

The Eternal Fortune-Cookie Question

Does money buy happiness?

(*Forbes* April 21, 1997)

"We have, at last, an answer to the eternal fortune-cookie question – a question on which philosophers, psychologists, economists and even fortune cookies have long been divided. The answer is that money bears an extraordinarily weak and tenuous relationship to human happiness . . . I'll spare you the mathematical details, but the bottom line, according to those who have studied the question, is that typically only 1% to 2% of people's differences in happiness is attributable to their differences in income . . . Astonishing . . . What the data suggest is that a raise is like a martini. It induces optimism, and it elevates the spirit – but only temporarily. After a few weeks the 'happy hour' effect begins fading away . . . So, why not relax and settle for the wisdom of the immortal Adam Smith, who . . . describes 'the poor man's son, whom Heaven in its anger has visited with ambition,' but who ends up discovering that the 'elegant repose' he as sought for his old age cannot match the 'contentment which he has abandoned for it.'"

I agree with everything in the article EXCEPT, in effect, blaming God ("the poor man's son, whom Heaven in its anger has visited with ambition") for our sin of misusing His gifts and ignoring His recurring counsel that money can be a snare and pit:

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." ^{1 Timothy 6:9-10}

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." ^{1 Timothy 6:6}

What the author of this article seems to be saying (even if not directly) is that, even though America is a rich country, money is a greater curse to happiness than a blessing!

How much happiness is lost when people work so hard and make so many sacrifices to earn more? They often forfeit 10%, 20%, 50% or more of their potential happiness in an effort that can only increase happiness 1% - 2%!

Just thought this was an interesting observation and truth which the *Bible* has been loudly proclaiming for thousands of years!

When will we learn?