

10 Ways the Pursuit of Money Can Mess Up Your Family

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Money often costs too much." What has the pursuit of money cost you lately? Your child's birthday party? Singing recital? Wedding anniversary?

It's much easier to be rich monetarily than have a rich family life. We all know which is far more important. If money is costing you and your family too much, consider cutting back on luxuries or even finding a new vocation. Give your kids what money can never buy—treasured time with you.

Here are the 10 ways the pursuit of money can mess up your family life:

1. Broken promises. In order to climb the corporate ladder, claim that extra bonus, or gain favor with the boss, we can choose to sacrifice so much along the way. A string of broken promises usually lie in the wake. "Dad, you promised you would be there."

Almost nothing can make a man feel lower than seeing the disappointed eyes of his child while saying those words. Let your word be your bond. If you make a promise to your child, keep it.

2. The parentless child. The two-income house is an unfortunate necessity for many. After all, there are bills to pay. Somewhere along the line, luxuries can become needs. Dad and Mom work longer hours for more money to get more things. Morning time is a blur. Dad's in a rush. Mom hurries to get the kids ready so she can beat the traffic. Dinner isn't at a table, but quickly woofed down while rushing to evening practices. By bedtime, everyone is exhausted and had little time together. When are children being molded and shaped ... and by whom?

3. Missing the small things. When I had my first child, my Father gave me his best advice for parents. "Don't miss the small things." It took several years to figure out what he meant. As parents, we tend to put emphasis on the big moments, but life really happens during everything in between. Random moments of joyous laughter. These moments are the bricks for a strong family foundation. An obsessive pursuit of a successful business and a good name can lead to missing the small things at home. Build what will last ... your family.

4. The materialistic child. When family existence revolves around money, children tend to be materialistic. Money becomes the family religion. When you held your newborn girl in your arms, you dreamed many things for her. Those dreams probably didn't include her screaming at you for the credit card or demand a brand new BMW on her 16th birthday. Placing money at the center produces disciples of the deity you have created.

5. Disregard for those in need. The house is filled with unused stuff. Meanwhile just down the road, a child has nothing. Wealth should be shared by generous hearts that see a need and offer a solution. A heart that loves money at the core has great difficulty giving things away. To be a successful family, you need to be able to embrace generosity.

6. Loss of sleep. Time is money, right? Who needs sleep? We give up many things for more money, but first to fall is generally sleep. The first advice most parenting articles give is to make sure everyone gets the proper amount of rest. Sleep is essential to our health and happiness. The pursuit of money is relentless. The man on the chase usually does so with blurry eyes and a yawn.

7. Stressed to the max. Money worries create high levels of stress. Stress is highly detrimental to your health. It can cause an unpleasant demeanor towards your wife and children. Money is at the root of more divorces than any other factor. That's something to think about.

8. One trick pony. The man obsessed with money is generally one-dimensional. Life is about experiences and the wisdom gained from them. You can talk all day about why the market will stay above 11,000, but can you hold an intelligent conversation on any other subject? Even if you can, you will quickly grow bored and guide it back to your comfort zone.

9. Justification. Sometimes we use the need for money as a justification for escape from an unhappy marriage or stressful family situations. As an example, a man with a child with special needs may use the real problem of education costs as a justification to work extra hours to meet the need. The reality is that he could make other adjustments to absorb the additional costs, but it is a convenient way to run from the issues. Choosing to be gone more is an escape, not a solution.

10. The company we keep. The people we surround ourselves with have an enormous influence on the type of parent we are. Generally when money is at the forefront of our existence, we surround ourselves with like-minded people. Consider the company you keep. Are there diverse and varied schools of thought? Do they challenge you and not just as a breadwinner? When you begin to surround yourself with high quality, well-rounded people, you will begin to see your own life take the same shape.

Sound off: What are things we can give up to gain more time with our families?

Huddle up with your wife tonight and ask her: What is something we can give up for a better family life?

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