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## Introduction

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“*To Have and to Hold*”—It’s a phrase we usually associate with wedding vows. Husbands and wives take one another “to have and to hold” for the rest of their lives. Each vows to **never let go** of this commitment. There is a sense of *permanence*.

Many of us treat our lives and our possessions in much the same way. We work hard to *acquire* and then *keep* the things most beloved to us. Naturally the thought of losing them is disconcerting. We want to have. We want to hold.

Yet, we know “neither the day nor the hour” when we will be called home. What we do know is when that moment arrives, all our stuff—*everything* we have labored for and acquired—will be passed on to someone else. Our favorite things will no longer be ours to have and to hold. It’s “*til death do us part*” for us and our possessions!

We find Paul’s words simple enough:

*“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”*

*1 Timothy 6:7*

Yet this is a truth many early civilizations never recognized. Believing they could “take it with them,” Egyptian pharaohs were buried with their treasures, certain that their wealth would serve them in the afterlife. Most of their belongings were stolen; those that weren’t succumbed to inevitable decay. What they clung to so fervently in life was handed over in death to thieves or Mother Nature.