

Hitting the Jackpot (1)

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You are on summer vacation in Florida and you make a run to the 7-Eleven for some Pepsi and chips. Your change is \$1.25, so you keep the quarter and buy a lottery ticket with the dollar. After all, the jackpot this week is \$87 million. So what's wrong with that?

Pardon me for asking, but what induced you to buy the lottery ticket? Were you wisely investing in your retirement? Was it humanitarianism? After all, about 35% of gambling revenue goes to the Florida educational system. Or did you see that billboard on I-75 that said: ***This Week's Jackpot: \$87 Million!!!***

Let's face it; people buy lottery tickets because they hope to get rich. In fact, statistics show that people buy fewer tickets when the jackpot is *only* \$7-10 million, but spending escalates dramatically when the pay-off heads into the tens of millions. People who play the lottery don't just want to get rich, they want to get *filthy rich!*

This truth alone should repel the faithful Christian who respects the words of Paul: *"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition"* (1 Tim 6:9).

"But it's *only* a dollar!" you protest. True, it's only a dollar that buys you a whopping one-in-20 million chance on a \$10 million jackpot (only 50% of the wagers goes to the lottery players; the other money funds administrative costs, commission to lottery outlets, and education). Why in the world would an otherwise sane person have the slightest interest in pursuing something that they only had a one-in-20 million (or worse) chance to obtain?

"Well *somebody's* got to win!" is the next comeback. True, one of those 19,999,999 other tickets has an equal chance to win. Not good odds, is it? But let's assume you are the lucky one. What then?

Well, all your problems will be solved. No more worries, no more hassles, no more job pressures. Life will suddenly be hunky-dory. Money will do that, won't it? Surely the Bible says that somewhere, doesn't it? *"The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep"* (Ecc 5:12).

Lottery winners often buy *misfortune* – envy, divorce, seclusion, aimlessness, alcoholism – with their fortune. Let us not be so naive.