



LIVING OUTSIDE THE MATERIAL WORLD

Marian Baltazar
Class of 1980, University of the Philippines College of Manila
AB Political Science

It is obvious that money is very important to us but have you tried doing without it and tried living outside the material world? Yes, we do talk a lot about money and what it can give us but is it really all that matters to us? Definitely we live ...in this world and we work for a living because we need money to buy us our basic needs but it doesn't necessarily mean that we would do anything just to acquire a heap of it. There are far more important things that money cannot just give us. Although it is a means to an end, there are also a few things that we cannot have with money alone.

Let us cite for instance a house ablaze with fire wherein people try to save things that are really important for them, the things that they run back too are not their valuables like their Rolex or their expensive jewelries. What is far more important for them (as far as other people are concerned) is their family photo album, the stuff toy that your grandmother gave you 20 years ago or maybe the love letters from your sweetheart, who is now your loving partner. Yes, I believe that a lot of people are living outside the material world that we live in, for they don't really have the love of money in their hearts. Even if you have millions of dollars, there are some things you'll never have with money alone. There are things that money can't buy and it's worthwhile to pursue them even as you worry about money.

Love comes first and foremost for there is no amount of money and "stuff" that can fill the void left by a lack of real love. It's the love of your partner that makes you feel safe and secure. It's another cliché, money can't buy us love but a true one. Love at its best functions regardless of whether you have a lot of money or very little. Neither can money buy us respect for it can't be bought, you have to earn it. It can't even buy us our health nor can't it even buy us back our youth. Money can buy healthcare and medicine but it cannot replace health once it's lost for you cannot rely on money to save you once your body has started to fail you.

We cannot buy success for it comes from hard work, applying your gifts and talents in the best way possible. Speaking about talent, money can definitely nurture talent but you cannot buy it for people are actually born with certain talents. The same way goes with manners and classy behavior for money doesn't confer good behavior. It cannot even buy us peace for it comes from contentment alone. Consequentially, money can't buy happiness for if it does a lot of rich people should have been happier.

The bottom line of all these is that money isn't everything in life. As the saying goes, "Money can buy a house but not a home; it can buy bed but not a sleep; it can buy clock but not time; it can buy you a book but not knowledge; it can buy you a position but not respect; it can buy you a medicine but not health; it can even buy you blood but not life." Hitherto, the biggest and the best things in your life don't have to cost you a penny. It's just that this is what living large on a small budget is all about and that's living outside the material world.

Questions for discussion:

1. Can real happiness be found in being too materialistic? Why or why not?
2. In this material world that we live in, what really matters the most to you? Explain your answer.
3. Is it worthwhile to be materialistic? Justify your answer.
4. Do you truly believe that money can't buy you true happiness? Why or why not.
5. Have you tried living outside this material world that we live in? Explain further.