

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Do You Like Buffets?

by Mark Robbins, CPA

Do you enjoy a good buffet? My weakness is a good Chinese buffet. No matter what diet I am on, I just can't stop at one plate! I start off well – lots of rice & vegetables, heavy on the sauce, but also light on the fried foods. I also eat quickly. When I finish my food before the other people at my table, I have nothing to do so I go back for more. My second plate usually has the food that I tried to avoid with my first plate.

Think of your favorite buffet. Are there some foods on it that you know you should avoid? Buffets can be a temptation for me because I figure that since I paid for it, I might as well eat what is offered. My waistline proves my point.

Take this quiz on the buffet of sin. Which sin would you like placed on the plate of your life?

1. Hating God
2. Immorality
3. Murder
4. Greed

Hopefully, you automatically passed on number one. Numbers two and three would certainly cause distress to your family as well as spiritual problems. What about number four? If you don't have anything on your plate to this point, you may be tempted to try this entrée from the buffet. After all, most people have it on their plates.

Listen to the apostle Paul as he describes the type of godlessness that God judges, "unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; gossip, slander, haters of God, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness, inventors of evil, disobedience

to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful" (Romans 1:29-31, NASB).

Is there anything on that list that you also have on your plate? There are some very interesting entrees in this list that are acceptable in our society. Greed is one of them. We are told that our economic system works because we are motivated by greed. That implies that God needs our greed in order to further blessing in our lives. I hope you can see past the error in that thinking.

What should you do if you realize that you have greed on your plate? You can't simply take it back to the buffet line. You must make the choice to stop eating and then have the waiter take it from you. God is not a waiter, but in terms of your sin only He can remove the penalty and the power sin has over you.

Now your plate is empty. What will you put on it? You need to replace greed with something else – generosity. The book of Proverbs has some great teaching related to how God blesses us when we are generous. Generosity is a characteristic that you definitely want on your plate.

This week you will be offered many choices from the buffet of life. What will you put on your plate?

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org