

Succeeding With Your Money...

Scriptural Principles for Biblical Finances!

Making money work for the Lord.

Becoming a good steward.

Having the blessing of the Lord.

Enjoying the blessing of giving.

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Preface

Making right use of the money God gives us is one of the greatest challenges of life. We will be held accountable as stewards of all that He has given us. To succeed with our money is a great responsibility. Every Christian should strive to succeed in this area for the glory of God.

If the average family lives a full life time, and if the Lord tarries, and things continue as they are at the present time, most families will handle over a million dollars in those years. Often the amount will even be much more than that. Yet 95% of those retiring in recent years (according to national figures) retire with very little saved. Many have failed in their support of God's work, and also in saving toward their retirement. Failure in those two areas goes "*hand in hand*" in most cases.

If a family would follow the teachings of the Word of God and the concepts set forth in the following pages they would succeed and not fail in the use of money. Which will it be for you? I trust that many families will study the following pages through, and follow these guidelines diligently. We need to become good managers of that which God has given us. May God bless this study to many across America.

Dr. Edward Watke, Jr. Evangelist

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Success with Money

Introduction

Having enough money through wise management of available income is what we mean by success. Financial responsibility is a very important part of every Christian's testimony. When a Christian fails with funds, or any ability that God has given him, then he is a *"blight"* on the Name of the Lord.

There are three basic things we must grasp:

1. Money is important. It represents an important part of your life: your hopes and dreams.
2. The planning of money use is more important than the money itself.
3. Your desire for the best plan for you and your money is the most important aspect of your stewardship.

Charles Simeon wrote, *"On all our possessions, on our time, and talents, and influence, and property, God has written..., 'Occupy till I come'."*

Success Comes from a Right Attitude

1. Yield Your All -- Genesis 13:12-18

- a. God blessed when Abraham yielded his all to the will of God. (Hebrews 11: 8-10).
- b. Success is wrapped up in the word "yield" (Romans 12:1,2; Romans 6:13; II Corinthians 9:6-8).
- c. Yield as *"dying to self"* and being alive to God (Romans 6:6-11). Such *"dying to self"* will cause a holy stewardship, and a godly attitude in it all (Titus 2:11-14). We will be concerned to "save" in order to have to give.

2. Face Your Responsibility.

You must have sincerity of heart, not lacking ambition and industry. Many do not have a genuine interest in their work, or in how they manage the income they receive from that work. They are not sincere about doing the best they can with what the Lord has given them.

You must commit all your life to Him, and be the kind of person to whom Christ can give His blessings (Joshua 1:8,9; 1:3-4). Having money or making money is not sinful, or wrong. Having the profit motive in mind is not wrong, provided we are *"doing all in His will, for his glory"* (I Corinthians 10:31,32).

The ability to make money with money often proves God-given blessing, and the right of leadership in another area. (Example: A pastor must in the very nature of his work be involved in leadership in the use of money. If he cannot handle money to good ends in his personal finances, then he surely is not "fit" to lead the church as the overseer. (Acts 20:32-34)

The profit motive is present in our desire for rewards in a day to come. It is an honest, legitimate, and Scriptural motive for the Christian to possess (Luke 19:11-19,26; Proverbs 10:4; 22:29).

Success Comes by Freedom from Serious Errors

1. Incorrect Concept of "Saving."

You cannot call it "saving" when the saving is for the purpose of "spending." You cannot call it "saving" when you save some percentage on a purchase just made. You did not "save" in the true sense (as we are now thinking), you spent some money. But it is good to buy things on sale when the purchase is to meet a real, bonified need.

All the advertising media today urges us to save so we can spend it later on something we want. That is not the way to succeed with your money. Money saved travels toward you, but money spent travels away from you.

Christmas clubs and vacation clubs are not "saving" clubs, they are "spending" clubs. You cannot mix "saving money" and "spending money" and have success with money.

2. Competition with Others.

Why do people try to *"keep up with the Joneses?"* This is one of the basic reasons why many people are in unnecessary debt. Often it is from fear of criticism. We fear what others might say or think of us. We must do our very best with what we have, not with what we do not have.

