

Money, it's a gas, but also a burden

MARK PAVILONS

Every day is a bank account, and time is our currency. No one is rich, no one is poor, we've got 24 hours each.??Christopher Rice

If this whole existence thing is all about money, then we're in a heap of trouble. After 50-odd years on this planet, it only recently dawned on me that it's only money. By that I mean daily living is expensive, and things cost money. We can't fret about it or worry ourselves into the fetal position. Sure, we have to have enough to live, to pay our bills and keep that rather expensive roof over our heads. We have to feed our always-hungry offspring, who want the good stuff, and seldom ask for Brussels sprouts and broccoli. We have to put fuel in our ever-hungry, polluting vehicles. We also have to wear socks, unless of course you're one of those forever young beatniks who wears sandals no matter what season it is! Alan Watts concurred when he said there are many people accumulating what they think is vast wealth, but it's only money. While living pay cheque to pay cheque is my reality, it used to cause me a lot of sleepless nights. What if something happened? What if we needed a new roof, a new car, a new body part? What if? Experts argue that we should all have at least three months' salary socked away as savings, as our rainy day fund. I'm not sure how many actually have it, some nine months into a pandemic. But again, let's say we worked our butts off, putting in extra hours, holding down an extra job, just to sock away a little something. That something would be eaten up in a flash, in the face of one of those emergencies. So, does all that time and effort just go into plugging the hole in the leaky dam? Those rainy days seem to combine together and become that proverbial storm of the century, or at least storm of the month. It must be quite lucrative being an umbrella salesperson these days. Life, it's been said, is a game and money is how we keep score. But just who's keeping score? The Big Guy has no use for money or any earthly possessions. All he cares about is what is in your heart and soul. And good, old Ben Franklin said money doesn't fill a vacuum, it creates one. Our forefathers seldom had full pockets, but that didn't hold them back. In fact, empty pockets forced them to make a living and succeed. So, let's get some advice from a certain historic book. The bible is packed with more than 2,000 scriptures about money and possessions. That's twice as many bible verses about money than faith and prayer combined. In fact, 16 out of 38 of Jesus's parables deal with money and possessions and one out of 10 verses in the Gospels deal with money. Matthew 6:24: No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. Luke 16:11-12: If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? So basically my brothers and sisters, money is a tool and ownership is meaningless. Possessions come with a great deal of weight to bear. The earth, our own subdivision lot or rural estate, doesn't really belong to us. It was never ours to own. Ever since man began laying stake to real estate, building structures and creating wealth, it paved the way for the strange, money-motivated journey we're on. The misconceptions behind having a lot of money include: We will be happier; we will be content; we don't have to work, or worry or lose sleep. We can eat at the best restaurants, drive the nicest cars and sit on a beach somewhere, being served tropical drinks of every colour. Is this how we describe paradise? Is this how we were meant to live? At this point in our wealth management journey, money is still all powerful. Fact: my children will need \$1 million to buy a house. Fact: they likely won't be able to get it. The money I have socked away will act as a salve over any new wounds. It will heal the scar of the day. But it will never give me eternal youth, or ensure immortality for my children and their children yet to come. When I think of the best moments of my life, they seldom involved a lot of money. We were lucky to have enjoyed years of summer family vacations. I smile when I think of the board games, poker nights, Christmas tree trimmings, family dinners, playing with our dogs at the lake, fishing, flying a kite, the smell of summer, bullrushes, a baby's laughter, the smell of coffee, hotdogs, potato chips, riding a bicycle, eating an ice cream cone and sharing the last bit with your dog, letting your daughter paint your nails, playing with toys, listening to music with the windows open, putting a quarter in a pinball machine, taking a photo of the sunset, a sad dog movie, BBQ with friends, snowflakes. Money, it's a crime. Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie. Will we even use money on the dark side of the moon?

