

Can't Buy Me Love

*Say you don't need no diamond ring and I'll be satisfied
Tell me that you want the kind of thing that money just can't buy
I don't care too much for money, money can't buy me love*

Can't Buy Me Love, John Lennon and Paul McCartney

In the world's poorer countries, owning a second pair of shoes is considered extravagant. Being fulfilled, then, must not depend on money because true fulfillment would be completely unattainable for the poor. And frankly, here in America we know that even when you have money to spare (whether for a second pair of shoes or for a second or third car) true fulfillment still doesn't – and can't – depend on money. So what does it depend on?

This week we will see that God our Father has established a truly fulfilling goal for each of us that is achievable not through our wallets but through his Son, Jesus Christ. Let's learn together about the love God has for us, love that money can never buy.

Monday – Joy in Trials

"One joy scatters a hundred griefs." Chinese proverb

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:6-9. What do you think this rejoicing looks like that Paul is describing (i.e. rejoicing in the midst of suffering)?
2. Consider a parallel passage in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. How might you carry out its instructions in times of trouble?
3. For a real life example read Acts 16:16-40. How did Paul and Silas respond to their troubles? What effect did that have on the people around them?

Making it Personal: When you are faced with difficulty, how will you remember God?

Tuesday – Refining Fire

"Your own property is concerned when your neighbor's house is on fire." Horace, 1st c. BC Roman poet

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:6-9 (focusing on vs. 7). For what purpose does God allow hard times into our lives?
2. For a real life example, consider Psalm 73:1-28. What was Asaph going through? Describe the turning point of the whole psalm, verses 16-17. How can verse 28's conclusion guide you in your life?

Prayer Focus – Pray through Psalm 73:1-28, putting it into your own words.

Wednesday – Believing the Unseen

"The practical effect of a belief is the real test of its soundness." James A. Froude, 19th c. British writer

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:6-9 (focusing on verse 8). Think about a time when you have felt strongly about someone whom you have never met face to face?

Text Insight: Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends and traveling companions for years. His words to those of us who have not seen Jesus face to face should therefore carry special weight and authority.

2. How is faith characterized in Hebrews 11:1-2? What does this mean in daily life according to 2 Corinthians 4:16-18?
3. In John 20:24-29, Jesus gives us some encouragement despite the fact that we have never seen him face to face. How do his words impact you?

Prayer Focus: Pray that Jesus' blessing on believers would bring great joy no matter what they are facing.

Thursday – Faith's Goal

"In absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia." Anon.

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:6-9 (focusing on verse 9). What is the goal of faith? What is the origin of faith according to Hebrews 12:2-3?
2. How does Jesus tell us to pursue our goal in Luke 9:22-26?
3. Now look at Psalm 35:2-3. How can God keep your faith firm in troubled times?

Making it Personal: Have you set goals in your life that interfere with faith achieving its goal?

Friday – Faith, Hope and Love

"The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies: probably because they are generally the same people." G.K. Chesterton, 19th-20th c. British writer, philosopher and theologian

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. What do verses 1-3 tell you about the shortcomings of success?
2. In verses 4-8, we see the characteristics of true love. When have you seen one of these recently? What affect did it have on you or others?
3. Describe the maturing process for those who are growing in love according to verses 9-13.

Making it Personal: Ask God to help you mature in his love, pursuing the goal of your faith.

For the Weekend: Read 1 John 2:15-17, 3:11-24 and 4:7-5:5. What does John say about God's love, our love for God and for one another, and the need to avoid loving things the world values?