Pride also causes us to secure debt to purchase things we do not need, or even really want, in order to keep up with others and project the image we want them to see. We want to appear richer than the "Joneses" (I Timothy 6:10).

We must be clothed with **humility**. You cannot be proud and humble at the same time. If we entertain pride instead of humility then we will try to keep up with others. Humility is a *"true evaluation of oneself."* It is not under-evaluating oneself, nor is it over-evaluating oneself. It is being honest with oneself (James 4:8-10, 13-17; I Peter 5:5,6)

3. Misuse of Credit.

When we buy on time, or credit, we are purchasing on time we do not have or can't presume upon having in the future (James 4:13-17). Credit buying could well cause anyone to end up with a "goose egg," instead of a "nest egg! "

Buying on credit is not a moral issue of right and wrong, nor is it wrong to charge interest. When someone loans money he deserves an appropriate "rent" for the use of his money as he would for a house that is rented.

It has been proven that two out of three families in the United States purchase by using someone else's money. That is, they buy on credit. Not all such buying is bad. The word **"usury"** really means "to use." It is the fee paid for using someone else's property or money. The word "interest" comes from a Latin word, meaning *"to be between, to be different, to be of importance."*

4. Here are some historical theories about interest.

- a. The sacrifice or abstinence theory: This teaches that the one who is the lender forfeits certain things in life to accumulate the money he loans. Therefore, because of his sacrifice, he has a right to the reward of interest for the use of his money. It is a reward for his sacrifice.
- b. The time theory: Since the buyer wants things now, but cannot afford them now, he feels that he is getting extra value in having these things now. He pays for that extra value in present possession by paying the interest charges. Time is involved, both in immediately having the things money buys by charging, and because the lender's money is being *"tied up."*
- c. The productive theory: This theory has to do with a nation's ability to produce. In all production there are three things involved. They are the combined elements of **capital, management, and labor**. In this joint project

to produce what the consumer wants, the *laborer* gets wages for his effort, *management* receives salaries and profits for their risks, and *capital* receives interest for its investment in buildings and equipment.

The productive theory is proof that there is nothing wrong with charging interest, receiving interest, or having a profit motive. Because men who made money put it to use as capital, we therefore have the multitude of factories and businesses where people work. A nation is robbed of productivity when money is not put to work. When capital, or money is invested, then the principle of credit and interest is immediately involved.

Credit buying is here to stay, until the Lord comes or until we have an economic crash in our nation. It is an accepted part of our economy. Paying for credit that is, paying interest charges is no less honorable today than paying for food, clothing, and shelter. But the Christian should be very, very careful how he uses this privilege.

5. Why should those who loan money receive interest?

- a. Because they have costs in the use of their money. If they borrowed the money to reloan it, they have to pay a price for the money they are loaning. In any case, they could have invested that money in something else that would yield a return.
- b. They have clerical, management, sales and advertising costs.
- c. They have a right to have a profit from its use.

6. There are various ways to borrow money.

- a. With a large down payment, with a very short term of repayment time (90 days, 6 months).
- b. With a small down payment, with a long term contract to pay the balance. Interest charges can total more than the amount of the original loan. In no-down-payment borrowing ultimately you may pay heavily for doing this. You can't get something for nothing.
- c. The balloon-payment method. The repayment amounts are small at first and become larger later. You may be urged to refinance, thus beginning another "round" of interest. Charges can accelerate beyond your ability to pay. Uncontrolled credit buying can be a merry-go-round where "dollars and sense" do not go together. Credit buying can be a blessing or a curse. Consider that sin comes from uncontrolled or mishandled blessing.

7. There are some "*brakes*" you should apply to credit buying.

- a. Never agree to buy something, (sign the credit papers) when it will cause you to "eat into" your savings unless you have the personal discipline to repay the amount your borrowed from yourself and thus save the interest you would have paid to someone else.
- b. Never agree to buy something that will hurt your present standard of living.
- c. Never agree to buy something that will send you into heavy debt.
- d. You should never have payments on credit purchases that will be more than 20% of your income (except your house mortgage).

