

It's Not Easy Being Green

I hope Kermit the Frog won't mind me borrowing his theme song—it just seemed like the perfect title for a follow-up to my March article in which I shared with you some of the struggle my wife and I were having with respect to possibly updating our house.

As you may recall, it has these green laminate countertops that we'd always intended to replace. They're in great shape and not really a bad shade of green, but it sure would be nice to have something newer and, well, more contemporary. Then there's this tile floor that we've also wanted to replace, and the cabinets that could use refinishing, and.... Well, you get the idea.

So Pam and I found ourselves talking about the cost, and whether or not it made sense to spend that much money, and how all of these things are wants and not needs.

It's easy to talk about how everything we have comes from God and how we're all just stewards of what He has given us. It starts getting really tough, though, when you step back and say, "Hey! This really isn't my kitchen—it's God's. What does He want us to do with it? What does He want us to do with our money the money He's entrusted to us?"

If you're like me, it's pretty easy to convince yourself that you really need something you want. The problem is that the more we fill up our hearts with material "needs," the less capacity we have to satisfy our spiritual needs. How sad is that?!

So in last month's article, I talked about three different ways we can try to sort out our needs from our wants and get a better perspective on our material lives. And since this all started with thoughts of a kitchen redo, I figure it's only fair to share with you how Pam and I dealt with our green countertops.

I closed my March article with tongue in cheek saying, "It's all so confusing! Maybe we should just move..." I figured that was the classic answer to every tough question—run away from it!

Except that...well...uh...that's exactly what we've done! Now don't blow me off for an

idiot (or worse, a hypocrite)—give me a chance to explain. Yes, we did end up with a house that has countertops we love, and the tile and cabinets are pretty cool, too. BUT, we bought a much smaller house (with a much smaller yard) that not only is cheaper to buy, but much more energy efficient.

I'd be lying if I didn't admit that there were other factors that went into the decision to move. But the bottom line is that we got some of the things we wanted by giving up some things we had. Some of those we will miss. Going forward, though, we expect to have more time and money for what is truly important in our lives. And we are also going to take advantage of this move to finally follow through on our desire to "destuff" our closets (and our lives).

Did we make the right decision? Time will tell. A lot will depend on how we use the additional time and money we expect to have. But one thing is clear already—we had to move.

As you may know, Pam and I are foster parents. About a week after we closed on our new home, while we were still wondering if we'd just made a huge mistake, we learned of some new requirements for foster homes with pools and ponds. Guess what—our old house has both. Compliance would have been very difficult and very unattractive. Guess what else? Our new house has neither a pool nor a pond.

Funny how things work out. Maybe we have made the right choice—found the right balance between needs and wants. In any event, it sure looks like we needed to move if we are to keep on doing what we think God wants us to do. And all because of some green countertops. Wonder if our next foster child will be a boy or a girl...

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For a wonderful look at what the Bible says about money, check out the Crown Financial Ministries Small Study Groups - call Margaret Fetty at 288-9034 for more information.