

Man's Walk to Claim Land

Leo Tolstoy, regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time, was born into a Russian family in 1828. He is best known for the novels *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877), which are often touted as the pinnacles of realist fiction.

His literal interpretation of the ethical teachings of Jesus, centering on the Sermon on the Mount, led him to become a fervent Christian anarchist and pacifist.

In one of his writings, Tolstoy tells the story of a rich man who was never satisfied. He always wanted more and more. He heard of a wonderful chance to get more land.



For a thousand rubles, he could have all that he could walk around in a day. But he had to make it back to the starting point by sundown or he would lose it all.

He arose early and set out. He walked on and on, thinking that he would get just a little more land if he kept on going. But he went so far that he realized he must walk very fast if he was to get back in time to claim the land.

As the sun got lower in the sky, he quickened his pace. He began to run. As he came within sight of the starting place, he exerted his last energies, plunged over the finish line, fell to the ground and collapsed. A stream of blood poured out of his mouth, and he lay dead.

His servant took a spade and dug a grave. He made it just long enough and just wide enough and buried him.

The title of Tolstoy's story is *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*

Tolstoy concludes by offering the answer: "Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed."

We don't have to look far around us to observe the quest for more and more in this life by others – some people who are preoccupied with the pursuit of materialism.

Materialism is defined by *Dictionary.com* as "preoccupation with or emphasis on material objects, comforts and considerations, with a disinterest in or rejection of spiritual, intellectual or cultural values."

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To such individuals, that course leads to inner satisfaction.

Tolstoy's story suggests a present consideration of what is truly important in life rather than discovery at the final conclusion of our journey upon this earth.

By experience, associates of Life Care and Century Park have learned that real happiness, real joy and real satisfaction come from loving and serving others.

The Bible is clear on this point. Here is one declaration:

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever. Amen (1 Peter 4:7-11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter