

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

The Real Thing

I like butter!

Not the imitation stuff that “looks, tastes, and feels like the real thing,” but honest-to-gosh butter.

And, contrary to most commercials, it has a flavor all its own...the kind that beckons me to take a little taste whenever I go by the kitchen counter. (That’s why, when there’s butter in the house, it usually has these funny little dents in the top.)

Of course, margarine is more affordable and, consequently, that’s what’s usually kept in the house. Unfortunately, however, there’s a problem with having an imitation around so much of the time: I get used to it after awhile (and have even called it “butter,” on occasion!). Of course, if one is interested in appearances, margarine is the thing to have; it’s always neat and tidy on the plate (no dents).

But, every once in awhile, I get a taste for “the real thing.” (After all, what’s a holiday dinner without butter on the table?) In fact, occasionally, this compulsion comes on me for no discernible reason, usually when I’m pushing my shopping cart through the grocery store. Then, in a devil-may-care attitude and a to-heck-with-the-cost, I toss a pound of it into the basket.

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Now, finances being what they are today, this invariably means that something else in the cart has to go. But, oddly enough, this never seems to bother me...and maybe that's what Jesus meant when he talked about the kingdom of heaven and the merchant, in search of fine pearls,

“who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” [Matt. 13:45, 46]

because, when you really have to have something, it's always affordable...even if it means giving up something else. But the interesting thing about “giving up something” is that one wouldn't “give it up” if that something was more valuable than the thing being purchased.

And...maybe that's why it's done in a “devil-may-care” attitude, because the devil may care!...especially if something worldly is valued at less than a taste of the REALLY good life.

(July 20, 1981)