- e. You should establish a "buffer" or savings fund so you can pay cash for the things you need.
- f. Consider a charge account a "curse," not a blessing, and never use it except in extreme necessity.
- g. When you are behind, working to keep up with payments you have to make to pay off debts, you become a "negative" thinker.
- h. Break the habit of being "able" to make payments to many creditors, but never being "able" to make installment payments to yourself in the form of savings to invest and a buffer fund.

8. Procrastination about your future.

One of our worst enemies is indecision and delay. There are many things we plan to do in life, that we just never do. Procrastination is a terrible enemy.

People's response to saving is like their response to spiritual things. They are indifferent, ignore, and delay. When we shelve the plan to succeed with our money and plan to "*think about it*" (*later*) we are already doomed to failure.

About nine out of ten people are failures with their money. They have no money working for them at all. What are you going to do?

After Tithing, Pay Yourself First

Pay Yourself First

Immediately after tithing, and after giving offerings above your tithes, **you should stand first in line before all your creditors.** Remember what we have already studied about our accountability as stewardship of **all** we earn (Malachi 3:8-10; Luke 6:38; I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 9:6-8).

If, for instance, you planned to save \$20,000 over the next 20 years, and then planned to put that \$20,000 to work for another 20 years (at compound interest), your result would be about \$80,000. If you delay this, then each year you cut yourself short a great amount. \$20,000 not put to work at 6-10 % interest represents a loss of \$1,200 to \$2,000 a year, plus the compounding of that interest money.

Most people will not plan to save. They will plan to spend, and may do that very well. But we must also plan to save. In order to plan you must view your whole life, and then set down a definite, concrete plan to succeed.

Save to Have a Working Capital

1. Set aside 10% of what remains after tithes and taxes.
2. Do it regularly, without fail.
3. Invest in such a way that the money works for you.

Savings Chart

(Calculated at 8% Interest)

Annual Income*	Amount Yearly	Number of Years	Principal Amount	Plus Int. & Comp.	Total Yield
\$7,000	\$700	10 years	\$7,000	\$3,681	\$10,681
		20 years	\$14,000	\$20,163	\$34,163
		30 years	\$21,000	\$65,440	\$86,440
\$8,000	\$800	10 years	\$8,000	\$4,074	\$12,074
		20 years	\$16,000	\$22,875	\$38,875
\$10,000	\$1,000	10 years	\$10,000	\$5,184	\$15,184
		20 years	\$20,000	\$28,888	\$48,888

(Calculated at 12% Interest)

\$20,000	\$2,000	10 years	\$20,000	\$19,309	\$39,309
		20 years	\$40,000	\$121,397	\$161,397
\$25,000	\$2,500	10 years	\$25,000	\$24,136	\$49,136
		20 years	\$50,000	\$151,746	\$201,746
		30 years	\$75,000	\$600,731	\$675,731

*After tithe and taxes

(Think of what these amounts could be if you are willing to save regularly for upwards to forty years. You would have a lot of money you could then invest in the Lord's work.)

1. Consider the feasibility of church or Bible college bonds.

- You are helping God's work (not the world's), by providing the church or Bible college with working capital.
- Your money will be returned with interest.
- Reinvest the interest (and the interest earned by the interest).
- Be sure you choose a fundamental, separatistic work.

2. Insurance is Not a Savings Program.

Most people who buy insurance as their savings program do so because that is the only way they can get themselves to save anything.

- Insurance pays the lowest return of any type of investment.
- In the crucial years when insurance is needed, term insurance is most practical.

3. Insure to provide replacement for the income you risk losing in the future.

Buy reducing term insurance, and direct the increasing difference into your savings program. You can't mix insurance protection and savings and do well. You are buying coverage of your wage earning power of a number of years and then investing the difference in places God would direct you.

