

# Why Do They Always Have to Be Either Entertained or Entertaining?

by K.P. Yohannan

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*The Western lifestyle of excess and misguided priorities can lead to a disconnect from the needs of others, and a failure to understand the reality of poverty and limited resources in many parts of the world.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 21:13, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 25:35-40, Luke 12:15, Romans 12:13, Galatians 6:2, Philippians 2:4, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, James 2:15-16, 1 John 3:17

**Topics:** "Compassion for the Poor", "Consumerism vs. Generosity"

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## Description

K.P. Yohannan addresses the tendency of people to seek entertainment as a means of escaping guilt and the deeper issues in their lives. He contrasts the extravagant consumption habits of Americans with the stark realities faced by those in poorer nations, emphasizing the irony of how much is spent on food and entertainment in the West compared to the dire needs of others. Yohannan highlights the disconnect between the generosity shown in church offerings and the lavish meals that often follow, which can overshadow the true message of compassion and awareness for global suffering. He calls for a deeper understanding of the needs of others and a reevaluation of priorities in fellowship and community life.

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## Transcript

Why do they always have to be either entertained or entertaining? I wondered. It was as if they were trying to escape from a guilt they had not yet defined or even identified.

I was constantly aware of how large--and overweight--most Americans seemed to be. Americans need big cars, big homes and large furniture, because they are big people.

I was amazed at how important eating, drinking, smoking and even drug use were in the Western lifestyle. Even among Christians, food was a major part of fellowship events.

This, of course, is not bad in itself. "Love feasts" were an important part of the New Testament church life. But eating can be taken to extremes. One of the ironies of this is the relatively small price North Americans pay for food. In 1998, personal expenditures in the United States averaged \$19,049 per person, of which \$1,276 (6.7 percent) went for food, leaving a comfortable \$17,773 for other expenses. In India, the average person had only \$276 to spend, of which \$134 (48.4 percent) went for food, leaving a scant \$142 for other needs for the entire year. I had lived with this reality every day, but Americans have real trouble

thinking in these terms.

Often when I spoke at a church, the people would appear moved as I told of the suffering and needs of the national evangelists. They usually took an offering and presented me with a check for what seemed like a great amount of money. Then with their usual hospitality, they invited me to eat with the leaders following the meeting. To my horror, the food and "fellowship" frequently cost more than the money they had just given to missions. And I was amazed to find that American families routinely eat enough meat at one meal to feed an Asian family for a week. No one ever seemed to notice this but me, and slowly I realized they just had not heard the meaning of my message. They were simply incapable of understanding the enormous needs overseas.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/kp-yohannan/why-do-they-always-have-to-be-either-entertained-or-entertaining/>

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