rev. Moses doesn't necessarily give specifics on how to live, but she does seek to inspire the reader to take more practical steps to live out the concepts found in the other chapters. No matter which it is, I love that all-important question regarding how we *should* live. Ultimately that's a question that we can only answer individually, which is perhaps why the author didn't give more specifics.

One of the previous books our book club read pointed out just how wasteful America is as a country, and that compliments the discussion in this book of how we do live in a culture of excess that's not merely borne out in wastefulness. The reality is that here in America, we seem to think that bigger is better: bigger portions of food when we go to the restaurant, bigger stores so we have more selection, bigger packages like what we find at warehouse stores like Costco, just everything is *bigger*. And at the same time, so much of all that stuff is going to waste. I looked up the statistics and found that Americans buy 80 billion new items of clothing each year, and approximately 11 million tons (about the same amount) end up in landfills during that same time frame. Awareness campaigns to keep textiles out of landfills are great, but I've also heard that even

thrift stores are becoming overwhelmed with the sheer amount of clothes that are donated. The problem that Rev. Moses presents is that we, as a group of people, generally have the mindset of needing more even when, if we took a closer look at our lives, most of us would find that we already have enough. Perhaps, when we go shopping, we should ask ourselves if we really need that new blouse or another pair of shoes. My favorite quote from the book is at the end of Chapter 2: "*More asks: What else can I get? Enough asks: Do I really need more?*" I think these are questions that we need to ask ourselves more frequently.

I like how the author takes a look at the concept of simple living and admits that it isn't necessarily so simple. We can look at others who may be growing their own food in a garden or on a farm, raising their own livestock, making their own clothes, etc., but the reality is that those things take a lot of time and effort, and ultimately aren't really simple after all. Rev. Moses leaves a lot of room for grace in this area and admits that she herself is sometimes guilty of not doing the "simpler" thing. In this respect she gives the reader the space to do what they can, while not beating themselves up for their failings, but at the same time, she encourages and perhaps challenges us to try a little harder, such as committing to not driving one day a week or to not purchasing any new items for a month.

Another thing I particularly appreciated was the author taking a look at our charitable giving, and this is something that we discussed in our book club as well. We came to the conclusion that many times, our giving is more to make us feel better than to really help those it's supposed to. While it's great to give money and/or goods to charitable causes, we need to be sure that it's something the person receiving it actually needs. In many third-world countries, some missionary efforts are actually detrimental in more ways than one. I've now heard of a couple of instances of the people receiving things they don't really need and/or it can be damaging in some way to the local economy. So when giving to organizations that help the needy in other countries, we need to be sure it truly is helpful. Also we need to take a closer look at systemic causes of poverty and other social issues and perhaps search for ways to make changes in those areas rather than just throwing money at the problem and hoping it will go away. After all, one of the things the author points out is that we actually have the capability to grow and produce enough food for everyone, yet 50% of children will experience food insecurity at some point in their lives. It's for this and many other reasons that we need to commit ourselves to advocating for deeper, more meaningful changes, or at the very least, making sure we're supporting organizations who do. After all, as the old adage goes, "Give a man a fish, he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime."

Overall, *More Than Enough* was a good book that is written in an easy-to-read writing style. Rev. Moses uses a lot of stories and anecdotes from her own family and the lives of those around her to illustrate her points. She also interweaves those narratives with Scripture and Bible stories to illustrate how they pertain to our Christian faith. The only reason I knocked off a half star is that there were times as I read it that I felt it wasn't quite cohesive enough, although upon further reflection, it may have just been my perception at the time. But I can't deny that Lee Hull Moses had a lot of interesting and thought-provoking things to say that will inspire me (and hopefully anyone else who reads her book) to take a deeper look at my life and to making changes that will benefit, not only me, but others as well.

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### **Ginny says**

Uggg. It was a selection for my church's book study. Total disappointment. Not well written. Very self-indulgent. I couldn't get past the mediocre writing to focus on the concept.