4. You Can't Save Out of "Leftovers."

Most families try to save out of what's left, after bills, debts, credit card purchases, revolving credit purchases, utilities, groceries, housing, medical care, insurance, etc., are cared for. When you try to "save out of the rest" that is left, you find there is **no "rest"** left. You have already spent your money. Maybe you have stolen from God besides.

How much money do you want to save? If you are going to save you can't do it without establishing yourself as your "number one creditor." Don't pay others without paying yourself first. If it is necessary and possible, reduce your present payments. Pay yourself first!

Prepare to Discipline Yourself

1. Distinguish Between Necessities and Wants.

- a. Uncontrolled spending ruins any savings plan. Carry out a good plan.
- b. Uncontrolled spending hinders most people from ever starting a savings program.
- c. Consider your actual needs and seriously judge your desires.
- d. Put all spending under control, and pay yourself first! A disciple is a disciplined person!

2. Have a Plan to Succeed!

Apply this simple formula to what remains after giving and taxes.

Set aside 10% for your savings.

Set aside 20% for your buffer fund.

Live off the 70% you have left.

- a. *Establish a buffer fund.* It will receive 20% of the money that remains after giving and taxes. Use the money that accumulates to make major purchases and avoid going into debt.
 - * Pay any debts you already have (car payments, furniture, revolving charge, credit cards, etc.).
 - * Plan to get control of your money. How? By spending the 20% buffer fund only on debts, until you get them paid. (Even if they total more, get them under control.)
 - * After the debts are paid, go on cash accounting and put the buffer fund into a separate saving account. *This is savings to spend on needs.*
 - * Save for major appliances, furniture, and other large items. Save toward a car, and be earning interest on your money besides.
 - * Buy short term bonds, or savings certificates (5 years) to save for the next car and use the buffer fund as a "gainer."
 - * Buy carefully. Look for needed items "on sale." Be sure they are needed!
 - * Never use charge cards or credit cards, except for accounting purposes. Charging items you need and for which you have the money in hand can delay actual payment for up to two months, during which time your money continues to draw interest. Pay the total amount due when the bill comes.
- b. *Live on the 70% of what remains after giving and taxes.* It should be sufficient for your housing, utilities, food, medical care, insurance expense, gasoline, clothing, and incidentals. (You actually are using 90% for living for the buffer fund is actually part of your living, but used to control debt.)
 - * Don't pay more than 20-30% of total income for housing.
 - * Curb unnecessary, costly eating habits.
 - * Pay all car expenses, except vehicle replacement, from this 70%. Control any desire for a car that is above your means.
 - * Avoid purchasing "things" for "things" sake (I John 2:1517; Luke 12: 15). Curb all unnecessary clothing purchases. Buy sale items, sew, and make what you can. Pay cash for all clothing.
 - * Prepare a practical, workable budget to apply the 70% to the needs of your own family.

3. Make Wise Use of Your Time.

- a. Time is like money, use it wisely.

- b. Time can, if properly put to work, increase your income.
- c. Set a goal for use of your time. Don't kill time, work it "to death."
- d. Set a goal toward self-improvement. Work on some educational goals in the field of your present endeavor. Plan to become indispensable to your present boss.

4. Don't Consider Your Home Your Investment and Savings Plan.

- a. Don't make a house purchase that will jeopardize your savings of 10%.
- b. Consider any gain from your home (in value increase) just an extra blessing along the way.
- c. Future property tax increases could destroy your savings program.
- d. Don't allow the "glitter and thrill" of house improvements to become your savings program.
- e. Remember: ***"Keep a part of each dollar you earn - make it work for you!"***
- f. Build up and maintain a good buffer fund reserve for medical expenses or any unexpected outlays of money for the home.

5. Plan Your Savings and Work Your Plan.

It takes three things to succeed: desire, a plan, and time. As you are a yielded, *giving* servant, you will see God's blessing and goodness in your financial plans. God has a plan for you. You need to work that plan. His plan is that you succeed.

