Why Winning the Lottery Isn't God's Answer for Prospering You

You'd be hard-pressed to find someone who hasn't taken a moment to imagine what they'd do if they won the lottery. As Americans, we have a tendency to think that most, if not all, of our problems would be solved if we only had a little more money. At a minimum, we assume we'd be happier. But that's actually not the case. Research shows that people – regardless of income levels – said they'd need 25 percent more money to be happy. Research also tells us that if we get an increase in finances, we change our lifestyle to match our new income level and then quickly start thinking we need an additional bump to continue to be happy. It's a cycle that never results in contentment.

So, how do we change our relationship with money so we can be content with what we have now and not longingly wish we could win the lottery? Consider reevaluating your relationship with money.

Finding contentment with what you already have

What is your emotional relationship with money – how do you really feel about it? Oftentimes contentment and peace come by managing our expectations and finding our happiness rooted in a realistic understanding of life. Anyone can get to and maintain a healthy relationship with money at nearly any income level; it just requires evaluating deeply held views around money.

In our culture, we have bought into the lie that money is the easiest route to happiness. And the easiest, fastest, biggest way to acquire money is to win a jackpot or the lottery. We know this isn't true – the idea that winning the lottery is the key to happiness – but we still find ourselves fantasizing about what we would do if we could cash in that big ticket!

This gambler's mentality often plays out in more socially acceptable ways. We observe it in people who are always maneuvering to make a fast buck rather than execute plans that bring steady, sustainable growth. Instead of repeatedly betting on yet another high-risk venture to grow our wealth, we can invite God to guide our steps and shape our plans. What we acquire in the end is up to him. And if we can learn to trust Him and find contentment with what we have, we can reach that healthy money mindset at any earning stage.

Live a generous life – right where you're at!

Many people might dream of winning money and using a portion of it to make a difference in their community. Maybe you want to set up a scholarship fund, start a nonprofit, or even quit your job and volunteer full-time for a cause you care about. These are all noble ideas – but they also bring up another question – what is holding you back from making a difference right now?

Generosity is both the prescription and the evidence that you are on the right path to a healthy relationship with money, and thankfully living generously isn't limited to extravagant gestures or outlandish financial donations. You can support causes you care about with your time and your money right now by prioritizing your financial goals and making sure to fit those areas you care about into your financial picture. If your bank statement and your calendar don't reflect your desire to give, take steps to realign how you spend your time and money – regardless of receiving a financial windfall.

Practice gratitude

We live in a world where are constantly bombarded by consumerism – messages telling us that what we currently possess isn't enough. We see billboards on our way to and from work; magazines in the grocery store check-out aisle full of advertisements about clothing, gadgets and exotic vacations; the Internet and television parade lifestyles that are filled with things we may or may not have. If we allow ourselves to focus on messages of what we don’t have, it becomes difficult to maintain a healthy relationship with money.

The good news is there’s a relatively simple solution to get your money mindset back on track: practice gratitude. When you start to focus on all the things you could buy and places you could go if you only had more money, stop and start to think about the things in your life you’re grateful for. You can take it one step further by being generous. Generosity doesn’t have to be complex. It can be something simple that takes the focus off of you and puts it on making a difference for someone else. Gratitude reframes our wants and needs and helps us realize that God had and will continue to provide for us. This is a powerful tool to create and maintain a healthy relationship with money.

Creating a healthy money mindset is not about how much you have

Remember: A healthy relationship with money isn’t about how much you have. It’s a conscious choice to think and act differently about everything you own or might wish you did. A healthy money mindset means deciding you have enough for yourself and enough to share.

Maintaining that healthy mindset comes from regularly examining whether your views on finances and generosity line up with your values and actions. As you create that mindset, you will soon realize that winning the lottery isn’t necessary to bring you joy or contentment because you already choose to live in it every day.

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