

THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY

Intent of these jottings

- ✓ *What's the value of money in relation to happiness?*
- ✓ *Jesus and money, to reflect on the evangelical value of money.*
- ✓ *To realize that money the "idol" of modern man, cannot deliver the goods it promises.*
- ✓ *To be contented with moderate riches and possessions.*
- ✓ *To understand why modern man is so unhappy.*

Uses of These Notes

For encounters sessions.
 Group discussions and debates
 Prayer sessions
 Personal examination of values in life
 Talks and sermons

Introductory Session

Singing of hymns and/or bhajans
 Opening prayer

Starter.

Johnny was a simple and ordinary man. Wealth, he had little in his life, yet happiness he had in plenty. He was a contented and satisfied person.

One day, on the road, as he passed by a dust-bin, he discovered a bundle of 1000 rupee notes lying in the garbage. In surprise and disbelief, he lifted the treasure and looked at it

His first impulse was to take the money home. With greed, he held the notes on his hands, for a while he kept looking at them....but, on a second thought, he changed his mind and spoke to the notes in this way::

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 "My dear notes, do I really need you at all to be happy? Till today, I never had you and I have been very happy. On the contrary many of my neighbors loaded with the likes of you, are utterly wretched and unhappy! I do not want to be like them. I rather prefer to be what I am without you, than to be what they are with you No! No! I have no use of you Then, without more ado, he flung the notes back into the dust-bin.

The notes felt highly insulted. Never in their life had they been treated so shabbily. In anger they shouted at Johnny: "Who do you think you are? You must be a crazy mad man. Till today everybody wanted us, everybody craved for us and you dare despise us? Don't you know that money can buy everything our world can offer'? Money opens the door to pleasures, prestige and success! Money makes for happiness! Come on pick us up and take us home with you!"

Johnny replied: "Yes, in a way you are right. Money can buy all the things the world can offer, yet money cannot buy the finest things the heart of man pines for. To tell the truth, my heart has been always at ease, yet I never had you."

The notes challenged Johnny and yelled: "No! It's not true! Tell us what are the things the human heart pines for that money cannot buy? Come on; tell us what those things are? Tell us! Tell us!"

Calmly and sure of himself, Johnny replied: "For Instance.

Money can buy for me a golden bed, but not the sound sleep I have!

Money can buy me the best food, but not the good appetite I enjoy!

Money can buy me cosmetics, but not the good looks I have!

Money can buy me a posh and luxurious house not the happy home I have!

Money can buy me sensuous pleasures, not the Inner joy I feel!

Money can buy me sex and women, not the faithful and loving wife I have!

Money can buy me people, but not the true friends I have!

Money can buy, me books, but not knowledge and wisdom!

Money can buy me fancy and extravagant clothes, but not personal dignity!

Money can even buy for me a first class funeral, but not a happy death

In a word, whatever is worthwhile in life and truly satisfying to the human heart, you money cannot buy!

You can only bluff gullible and incautious people to believe that you can give, what is not yours! You are a cheat! Stay on, stay on where you belong- the dustbin!"

And with a chuckle, Johnny happily went on his way.

POINTS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

How is it that although money cannot buy for us the finest things of life, most of us are craving for it?

- Can money be the "be-all" and the "end-all" of life? Why?
- Is money good or bad?
- Is money a blessing or a curse? Why?
- What's the real value of money?
 - How is it that very often, the more money people have, the less happy they are?
- How much money do we need to be happy?
- Scripture says that greed for money is the root of all evil. Do you agree? Why?
- How to possess money and yet not to be possessed by it?
- What adverts and propaganda in the Papers, T.V. etc do to us about our evaluating money? Do they help us to be happy and satisfied? How?
- What's the value the world attaches to money in comparison to the value Jesus attached to it?
- What do the education we received and the market tell us about the value of money?
- What is more valuable, to be or to have? Why?
- Explain the following maxims.
 - ✓ "It will be very hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Why'?"
 - ✓ A High Standard of Life is far better a High Standard of Living."

- ✓ In today's world everything has a price, nothing has value.
- ✓ What has real value cannot be bought
- ✓ What can be bought has little or no value
- ✓ Values are sold for pleasure, wealth and expediency.