- a. You must have determination.
- b. You must have consistency.
- c. You must recognize your right to succeed in the will of God. I believe God wants His people to succeed -- spiritually, vocationally, and financially.
- d. You must resist temptation to stop saving and start spending what you save. Start doing it for a week, then a month, and then keep on doing it. Consider how great your plan is, keep the goal in mind. Consider how much you could lose if you quit! Toward the end of the plan you will get back out of it two to twenty, even many times as much as you have put in.

• Example: Go back to the chart on page twelve. Someone with a twenty-year plan who is saving \$700 a year, and skips the fifth and sixth years, will have lost a total of \$4,418.00 at the end of twenty years. Not only will he be missing the \$1400 he should have invested, but also the \$3018 his money would have earned at 8% compounded interest.

Your Plan Can Provide Collateral in Time of Extreme Need.

1. Use your savings for "power" to get a commercial bank note at the lowest rate possible.
2. Use your savings to help negotiate short-term purchases to be paid out of the buffer fund (30 or 60 or 90 days same-as-cash).
3. Use your savings as "power" to secure a car loan at commercial rates. (To

be paid quarterly with interest figured on the unpaid balance.) When the car is the security, it requires a higher interest rate.

Example #1.

Car is purchased at \$2000 (cash). \$1500 is borrowed on a commercial note at 9.13%. Bonds (from savings) are used as collateral. Payment terms are 2 years or 8 quarters at \$187.50 quarterly, plus interest. Interest is \$34.27 the first quarter, \$30.00 the second quarter, \$25.67 the third quarter, \$21.39 the fourth quarter, \$17.11 the fifth quarter, \$12.83 the sixth quarter, \$8.55 the seventh quarter, and \$4.27 the eighth quarter. This would be a total of \$154.09 interest. These payments are made from the buffer fund.

Example #2.

A two year, \$1500 auto loan is taken out at an annual rate of 22.94% A.P.R.(annual percentage rate). Total interest charge is \$421.06.

It is imperative that Christians seek to stay out of debt, and make much better use of their money for the glory of God.

A Proper Value System

1. If we have a proper value system of money and its use, the following things will be true.

- a. We will acknowledge that all we possess belongs to God. (Job 1:21)
- b. We will make wisdom the main objective in life.
- c. Wisdom that only God can give. Looking at life from God's perspective will change our concepts of what is really important in life. Instead of using money just to acquire things, our chief goal becomes communicating the love of God by meeting the needs of others as God enables us (Ephesians 4:28). If my primary goal is to make money or get the things that money will buy, then I have a wrong value system.

2. Giving God the Tithe is a Reminder that All I Have Belongs to Him.

We should learn to give above the tithe. Tithing is just the beginning of giving. We must give offerings above the tithe (Malachi 3 8-11; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 8:1-9; II Corinthians 9:7-9).

3. God has Promised Only to Supply Our Basic Needs.

Food, clothing and shelter are basic needs which God has promised to supply. Anything more than these only indicates God's blessings, over and above. (I Timothy 6:8; Philippians 4:11) We must learn to recognize the difference between needs and wants.

4. By God's Grace We Must Become Flexible Enough to Adjust Naturally to Unexpected Gains or Losses.

One key to financial ease is to adjust the basic level of living to the lowest point of income. This will permit wise giving and wise investing instead of having to pay old debts.

5. Develop to the Fullest the Means that God has Given Us to Earn, in Order to Give as God Directs.

All of the Word of God warns us about laziness. God expects us to take all that he gives us and use it to its fullest (Romans 12:11).

6. Learn How to Make Wise Investments.

Many Christians feel that it is wrong to invest their money. Jesus refuted this when he called the man who hid his talent of gold a "wicked and slothful servant" (Matthew 25:26,27).

7. Develop a Sensitive Attitude to the Needs of Others. A Christian is to be concerned for others. He is to be observant of other's needs (I Timothy 6:19; I John 3:16-20).

8. Keep Finances in Their Proper Perspective.

Matthew 6: 20,21 tells us to lay up treasures in heaven. A person's ability to give is determined by what he has already given (Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6,8,11). A person's motive in giving will determine his reward in giving. Giving must be from the heart. II Corinthians 9:7 and 8:11 are very clear about this. A person's investments will only be as eternal as the things in which he invests (I Timothy 6:19; Matthew 6:20,21).

