

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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How Much \$\$\$ Do You Need?

In "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" Tolstoy tells of a man who discovers that for a small fee, he can have as much land as he can walk around in a single day. Driven by greed, the man wakes early, walks so far that he cannot get back to his starting point, and in the end dies of a heart attack brought on by the effort. He is buried in a six foot plot of land, thus ironically answering the title's question.

How much money does a person need? This is the modern analogue to Tolstoy's question. Many people who have more money than they could spend in a lifetime drive themselves to acquire more. They don't make money in order to endow causes, or as a byproduct of productive work, but simply to run up numbers in their accounts and in their heads.

Most of us have much more than we need and many have more than they could ever use. The drive to accumulate for its own sake is a spiritual malady; it is a poor substitute for

creation, connection and wonder. Don't succumb. As the Torah teaches us, "Guard your soul carefully" (Deut. 4:9).

Watch Rabbi Wolpe being interviewed on Al Jazeera America on Anti-Semitism in Europe.

Get Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart*.