Thoughts for AN Input by the Moderator

- Money in itself is neither good nor bad. It's God's creature.
- Greed for money is bad.
- With money we can do good and evil all depends on how much we value it
- The problem is not to possess money but to be possessed by it!
- Dissatisfaction with what we have makes us unhappy.
- Money is given to us by God "in trust", to use it, not to hoard it or to squander it.
- We are administrators not owners.
- To think we need lots of money to be happy keeps us forever unhappy..
- We need a minimum reasonable amount of possessions to lead a decent human life, but not wealth and luxuries.
- Poverty, if it means frugality and simple living, is not bad. Destitution is !
- Jesus was neither a destitute, nor a rich man.
- Accepting our lot in life, even if it means being poor, is the secret of happiness.
- The desire to have than others is a hot bed of jealousy.
Competition is bad, emulation is right.
- We aren't born to compete, but to cooperate.
- The spirit of the world, advertising and the consumerist society we live in are the main causes of our unhappiness.
- Poor self-image very often prompts us to boost our "ego" with status symbols and the trappings of wealth.
- We judge the worth of others, by what they have, not by they are!
- Comparing our wealth and possessions with those of others is a source of unhappiness and rivalries.
- The books we read, the movies we enjoy, the ads thrust on us make us believe that money can buy joy, peace, contentment. It's all a blatant lie! We swallow it, hook, line and sinker!
- By trying live up according to others' ex-pectations, and to climb the social ladder we ruin our life.
- Inordinate attachments to what we have are sort chains that prevent us from being free and Joyous.
- The general loss gospel values – simplicity, humility and detachment - fills the word with misery.

APPENDIX ONE Activities (Optional)

Instructions for the moderator

Time being available does not skip the activities. They are very effective to drive home to the participants the lessons of the day.

The afternoon hours are best suited for them.

a) Preparation of the Activities

- ✓ Divide the participants in into smaller groups.
- ✓ Give to each group one of the following N.T. texts:
 1. The Rich Fool. Lk 12:13-21.
 2. The Rich Man and Lazarus. Lk 16:19-31.
 3. The Rich Young Man. Mk 10:17-31.
 4. The Shrewd Manager. Lk 16:1-13.
 5. Judas' case. Money corrupted him. Mt 26:14-15 & 27:3-5.
- ✓ Ask them to prepare some activities, for instance, role-plays, radio plays, either in their ordinal form or in modern set-ting..

A novel way of presentation could be the following:

- 1) One member of the group will play the main character of the passage, i.e. the Rich Fool, Judas, the Young Rich Man, the Shrewd Manager,
- 2) The other members of the group will try to convince him of his mistaken attitude towards money.
- 3) He will stoutly defend his position (the mentality of the world).
- 4) Finally, the outcome of the play will prove him wrong.

b) Presentation

When the time given for preparation is over, the groups will get together.

Each group will present its activity to the house.

After each presentation, there will be a short analysis and evaluation.

APPENDIX TWO **Prayer Service**

- ✓ End the event with a prayer session.
- ✓ Begin the prayer session with a short silent "personal prayer".
- ✓ Read Mt 6:19 "Riches in heaven".
- ✓ Comment on it. Lead a little meditation on it.
- ✓ Leave the participants alone with God and ask them to examine their attitudes towards money and riches.
- ✓ You may read the "beatitudes", Mt 5:3-10, or God and Possession, Mt 6:24-34..
- ✓ Reflection. Is there anything they should do about it?
- ✓ End with a group shared prayer.
- ✓ Encourage participatory prayer
- ✓ Sing some hymns like "Seek First the Kingdom of Heaven".

APPENDIX THREE **Money and the Family**

Love, affection, company, tenderness, mother's and father's presence cannot be bought. In order to give our children the very best we make them orphans

Trying to give our children "our very best" namely money, we deprive them of "their very best," that is what God and Mother Nature provided them with. No amount of money and all the luxuries in the world are a fit substitute for parental love.

A STORY, RATHER EVERYDAY HISTORY.

The kids of some wealthy parents working abroad in high office, were left in Bombay in a big mansion, looked after by a kind aunty and an ayah.

One day they ask aunty:” Why Mum and Dad are not here with us? We want them to be with us”

Aunty replied: “Mum and Dad love you very, very much; they work very, very hard for you. They want to give you their very best. Look here, they bought for you this wonderful mansion, a posh car to take you to school with your chauffer, they send you to be best teachers in town for tuitions, they bought for you all sorts toys and video games, they see to it that you get lovely food, cookies and what not. They always buy for you the very best!”

The youngest child with a crying voice retorted: “Then, tell them to buy for us a Mummy and a Daddy as other children have. We want them!”