
Words of Truth

Can You Buy Happiness?

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This is the “American Dream”: “The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States, a set of ideals in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, and an upward social mobility achieved through hard work. In the definition of the American Dream by James Truslow Adams in 1931, ‘life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement’ regardless of social class or circumstances of birth” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Dream).

False teachers have often used false promises of prosperity to lure in prey (II Peter 2:1-3 and II Peter 2:18-19). Creflo Dollar is a modern day false teacher that employs such tactics to draw people into his false religion. He has even created the “World Changers Church International School Of Prosperity”. With his school he lies to people about God wanting them to be rich in material things (<http://www.worldchangers.org/soonline/soplanding.html>). People fall for this because happiness is thought to be available through money.

The question is, “can you buy happiness”? God’s people are supposed to be a happy people (Psalms 144:15). Thus, if money does bring about happiness, you can be sure that God wants us to have plenty of it. To be sure that I have all the Scriptures about how money can make us happy, I searched the Bible from Genesis – Revelation. I searched for verses that have the words, “happy”, “happiness”, “joy”, “joyful”, “laughter”, etc. If I were to quote the Scriptures that have those words associated with material gain bringing any form of happiness this article would end with no more Scriptures. While you can find that correction from God (Job 5:17), having children (Psalms 127:3-5), eating what you provided from work (Psalms 128:2), wisdom (Proverbs 3:13), etc. brings happiness; you do not find such statements in regard to an abundance of wealth. You can even see that suffering for God can bring happiness (I Peter 3:14). However, you will not find that bigger houses or greater investments will bring you joy. So, what do you find about gaining more material things?

Getting More Will Bring Something To Your Life

If you want the bigger house, faster car, larger property, and so on; there is something you will find out. Let’s allow the Scriptures to speak on this point. Notice what MORE material things will bring to your life: *“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As*

he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness” (Ecclesiastes 5:10-17).

In case you didn't get it from the Scriptures above, here is another set of Scriptures to consider: *“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live... Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven... Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Proverbs 15:27, Proverbs 23:5, and Matthew 6:19-21).*

Consider some things that the Scriptures you've just read should have you realizing already. What happens when you get a bigger house, larger property, more cars, etc.? For one, you find out that they don't make you happy. Then, you also realize that those material belongings increase your expenses because of upkeep, taxes, etc. We cannot forget that the bigger house needs furniture. The nice backyard needs sprinklers and all other types of things to help it be nice. How happy are you now? If these things are where you look to find joy you'll find more misery every day.

Don't Look To Material Things To Bring You Joy

It is not wrong to have nice material things or even to enjoy them (Ecclesiastes 2:24, Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, Ecclesiastes 8:15, and I Timothy 6:17). What is wrong is falling in love with material things and not finding contentment in what you need (I Timothy 6:6-10 and Hebrews 13:5-6). Whether we abound in material things or suffer loss, we should be able to be content (Philippians 4:11-13). If our lives become centered on the things we own we have missed what we're supposed to be living for. As our Savior asked, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matthew 16:26)?*

When you leave this world everything you have gained will become the property of someone else (Psalms 39:6, Psalms 49:10-11, and Luke 12:16-21). Riches certainly will not help your soul to be saved (Job 36:18-19, Psalms 49:6-8, and Proverbs 11:4). Lasting joy will only come to those who are prepared to leave this world and enter into eternal life with our God (I Peter 1:3-9 and I Peter 4:13). Therefore, when you fall in love with everything this world has to offer you have fallen in love with things that will end with this world (I John 2:15-17).

Conclusion

People often work harder and harder to get bigger and better things. However, they find that the more they get the more they want (Ecclesiastes 6:7). Does an abundance of material things bring joy to one's life? God's answer is, NO (Luke 12:15). If you are looking for happiness and cannot find it in this world, change your search parameters (Psalms 146:5, Proverbs 16:20, and Philippians 4:6-7).