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THOREAU AS A PROPHET

Thoreau was a simple man that believed in having only the basic necessities in life. Thoreau lived a life of simplicity at Walden Pond. In Walden, Thoreau gives a background of his life and some life experiences that he has encountered. Thoreau also explains that the four necessities in life are food, shelter, clothing, and fuel. Thoreau was a prophet of the twentieth-century regarding the issue of materialism.

In Thoreau's days there were people who lived in luxury and people that lived with just the essentials of life as he did. Men of those days worked hard for everything they had and did not find it necessary to indulge in such luxuries as men do today. "When a man is warmed by the several modes which I have described, what does he want next?" (Thoreau 1496). In today's society, most everyone has the necessities of life, but chooses to indulge in the luxuries of life. In America today, most all families have more than one car, own multiple numbers of televisions, and have far more clothing than necessary. We have become a society whose focus points to materialism.

According to Thoreau, the necessities of life are food, shelter, clothing, and fuel. (1495) "When he has obtained those things which are necessary to life, there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities" (Thoreau 1496). Thoreau is saying that it is a choice to obtain more than the necessities of life. We choose to buy excess clothes and excess technology. What happened to being content with what God has given us? "But if my jacket and trousers, my hat and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do; will they not?" (Thoreau 1501). In the Bible it says, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." (John 4:25). Perhaps Thoreau was alluding to Christ's teachings in this passage of scripture. Christ does not care what possessions we have, only that we worship Him in spirit and truth.

In conclusion, today's society has placed its focus on the luxuries they can obtain. The basic amount of food, shelter, clothing, and fuel has shown an increase in demand from today's society. Living the life of luxury is a goal among many individuals in our society. Society no longer lives a simplified life as Thoreau did. Thoreau taught that man can live with the four basic necessities of life, but often chooses not to do so. After reviewing Walden, Thoreau has shown himself as being a prophet of twentieth-century problems. The world has increasingly become worse in regards to a materialistic outlook.