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### **Jeanie says**

**If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor)the world. This makes it hard to plan the day. Therein lies our dilemma.**

Moses does not offer any quick fixes in living on less. But she does offer a calling to examine how we consume. What we consume affects our brothers and sisters. The chocolate we eat, the clothes we wear, the movies we see. I appreciate the calling for Christians to take notice on how we consume. Moses herself has shared her journey to become more aware and the changes she has made along the way. Being a progressive lefty is quite evident in her testimony and I am afraid does not get to the root of the problem. Take poverty for example. There are many reasons for poverty in our country from mental illness, the lack of father leadership, to name a few. Her call for \$15.00 wages does not fix the problem of poverty. If anything, it could create new problems.

There were other issues that I took as not solving the problem but creating another because it does deal with the real problem. The issue of our heart. The finished work of Christ and the not yet. Politically packed and offers little. I would not recommend.

*A Special Thank you to Westminster John Knox Press and Netgalley for the ARC and the opportunity to post an honest review.*

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### **Rev. Linda says**

Each year that I "mature", I find myself minimizing my life more. This wonderful book, which I kept seeing posts about on Facebook from my Brite Divinity friends, gave me lots to think about for the coming year. Her good humor and ability to not make it a self-help, do this and all will be well book made it an excellent read. I highly recommend. ----From the publisher: Ever look around your life and feel overwhelmed with gratitude for everything you have? Sure, nothing is perfect, but if you have a safe place to live, food on the table, and clothes to wear, the reality is that life is pretty good. That's not true for many people in the world, and you may wonder, How do we live in a way that honors God and shows gratitude for the good life we are living in the midst of a world full of pain and brokenness? All our daily choices have an impact on the earth and the people around us: choices about where we shop, what we eat, what we give away. But can we really do anything to help? Can we find joy in our own lives when there is so much pain in the world? Sorting out the answers gets overwhelming and complicated very quickly. With a blend of practical reflection and insight on topics from guilt to delight, "More than Enough" goes beyond a call to gratitude and generosity and invites the reader to a new way of life, one that is grounded in the hope and grace of God."

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### **Shannon (Mrsreadsbooks) says**

Ever look around your life and feel overwhelmed with gratitude for everything you have? Sure, nothing is perfect, but if you have a safe place to live, food on the table and clothes to wear, the reality is that life is pretty good. That's not true for many people in the world and you may wonder; How do we live in a way that honor God and shows gratitude for the good life we are living in the midst or a world full of pain and brokenness?

I enjoyed this book; the author tells some important stories and asks some important questions, such as, why are there so many hungry people in this world when we have plenty of food to feed them all? Mind you, this is a simple question to a very complex issue that deals with everything from farming to politics, but it is a good question. The author goes on to explain how all of our daily choices have an impact on the earth and the people around us. Choices ranging from where we do our shopping to what we give away. I thought it was a well written book that talks about some topics that I have not previously read about from a Christian perspective. Thank you to John Know Press for sending me an advanced reading copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Jonathan Esterman says**

The opening pages of this book launch a salvo of queries at the reader. How can there be too opposites that meet in the middle? Starving kids in the same state as the upper class? First world problems when clean water is missing in many parts of the world? The dichotomy presented is the same struggle that exists in basic theological questions - how can there be a man who was G-d? How can heaven meet earth? These opposing ends meet the middle in what is referred to the mandorla - an almond-shaped image that is the embodiment of the early church (since then we've turned it sideways and added legs, calling it a fish). The author asks this of the reader. How can there be a gap between the rich and the poor? It brings very real questions to what many have as a theoretical faith and not a practical one. These questions challenge the very basis of religious beliefs for many, and may even be a discouragement. HaShem does not love one person less than another, does He? They why are they not equally blessed?

These questions are not meant to discourage, but rather to engage and set the tone of the book. The author's voice is one of cafe conversation - seeking to find resolution and understanding, a harmony, of the mandorla reality. The author engages the reader to find resolution by sharing their own life experiences, theological understandings, and Scripture interpretations. The book is very easy to follow along with, dodging overly complicated terminology in favor of reaching a larger audience. This book is best intended for those that have already asked whether or not to read it, and if that's the case, then maybe it's better to get over the hump and see what the author has to say...

