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## THE TRUTH ABOUT MONEY

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“Let’s pass over to the really rich—how often the occasions they look just like the poor! When they travel abroad they must restrict their baggage, and when haste is necessary, they dismiss their entourage. And those who are in the army, how few of their possessions they get to keep . . .”

—SENECA, *ON CONSOLATION TO HELVIA*, 12. 1.b-2

The author F. Scott Fitzgerald, who often glamorized the lifestyles of the rich and famous in books like *The Great Gatsby*, opens one of his short stories with the now classic lines: “Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me.” A few years after this story was published, his friend Ernest Hemingway teased Fitzgerald by writing, “Yes, they have more money.”

That’s what Seneca is reminding us. As someone who was one of the richest men in Rome, he knew firsthand that money only marginally changes life. It doesn’t solve the problems that people without it seem to think it will. In fact, no material possession will. External things can’t fix internal issues.

We constantly forget this—and it causes us so much confusion and pain. As Hemingway would later write of Fitzgerald, “He thought [the rich] were a special glamorous race and when he found they weren’t it wrecked him as much as any other thing that wrecked him.” Without a change the same will be true for us.