

News Story Summary

A recent study conducted by the University of British Columbia seems to show that money cannot buy happiness. The study did reveal that people feel a little happier when they spend their money on time-saving services like a house cleaner, lawn care, or grocery delivery. They compared this to the way people feel when they spend their money on material purchases – “things” – and buying things does not boost people’s emotions as we might expect. Elizabeth Dunn, a professor at the University of British Columbia and an author of the study, said, “We hypothesized that people would be happier if they spent money to buy themselves out of the things they don’t like doing.” Their hypothesis proved to be true. When people in the study spent money on time-saving services, they said that they felt more positive emotion. “Buying yourself out of [tasks] like mowing the lawn or cleaning the bathroom — these were pretty small, mundane expenditures, and yet we see them making a difference in people’s happiness,” Dunn says.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term “can money buy happiness”.)

Focus Attention

To supplement the Focus Attention idea, begin by asking the questions under Discuss: *What is one thing that would devastate you if you lost it? What is one thing that you think would bring you contentment if you gained it? Say: Some people might feel that gaining certain things can bring them happiness or contentment.* Share the news story summary. Then continue with Explain under Focus Attention.

Challenge

To supplement the Summarize and Challenge ideas, remind the group of the news article. Stress that finding our joy in things other than God can never satisfy us. Note that even gaining time-saving services to lighten our schedule – these things can only bring a temporary satisfaction. Then continue with Challenge under Summarize and Challenge.