9. God Uses Our Finances.

- a. To supply our basic needs (Matthew 6:31-32; Philippians 4:19).
- b. To prove God's power (Malachi 3:10; Hebrews 11:6).
- c. To prove God's love (Matthew 7:11).
- d. To have Christians share with Christians (II Corinthians 8:14,15, Ephesians 4:28).

Getting Out of Debt!

1. Define Financial Freedom.

Just what is financial freedom? What does it mean to be financially free? It surely means freedom from debt, freedom from dishonest financial dealings, freedom from worry over lack of necessary funds, and freedom to give in response to God's direction.

2. Consider the Benefits of Financial Freedom

- a. Being able to give to the needs of others as the Holy Spirit leads.
- b. Experiencing God's supernatural provision. Only God can supply the precise amount needed, at the precise time that results in bringing glory to God.
- c. Having wisdom and insight to use economy to meet our obligations. God does not waste things. God wants us to make the most of what He has given us.

3. Begin to Buy on a Cash Basis Only.

God's supplying of the money will indicate the relative importance and proper timing of each purchase. Give Him the chance to provide an item before you buy it. Remember that God can supply by decreasing bills or by increasing the income. Stop using credit cards except for money management. Be wise in your buying.

3. Realize that God is Able to Supply Funds When a Bill is Due.

4. Develop Sales Resistance.

Discern God's reason for insufficient funds. He may be testing your faith. He may not feel that you need the item, or it may be that the money was already misspent.

5. Causes of Financial Bondage.

- a. Lack of faith on our part.
- b. Lack of financial commitment to God's work (II Corinthians 9:7).
- c. Anxiety regarding present investments (Matthew 6:24-25).
- d. "Get rich quick" attitude (Proverbs 28 :20).
- e. Greediness (Ephesians 5:5).
- f. Covetousness (Psalm 73:2-3).
- g. Insensitivity to the needs of others (I John 3:17).
- h. Affection for the things of the world (I John 2:15).
- i. Anxiety from over-due bills (Proverbs 27: 12).
- j. Feelings of financial superiority (Revelation 3:17).
- k. Feelings of bitterness for lack of possessions (I Thessalonians 5:18).
- l. Debt structure out of control (Psalm 37:21).
- m. Addiction to credit cards.

6. Steps to Financial Freedom.

- a. Recognize God as the owner of all you have (Psalm 24:1).
- b. Develop a regular giving program (II Corinthians 9:6).
- c. Seek God first (Matthew 6:33).
- d. Get control of your debt (Proverbs 22:7; Romans 13:8).
- e. Pray about major purchases (Philippians 4:6).
- f. Ask God to provide it before you need it (II Chronicles 16:9).

- g. Never infringe on God's sovereignty (Matthew 4:6-7).
- h. Never borrow for pleasure (James 4:13-15).
- i. Give to basic needs of others (Romans 12:13).
- j. Never co-sign (Proverbs 11: 15).
- k. Avoid impulsive buying (II Peter 1:6).
- l. Develop "sales resistance" (Luke 14:28).
- m. Don't confuse "need" with "want" (Philippians 4:19).
- n. Know where your money is going (Romans 12:11).
- o. Know and apply the principle of saving (Genesis 41:35,36).
- p. Develop a sound financial plan and stick to it (Proverbs 24:3,4).

7. Some Other Practical Suggestions for Financial Freedom.

- a. Give your tithe and offerings first.
- b. Keep your money in a checking account; carry only a little cash.
- c. Make careful use of credit cards, don't abuse them.
- d. Pay your bills on time; gain advantage of discounts.
- e. Plan the meals; shop only once a week and use a list; don't go shopping while you're hungry; leave the children at home.
- f. Control impulse buying for yourself or the children.
- g. Comparison shop (the lowest price is not always the best bargain).
- h. Buy good used items; let someone else take the depreciation.
- i. Shop true sales; buy during the "off" season.
- j. Keep records; know where your money is going; keep a financial diary.

