

Quotations on Money

“No one can earn a million dollars honestly.” (William Jennings Bryan)

“The rich are the scum of the earth in every country.” (G. K. Chesterton)

“Behind every great fortune there is a crime.” (Balzac)

“The love of money is the root of all evil.” (I Timothy 6:8-10)

“The lack of money is the root of all evil.” (Mark Twain)

“The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilization, the one sound spot in our social conscience. Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honour, generosity, and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness. Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people.” (George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara*)

“If a man runs after money, he's money-mad, if he keeps it, he's a capitalist; if he spends it, he's a playboy; if he doesn't get it, he's a ne'er-do-well; if he doesn't try to get it, he lacks ambition. If he gets it without working for it, he's a parasite; and if he accumulates it after a lifetime of hard work, people call him a fool who never got anything out of life.” (Vic Oliver)

“A neighbor not long ago told me that her husband was one of eighteen nephews and nieces of a man who at his death had left a trust that gave each of them, when they turned twenty-one, an annual income of \$60,000 each. Apart from her husband, who went on to medical school, not one of these legatees finished college. The result of their uncle's generous benefaction was to breed a set of drug addicts, full-time beach bums, ne'er-do-wells, and other human disasters.” (Joseph Epstein, “Money is Funny,” p. 311)

“It is a socialist idea that making profits is a vice; I consider the real vice is making losses.” (Winston Churchill)

“Economic efficiency consists in making things that are worth more than they cost.” (J. M. Clark)

Martin Luther: “There is on earth no greater enemy of man, after the Devil, than a gripe-money and usurer, for he wants to be God over all men Usury is a great, huge monster, like a werewolf ... And since we break on the wheel and behead highwaymen, murderers, and housebreakers, how much more ought we to break on the wheel and kill ... hunt down, curse, and behead all usurers!”

“There is no money in poetry, but then there is no poetry in money, either.” (Robert Graves)

“Why doesn’t someone write a poem on money? Nobody does any-thing but abuse it. There’s hardly a good word for money to be found in literature. The poets and writers have been needy devils and thought to brave out their beggary by pretending to despise it.” (John Jay Chapman)

“Only the gauche, the illiterate, the frightened and the pastless destroy money.” (A minor character in Faulkner Snopes, *The Mansion*, quoted in Joseph Epstein, “Money is Funny,” *A Line Out for a Walk* [New York: Norton, 1991], p. 308)

“Money never starts an idea; it is the idea that starts the money.” (W. J. Cameron, q in Kurian 108)

“The only way to keep score in business is to add up how much money you make.” (Harry Helmsley, q in Kurian 109)

“Money is human happiness *in abstracto*; consequently he who is no longer capable of happiness *in concreto* sets his whole heart on money.” (Schopenhauer, quoted in Joseph Epstein, “Money is Funny,” *A Line Out for a Walk* [New York: Norton, 1991], p. 310)

“The urbane activity with which a man receives money is really marvellous, considering that we so earnestly believe money to be the root of all earthly ills, and that on no account can a monied man enter heaven. Ah! how cheerfully we consign ourselves to perdition!” (Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Ch. 1)

“If not outright poverty, then a genuine absence of interest in wealth was felt to be an assumed vow for anyone who had taken up the life of art or intellect.” (Joseph Epstein, “Money is Funny,” *A Line Out for a Walk* [New York: Norton, 1991], p. 306)

J.P. Morgan, during 1912-13 Congressional Committee hearings. Asked by committee counsel Samuel Untermyer whether it wasn't true that money was always loaned out based on one's assets, Morgan replied, “No, sir, the first thing is character.” And: if there was someone he couldn't trust, he wouldn't loan him any money, even if he had “all the bonds in Christendom” [q in Thomas 145].

“*Interest*, money which bankers earn by tightening their shoelaces, yawning, and testing teakwood surfaces for dust” (Guy Davenport, “Making it Uglier to the Airport,” *Every Force Evolves a Form*, 1987)

In 19th century US, bankers were “the favorite bogeymen in rural political demonology. So venomous was the mood that several western states outlawed bankers, and Texas banned them altogether until 1904.” (Chernow 72)

“The business of a moneylender ... has nowhere, nor at anytime, been a popular one. Those who have the resolution to sacrifice the present to the future, are natural objects of envy to those who have sacrificed the future to the present. The children who have eaten

their cake are the natural enemies of the children who have theirs. While the money is hoped for, and for a short time after it has been received, he who lends it is a friend and a benefactor: by the time the money is spent, and the evil hour of reckoning is come, the benefactor is found to have changed his nature, and to have put on the tyrant and the oppressor. It is an oppression for a man to reclaim his own money; it is none to keep it from him.” (Jeremy Bentham, “Defense of Usury” [1787], quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* 8.9.84)

“As H. L. Mencken observed, the businessman is the only sort of person who, when he obtains the object of his labors, namely, making a lot of money, tries to make it appear that it was not the object of his labors” (Martin Fridson 2000, p. 4).

“The World Bank recently calculated that 80 percent of the wealth of the United States is made up of intangible assets, most notably, its system of property rights, its efficient judicial system, and the skills, knowledge, and trust embedded within its society.” (Source: Michael Beckley, “China’s Century,” <http://tinyurl.com/6p73djb>. Data here: World Bank, “Where Is the Wealth of Nations?” <http://tinyurl.com/dcgum>, p. 4.)

But please do not think that I am not fond of banks,
Because I think they deserve our appreciation and thanks,
Because they perform a valuable public service ie in eliminating
the jackasses who go around saying that health and happiness are
everything and money isn't essential,
Because as soon as they have to borrow some unimportant money
to maintain their health and happiness they starve to death so they
can't go around any more sneering at good old money, which is
nothing short of providential.
(Ogden Nash, “Bankers are just like anybody else, except richer”)

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