

Can Money Buy Happiness?

Is money the key to happiness? Consider what it did for Buddy Post, a former carnival worker and cook, of Oil City, Pa.



According to the *Associated Press* and *Chicago Tribune*, in 1988 Post won a jackpot of \$16.2 million in the Pennsylvania Lottery. That was the beginning of his misery.

His landlady claimed that she shared the winning ticket with Post and successfully sued him for one-third of the money.

Post started an assortment of business ventures with his siblings, all of which failed.

In 1991, he was sentenced to six months to two years in prison for assault. Post claimed that he had simply fired a gun into his garage ceiling to scare off his stepdaughter's boyfriend, who was arguing with him over business and ownership of Post's pickup.

In 1993, Post's brother was convicted of plotting to kill Buddy and his wife to gain access to the lottery money.

In 1994, Post filed for bankruptcy.

Post's wife left him, and the court ordered that Post pay \$40,000 a year in support payments.

Post finally had enough. To pay off a mountain of legal fees, he tried in September 1996 to sell off the rights to the 17 future payments from his jackpot, valued at some \$5 million. But the Pennsylvania Lottery tried to block the sale.

"Money didn't change me," said Post. "It changed people around me that I knew, that I thought cared a little bit about me. But they only cared about the money ... Money draws flies."

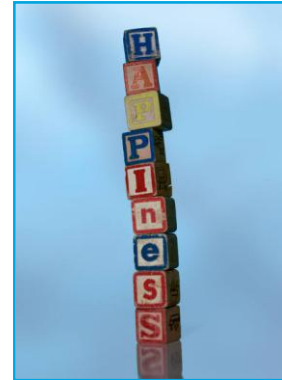


Terry Austin, writing an article on church stewardship for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, observed that Post "may not be a philosopher or a theologian, (but) he made a very profound observation. Money not only draws flies, it also has enormous attraction for people. State-run lotteries have become billion-dollar bonanzas. The vast majority of people in this country have purchased lotto tickets, or at least dreamed of what it would be like to win the big jackpot ... Casinos are packed with people 24 hours a day, all of them hoping to win big so they can fulfill their dreams."

(more)

Money is certainly a major player in our lives. Austin goes on to observe: “One of the reasons we have such a difficult time with money is that we have never answered the question – ‘How much is enough?’” Perhaps the answer comes from the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:10-13:

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”



Contentment is a key to a successful life, and it is a spiritual – not a material – accomplishment. Without learning the secret of contentment, no amount of money is enough.

– Beecher Hunter