Spirit-Controlled Finances

Why did Christ speak more about money than any other subject? In seventeen out of thirty-eight parables He spoke of material things (or money) He dealt with the **"how," the "where," the "what"** and other effects of material things on our lives. Your control of financial matters is a direct indication of your control of spiritual matters.

Money represents us, our toil, our time, and our talent. Life is **"coined money"** in many ways. Where our money goes is a great concern of our lives.

1. Finances Are a Part of Our Spiritual Life. (Luke 16:11,13; Matthew 6:24)
Life is inseparable from money, exchange, and material goals.

- a. Many Christians do not realize this and miss out on the greatest blessings of their lives. There is a connection between their use or misuse of money and their spiritual lives.
- b. There is a connection between our giving or lack of giving and our degree of spiritual prosperity.

2. God Blesses Those Who Follow Bible Principles.

Abiding by spiritual, Biblical principles of finances brings blessings, and the promise of blessings (Malachi 3:8-11; Proverbs 3:9,10; Matthew 6:33; Luke 6:38; Proverbs 11:24,25; II Corinthians 9:6-8).

3. Finances Are Important to Our Emotional Health. (Luke 12:15; I Timothy 6:10)

a. Debt often results in:

- * Sorrow and loss.
- * Heartache, marital fights, division and divorce.
- * Debt can destroy the Christian's testimony and dishonor God's name.

b. Deep debt produces bondage (Proverbs 22:7).

- * Bondage to men (bill collectors of all kinds).
- * Bondage to the unsaved, to the world.
- * Bondage to men, and not to God (II Timothy 2:4).

Christians are very willing to owe the world for the car, the house, the furniture and more, but are not willing to serve and believe God.

c. Deep debt limits our response to God.

- * To His will (Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 4:12).
- * To His purpose (Colossians 3:15-17; 2:5,6).
- * To His desire (Colossians 3:1-4; I Thessalonians 4:11,12; Romans 12:11-17; Luke 16:11-13).
- * It will limit a flexible response to God's will and leading in your life (Matthew 6:24).

4. Financial Pressure Dulls your Spiritual Perception. Financial pressure hampers your effectiveness in God's service. Financial freedom from debt, worry, and frustration brings an ability to yield to God. Then it quickens your prayer life, your faith, and your spiritual walk (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 13:5,6).

5. Finances are to be Under God's Control. (Proverbs 23 :4,5)

- a. Your possessions are God's (Acts 14:15; 17:24; I Chronicles 29: 12,14).
- b. You can demonstrate His love and power (I Chronicles 29:10-12; Matthew 6:26,30,33; Ephesians 3:20; 4:28).
- c. God will protect His testimony and yours (Malachi 3:8-12).
- d. God will unite Christians and His Church (II Corinthians 8 :1-9,14; II Corinthians 9: 6-8).

6. God Will Use Finances to Guide You.

- a. To protect you from harm.
- b. To strengthen your faith (Hebrews 11:6).
- c. To change the direction of your life (I Thessalonians 5:24; Philippians 2:13; Psalm 32:8).

Biblical Principles of Finance

1. God Possesses and Presides Over All the Wealth of the World

All Possessions are His.

- a. *"The earth is the Lord's, the world, and they that dwell therein"* (Psalm 24:1).
- b. *"For all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine..."* (I Chronicles 29:11).
- c. *"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory forever"* (Romans 11:26).
- d. All power is God's in heaven and on earth (II Chronicles 29:14; Ephesians 1:3).

2. Your Possessions are Given to You by God. *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (I Corinthians 4:2).

- a. God will hold you accountable in the use of the resources He has given you.
- b. You are simply a manager of God's affairs.