Disclosure: I have received a reviewer copy and/or payment in exchange for an honest review of the product mentioned in this post.

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### **Sam says**

Spoiler alert:

"I wish I could tell you what the answers are to all these questions about living well. I especially wish I could tell you that I'd made all the 'right' choices about living simply and money and owning stuff and advocacy and getting to know our neighbors. But I haven't."

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### **Sarah says**

I love the idea of this book, but right now I just can't seem to focus on it. I'll pick it up again some day.

I received an ARC from NetGalley.

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### **Cindy says**

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

I was really excited to win and receive this book. I have a tendency to overspend and to always want more stuff. Not a healthy way to live. I was really hoping this book would offer some strategies to change this kind of life. The author did offer a lot of great info and perspective, but unfortunately, it didn't go any further than that. The perspective is nice, but you have to find a way to apply it in your own life and in your own way.

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### **Heidi says**

A wonderful book speaking frankly and thoughtfully to the questions of consumerism and the longing for simple living so many of us middle-class Americans share. Moses uses Scripture, the desert mothers and fathers, contemporary writers like James Baldwin and Barbara Kingsolver, theologians like Marcus Borg and Sam Wells, and movies, as well as her own experiences at home, traveling abroad, and leading her small congregation in Greensboro, North Carolina to wrestle with this question as a Christian, a pastor, a middle-class American, and as a mother of two kids. I loved her book - she doesn't come up with easy answers but she makes you think and makes you laugh.

Looking for discussion group material? Her publisher is offering a free leader guide - <https://www.wjkbooks.com/Products/066...>

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### **Laura Cheifetz says**

I really enjoyed this book. The author is so honest about the disconnect between who she wants to be as a responsible conscientious Christian, and between how things actually are for a busy professional. The writing is lovely. I love that she talks about sin and confession, and the book is interspersed with short prayers and Biblical references. It feels like a conversation with someone who is wrestling with the things I wrestle with, taking the gospel seriously, but remembering to take herself with a grain of salt and a hefty dose of humor.

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### **Keith Beasley-Topliffe says**

(Note: I received an advanced copy in exchange for an honest review.)

Near the end of *More than Enough*, Lee Hull Moses explains her hope: "When I described this book to people, when I said that I was exploring what it means to live faithfully with abundance in the face of inequality and injustice, I generally got the same response: 'Great! Tell me when you've figured it out.' This will come as no surprise: I didn't figure it all out."

What she did do was reflect on her own struggles with living simply and responsibly and trying to help those who weren't so fortunate as herself and her family. Pay the price to shop local or save big at Costco? Marvel

at friends who built their own eco-friendly house and grow much of their food or wallow in guilt that you can't do the same? Go on mission trips and feel like a "poverty tourist" or spend your mission dollars financing microloans? What is the best way to protest injustice and inequity--and get your young daughter involved? How do you best find and live out your part in the "old, old story" if you can't drop everything to join the Shane Claiborne and other new monastics? How can you best be a Christian in the suburbs (especially when you're a pastor)?

These reflections include stories from scripture and input from her reading of Walter Brueggemann, Barbara Brown Taylor, and many others. But mostly they start with her own stories, some impressive, some small. Early on, the author talks about a therapist she had once who liked to talk more than she liked to listen, who told stories about her own life that never seemed to connect to the author's struggles. That's not the case in the book. The stories always provide an opening into the subject at hand (sometimes with a little more detail than needed, perhaps) and lead to deeper thought.

This is a book for folks struggling to deal with having more than they need (though maybe not as much as they'd like to have). If the title sounds like your life, this will be a helpful book in its own right and a pointer to further reading and action.

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### **Chelsea DeVries says**

I hunger for more and more literature that builds my faith as a Christian. So when I was offered this book to read, I jumped at the chance. Hoping it would open my eyes to a new perspective regarding prosperity.

Unfortunately, I was wrong.

This book really did nothing more than put me to sleep. It was an accurate depiction of life as I already live it with pressure from every which way to obtain more and more stuff and well, I gained nothing new from reading this.

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