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“Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz.”

When Christian hypocrisy is so bad it draws public rebuke in the form of a parody song - there is a deep problem. In her song, 'Mercedes Benz', American rock singer, Janis Joplin sarcastically prays to God for a luxury car so she can compete with her friends, "who all drive Porsches". Next she asks for a colour TV, followed by a night on the town. "Prove that you love me, and buy the next round?" she sings.

The mind space of some Christians is hard to fathom. Speaking about himself, Jesus said, 'Foxes have holes and birds have nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head'. Yet the advert on the back of one Christian magazine boasted, 'Our pastors all drive late model Mercedes Benz cars'. The point was clear, 'You can see how much God loves our church, because we're all so rich!'

But Jesus said that if anyone wanted to be his disciple they should, '...deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him'. Sadly, in the rich West, Christians struggle to deny themselves. It's so easy to justify the quality lifestyle products, expensive holidays and renovations. Would you rather be noticed as the one who has the most or the least? So Christians join the endless, upgrade cycle of every other Western consumer.

Meanwhile in other parts of the world - or just your own neighbourhood - there are people without. The release of Joplin's song in 1970 coincided with a terrible famine in Nigeria caused by the Biafran civil war. One reason the famine shocked the world is this photo taken by Peter Williams in 1969 showing three young boys looking hauntingly at the camera. Their unflinching gaze asks so many hard questions. In obvious need of urgent food and safety, it's not clear who will help.

Yet the Bible challenges anyone reading it to help those who are less fortunate. The logic is simple... if God is prepared to love us by sending his son to die for us at the cross, then how can we also, not be generous to others?

The author James in the Bible wrote this about prayer.

"You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures"

It's right to pray for our daily bread. But let's also pray for opportunities to be as generous to others as God has been to us.