3. God Wants His Wealth in Circulation.

There are three basic attitudes to wealth and possessions. These are found in Luke 10, in the parable of the *"Good Samaritan."* (Ephesians 4:28)

- a. Attitude of the Thief. *"What is thine is mine and I will take it if I want it."*
- b. Attitude of the Religious Pharisee. *"What is mine is mine and I am going to keep it."* He acted as if he did not see the need.
- c. Attitude of the Good Samaritan. He had the Christian attitude, *"What is mine is thine and if you need it more than I do, you can have it."* Too many people get all they can, then sit on it for themselves. God doesn't want us to hoard but to circulate what He gives us.

- * God does not want His people to sit on their wealth and not use it for Him.
- * God's very nature is to give. The thermometer that measures your love is what you give (Malachi 3:11; Luke 6:38; Hebrews 11:6).
- * God wants you to have the right philosophy of life, to give and not to get. You are not to be living solely for your own possessions, but rather to give and share with others. Christ lived to give, and the law of nature is to give.

4. All of God's Wealth in the World Legally Belongs to God's Children.

(Ephesians 1:3; Psalm 24:1; I Timothy 6:17)

There is a false philosophy that poverty is spiritual, and to earn and to have is not spiritual. Many of the Old Testament heroes were blessed of God with great riches.

5. God's Way of Circulating His Wealth is Giving.

- a. The Way to Become Poor is to Hoard (Proverbs 3:9,10; 11:24,25).
- b. The Way to Become Rich is to Give (Proverbs 11:25; Luke 6:38; Proverbs 3:9,10; I Corinthians 9:6-8).

6. God Wants Revelation Giving, not Reason Giving.

God desires that you would give out of His direction, according to His Word, and

by faith. This is revelation giving, but far too often we give according to our own human reasoning. And so often that takes place out of a covetous heart. (II Corinthians 9:7,8; Proverbs 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:28).

- a. God knows the need.
- b. God knows how much He wants you to give.
- c. God wants you to know what that amount is.
- d. God will make it possible for you to do His will.
- e. God is able to make all grace abound toward you. You do not have to be limited by the amount of your own resources. God has unlimited resources.
- f. God's presence and power must be on your life. You must desire to walk close enough to God to wait upon Him for His guidance in the "what," "where," and "when" of your giving.
- g. God will be glorified and you will be built up.

7. God Will Give in Return. (Luke 6:38)

- a. You can expect God's return. It is profitable to follow the Lord's direction, as He will trust you with more, so that you will have more to give and to use for His glory (Luke 6:38). Here is a caution: If you give out of a business deal with God with the motive to get rich, etc., God will judge you instead. The purpose of God giving you more is for you to give more in return.
- b. God wants you to use that return for Him (Mark 10:29,30). If you use the return incorrectly, or selfishly, you will not keep it in circulation. (Proverbs 3:9,10; Malachi 3:10; II Corinthians 9:6)

8. God Loves a Cheerful Giver (II Corinthians 9: 6-8).

God loves and blesses the cheerful, "hilarious" giver. Tithing is a good place to begin, but a terrible place to stop in your giving. We are to give, not according to our wealth, but according to God's wealth. God gives to us that we might have to give, but if we neglect giving, or give grudgingly, His blessings will also stop.

Conclusion

Every Christian ought to set some definite goals to attain control of his money. Without making some commitments you probably will do nothing about your use of money. You need to decide to succeed with your money for the glory of God.

Many people plan to save and to give to the Lord's work in the future. They never do either one. The Christian who learns to save for retirement and for the needs of his family, also finds it easier to give to the Lord's work as the Holy Spirit leads.

Over the years we have learned personally that as we regularly set aside money to invest our capability to give greater sums to the Lord has increased. As you discipline yourself to save, you will also begin to use your money wisely for the Lord.

Now is the time to make some personal decisions. Why not make some definite commitments to the Lord? For yourself and for the sake of your family do what God wants you to do. I trust that you can sign the following statement as your decision to manage your money.

Yes, I (we) hereby determine, with God's help, to tithe, and give offerings above the tithe, to the Lord's work. We will be on a budget in order to be a good steward. I (we), _____, on this day, _____, make this commitment to manage money for God's glory.