

IT AIN'T ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS

I have a friend named Janet* who, as close as I can figure, has approximately more money than God. She buys a brand new Lexus every other year whether she needs one or not. I drive a bashed up, 15 year old mini van that just turned over 200,000 miles. People actually stare at it when I'm stopped at traffic lights. So a year or so ago I bought a "commercial vehicle" sticker and cut it up to read "comical vehicle" and stuck it on the rear bumper. Now I think they are laughing for the right reason...

Jan, I mean Janet* goes on cruises five times a year. She even takes a cruise with her sister so they can scrapbook together! I guess it's a lot of trouble to have all that clutter spread over your 6,000 sq. foot home.

We take a yearly family vacation, stay in the cheapest hotels money can buy and for breakfast, eat dry cereal out of the plastic cups by the bathroom sink.

She and her family eat out more times in one week than mine does in three months. Naturally they eat in all the finest establishments, while my family doesn't even consider the possibility of eating anywhere that doesn't have a buy one/get one free coupon in the Entertain-ment book. Their tips would probably cover our entire meal.

The ring on her finger cost more than my house, and anything she needs done around her home is just a phone call away. She has a painter, a paperhanger, a landscaper and a house-keeper. Actually, I have all those things too, except that they go by other titles as well. Like "me," or "husband," or "children." My kids are convinced the only reason I had them was so that I would never have to do any housework. I'm here to tell you that that's not entirely true. They're also great for bringing in all those heavy bags of groceries and taking the trash to the curb.

When "Janet" redecorated her house recently, she redecorated her *entire* house! I had the sofa in the basement recovered with discount fabric I bought at Big Lots.

I won't even talk about the difference in our wardrobes. The lilies of the field have nothing on her! And in nearly seven years of friendship, I don't recall having ever seen her in the same lily twice.

The point is, in case you haven't gotten it yet, is that she is RICH and I am not, though it has never really bothered me. Okay, that's a lie. Sometimes it bothers me a little, but mostly it just bewilders me. I simply can't imagine having so much money at your fingertips that you don't have to check the price tag on a desired item or agonize over how you can possibly justify a purchase to your husband. So one day at lunch, I asked her.

"Jan, uh, I mean Janet... What's it like to have all that money?"

"It's nice," she said with a laugh.

Nice, I'm thinking. Nice! Heck yeah it must be nice. Fabulous is more like it! Before I could roll my eyes and ask her to be a bit more specific, she leaned over the table, looked me right in the eye, pointed her French-manicured finger at my chest and said, "I'd give it all up tomorrow if my husband loved the Lord the way yours does."

Right there in the middle of that busy restaurant, it hit me like an anvil falling on Wile E. Coyote. Of the two of us, I was by far the richest woman at our table. That day, I picked up the tab.

*Her real name is Jan, but in order to protect her identity in this article, I will refer to her as “Janet.”