

Search for a Shirt

A medieval king summoned the court sage one day and asked how he could conquer his feelings of anxiety and depression.



“There is but one cure for the king,” said the sage. “Your majesty must sleep one night in the shirt of a happy man.”

Soldiers were dispatched immediately to search throughout the land for a happy man. For days, the people they approached said they were not happy. All had some problem, some cross to bear. But finally, they found a beggar who sat smiling by the roadside.

The soldiers asked him if he was happy. He said he was truly happy. “I have no debts,” he said, “and I have peace of mind. In addition, I have an abundance of love to share.”

Then the soldiers told him what they wanted. The king had given them a large sum of money to procure the shirt of a happy man. Would he sell them his shirt so that the king might wear it for one night?

The beggar began to laugh uncontrollably. When he got hold of himself, he said, “I am sorry. I cannot oblige the king. Though I am happy, as you can see, I haven’t a shirt on my back.”

The moral of the story: Clothes don’t make the man.

Carried a conclusion even further: Neither does “stuff.” Oh, material things may bring some cheer, but their effect is not long-lasting. What makes the heart sing – for the present and for all time – is a healthy personal relationship with one’s Maker and with other people.

– Beecher Hunter