

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**Helping by Halving**

Teen Inspires Others to Give Sacrificially

By Paul Asay

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**What Happened:**

In 2006, 14-year-old Hannah Salwen was returning home from a sleepover with her father, Kevin, when she saw a homeless man sitting next to an idling Mercedes. “Dad, if that man had a less nice car, that man there could have a meal,” she said.

It was true enough, and Kevin agreed; but Hannah refused to let the matter go and continued to talk about the world’s economic inequities. Her mother, exasperated, finally said, “What do you want to do? Sell our house?”

In a word, yes. According to *The New York Times*, that’s exactly what the family did.

The Salwens sold their “luxurious family home” and moved into a more modest residence at about half the price. The Salwens donated to the Hunger Project the \$800,000 they made by downsizing; and the money is being used to fund programs in Ghana. Kevin Salwen then wrote a book about his family’s decision titled *The Power of Half*.

Hannah, now a high school junior, told the *Times* “No one expects anyone to sell a house. That’s kind of a ridiculous thing to do. For us, the house was just something we could live without. It was too big for us. Everyone has too much of something, whether it’s time, talent or treasure. Everyone does have [his or her] own half, you just have to find it.”

**Talk About It:**

What do you have too much of? Is it something you could sell? Give to someone who could use it? Can you ever give too much?

Have you ever encouraged your family to do something they might not have done otherwise? Has someone in your family ever encouraged you?

If you could donate to any cause, what would it be? Would you try to help those in Haiti? Orphanages in Russia? The homeless in the United States?

**What the Bible Says:**

“He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses” (Prov. 28:27).

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31:8-9).

“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints” (2 Cor. 8:3-4).