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The fast paced life and major shifts in socioeconomic front witnessed in the 21st century has necessitated major re-alliances and re-alignments of what people consider important for their wellbeing and survival. Principles and philosophies that not so long ago served to preserve the social fabric have been discarded, and their place taken by the inordinate self-directed obsession of monetary and wealth accumulation that is characteristic of most people living in this generation.

While money and wealth accumulation are valid indicators of economic progress, the methodologies and strategies that are employed to gain them continues to raise more questions than answers. Today, more than ever before, people have become increasingly obsessed with their work for purposes of accumulating more wealth to an extent that family and societal values are relegated to a distant position in the hierarchy of needs perceived to be of importance. It is against this background that this paper purposes to evaluate by comparing and contrasting the various factors and issues that will assist us to understand what, between money and family values, should be of primary importance.

It is indeed true that the dream of nearly everyone in this world is to become financially independent and happy, and money is largely viewed as the only silver conduit to financial freedom and enjoyment of life. However, it must be said that this kind of thinking is grounded on misconstrued facts and perceptions that only borders the bizarre. The foremost requirement for individuals aspiring to become financially stable and lead a happy life is to learn how to spend and save the money accrued over their lifetimes and, more importantly, how to invest the financial resources to attain stability.

These valuable lessons are best internalized at the family level, and family values play a significant role in molding the principles and perceptions of how young children will utilize their resources later in life depending on what they learn from their parents and older siblings. If the parents are careless with how they spend their money, chances are that the children will internalize that in their value system and will likely become careless spenders later on. As such, family values becomes the epicenter of shaping individual behavior and actions towards the attainment of a certain good, while money assumes the position of facilitating the attainment of a certain good such as that of becoming financially independent. Establishing strong family values undoubtedly creates a foundation which permits people, especially young children, to make wise choices on their own.

Indeed, the values espoused at the family level not only acts as a moral guide to the members of a family, but also functions as the cornerstone of their own conscience. It is primarily the family that functions to instill such values as integrity, respect, forgiveness, self-discipline, and honesty, among others. In the absence of these values, money loses its place in making our lives more fulfilling by virtue of assisting us to meet our needs. Money, in its holistic form and nature, can neither be used to buy the values that are so fundamental to our very own existence such as self-discipline and honesty nor can it be used to buy some states of wellbeing such as happiness and health. For instance, movie celebrities are not only known for their fat wallets and fame, but also for their erratic behaviors such as drug abuse, law-breaking, and high-level divorces. On the contrary, the internalization of good family values into people's lives allows them the opportunity to use

money to enhance the attainment of states of wellbeing that guarantee happiness and health.

As such, money assumes a secondary role of making our lives more fulfilling, and may indeed miss out on playing such a role in the absence of good family values. In line with the above, family values helps us discern what is good from the bad, and offers us the opportunity to develop our feelings of self-worth and identity. However, character and self-worth cannot be measured or evaluated in terms of dollars or monetary predisposition. It is true that money can bring security and comfort, but this should not be misconstrued to imply that an individual with lots of money is valued or evaluated using the monetary yardstick. For example, drug lords and bank robbers have a lot of money, but certainly aren't perceived as people of upright moral values by individuals who know what they do. The fact that society defines people by their actions and behavior, not by their wealth, therefore assumes a paramount role in this discussion. Certainly, the family is one of the most essential facets of an individual's life, and the values transferred to the individual by the family institution define his self-worth and identity.

As such, it is important to first entrench responsible actions and behavior at the family level before thinking about what money can do to transform lives in ways such as getting a good education, donating to charity, or establishing a business venture. It can be safely argued that family values assists individuals to develop their own world views in ways which money can possibly never achieve. The worldviews that people form are basic to their very own existence since they helps them traverse various life

challenges by formulating strategies and frameworks for proper conflict resolution and coping mechanisms. It is universally agreeable that a weak, negative, or disjointed worldview only serves to occasion more problems that cannot be solved by the financial capability of an individual.

For example, Mike Tyson was a great and astute boxer, but his negative worldview arising from his poor upbringing as a child brought him problems with the law enforces that could not be solved by his vast financial resources, resulting in his jailing. This example demonstrates that family values are extremely important in assisting an individual to develop a positive worldview, which inarguably goes a long way to define the capacity of such an individual in developing relationships with others and in conflict resolution. Money and wealth cannot assist an individual in developing good relationships or solving conflicts that are so prevalent in modern society in the absence of family values and, as such, they only assume a secondary role as far as values are concerned. It is a well known fact that family values are affected by the socioeconomic realities within the family setup, and that money is an important indicator of the socioeconomic status of a family.

Indeed, some individuals use this line of thinking to conclude that families with strong economic status have strong family values, implying that money and the wealth it accumulates are the foremost determinants of a family's capacity to have good family values. However, this is a fallacy that is not only wrong in its interpretation, but has served to instill a misplaced perception that money is everything. In India, for example, the Caste system aligns families with their social economic status, but no evidence has to date been adduced to the effect that families within the lower castes have lesser

family values than those in the upper levels of the system. As a matter of fact, it is more rational to argue along the continuum that family values determines the socioeconomic status of individuals since evidence can be adduced to support this argument.

For example, children from families which abhor alcoholism and drug abuse are more likely to become successful in life than those reared by alcoholic parents. As such, family values are more important than money. All in all, the above discussion has demonstrated why family values must take precedence over monetary considerations. Money is good, but it is not the panacea for leading a prosperous and fulfilling life. However, the capitalistic nature of modern society coupled with misleading media reports and advertisements are entrenching a new angle in our perceptions about what money can do for us to a point where the position of family values in the social matrix is increasingly being threatened by our compulsive love for money.

When parents start to worship money, children will have no alternative other than to view money as of primary importance to the values that will help them later in life. This trend should be reversed at all costs.