

## Lesson Outline

There is a plague afflicting this nation which threatens to enslave it. It is an epidemic of out-of-control debt! - ranging from the staggering national debt (15 trillion dollars - \$49,000 per citizen) to overwhelming personal debt. Hundreds of thousands of people are in literal financial bondage. – much of which resulted from an addiction to consumer credit.

In the USA (300 million people), there are over 500 million credit cards (+ countless gas, store, misc.) being used to buy just about everything including the necessities of life. Non-promotional interest rates of these credit cards range from 15-28% accompanied by sever penalties for charging over limit(s) or making late payments. About 17% of all the disposable household income in the country goes to making payments on consumer credit. The credit card delinquency rate is 3-4% during times of prosperity and more during economic hard times. The average American family carries about \$6,000 in credit card debt in addition to mortgages, car payments, student loans, etc. In 1996, nonprofit debt counseling agencies met with almost a million people having an average debt of \$18,500. Yet most American mail boxes continually receive regular offers for pre-approved credit cards!

According to the Bible, insolvency results in drastic action. Read

- Matthew 18:25 (from verse 23) **Jesus speaking:** <sup>23</sup> *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.* <sup>24</sup> *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.* <sup>25</sup> **But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.** <sup>26</sup> *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* <sup>27</sup> *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.* <sup>28</sup> *But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.* <sup>29</sup> *And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* <sup>30</sup> *And he would not: **but went and cast him into prison,** till he should pay the debt.* <sup>31</sup> *So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.* <sup>32</sup> *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:* <sup>33</sup> *Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?* <sup>34</sup> *And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.* <sup>35</sup> *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

- II Kings 4:1 <sup>1</sup> Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: **and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.**

Today, the usual (and virtually acceptable) way to solve a debt problem is to declare bankruptcy either through a Chapter 7 (discharges personal debt through liquidation) or Chapter 13 (reorganizes of personal finances in order to establish a payment plan). During the Great Depression, the bankruptcy rate was 1/215 while in 1995, the rate was 1/225! In 1997, 1.4 million personal bankruptcy petitions were filed in federal courts.

Although bankruptcy protection offers a fresh start for the one in debt, it remains on one's record almost forever and is typically difficult to recover from. And, depending upon who is owed the debt, a bankruptcy can hurt many innocent people and businesses.

Most importantly, bankruptcy does not FORCE underlying issues to be dealt with!

Here's the real disturbing fact: many Bible believing Baptists are in financial bondage. This state of affairs not only has its attendant material, emotional, and social consequences, but also has an impact spiritually. Debt impairs our walk with the Lord, our ability to serve Him, and can influence our testimony.

**Scripture about the steward.** Read Luke: 16:10-13 <sup>10</sup> He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. <sup>11</sup> If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? <sup>13</sup> No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

- According to verse 11, we cannot expect the Lord to commit to our trust the TRUE RICHES if we have not been FAITHFUL in the area of finances.

This lesson concerns itself with achieving real financial freedom through the application of Biblical principles.

## I The Aims of Financial Freedom.

What is real financial freedom? First we consider what it is NOT. It's not necessarily a matter of having more money! It's not having everything you could ever want! It's not being insulated from having needs and experiencing financial pressures and problems. It is certainly not to be independent from GOD (which wealth has a propensity to encourage!)

Three Biblical goals, when achieved, define financial freedom:

### A. Goal # 1: Be Rich toward God – our Motive.

Read Luke 12:15-21 (through verse 26) <sup>15</sup> *And he [Jesus] said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he posseseth.* <sup>16</sup> And he spake a parable unto them, saying, *The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:* <sup>17</sup> *And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?* <sup>18</sup> *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.* <sup>19</sup> *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* <sup>20</sup> *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* <sup>21</sup> *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.* <sup>22</sup> And he said unto his disciples, *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.* <sup>23</sup> *The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.* <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? <sup>25</sup> *And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?* <sup>26</sup> *If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*

Why does God bless us with material wealth and possessions?

- Obviously, to keep body and soul together with the necessities of life.  
Read Matthew 6:31-34 ... O ye of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore take no thought, saying, *What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?* <sup>32</sup> (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. <sup>34</sup> Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

- To provide for others in our family. Read I Timothy 5:8 <sup>8</sup> *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*
- But, ultimately, to be a blessing in the work of the Lord.

From Luke 12:15-21

1. The parable of the certain rich man was given as a warning against the sin of **covetousness** [inordinately or wrongly desirous of wealth or possessions; greedy, eagerly desirous] (verse 15).
2. Jesus contrasted the pursuit of earthly wealth with being rich toward God. (verse 21).
3. We are instructed to be more concerned about laying up treasures in heaven than accumulating earthly wealth. Read Matthew 6:19-20 <sup>19</sup> **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:** <sup>20</sup> **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:** <sup>21</sup> **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**
4. Read Proverbs 11:24a <sup>24</sup> There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. According to Proverbs, God blesses the SCATTERING of wealth. (i.e.; One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.)
5. Read Proverbs 11:25 (and more) <sup>25</sup> **The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.** <sup>26</sup> He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it. <sup>27</sup> He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him. <sup>28</sup> He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. <sup>29</sup> He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. <sup>30</sup> The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. <sup>31</sup> Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed [repaid, rewarded] in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.  
According to Proverbs 11:25, God blesses the LIBERAL soul.

**Note:** The difference between a true liberal and a political “liberal” is that a true liberal is generous with his own money!

6. Read Acts 4:34-37 to see how Barnabas used his possessions to be a blessing to the church at Jerusalem: <sup>34</sup> Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. <sup>36</sup> And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup> Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.
7. Is it possible to show liberality **without** having great wealth? – Yes. Read II Corinthians 8:1-2 <sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; <sup>2</sup> How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.
8. The giving of God's peoples "enlarges" (enhances, enables) the gospel to be preached in the regions beyond you. Read II Corinthians 10:15-16 <sup>15</sup> Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, <sup>16</sup> To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. <sup>17</sup> But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. <sup>18</sup> For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. [Give Glory to God]
9. Read I Timothy 6:17-19 <sup>17</sup> Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; <sup>18</sup> That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; <sup>19</sup> Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The Lord blesses us with UNCERTAIN RICHES so that we may be rich in GOD WORKS. Wealth is OK as long as 1) you acknowledge that God is the source of your riches and 2) you are liberal with your riches with the ultimate goal to spreading the gospel.

What a blessing it is to have the ability to generously (and joyfully) respond to the financial needs of the Lord's work - read Hebrews 10:34 <sup>34</sup> For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

On the other hand, financial bondage ruins our ability to effectively serve the Lord with our time and treasure – read Matthew 6:24<sup>24</sup> No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

### **END OF GOAL # 1 – Be rich toward GOD**

#### **B. Goal # 2: Be Content** – the measure of our Faith.

One of the most difficult things for any Christian to do is to be content – especially under the pressures of a materialistic society and a constant barrage of advertising which is deliberately designed to ferment discontent and promote the “enjoy now, pay later” mentality.

**Contentment means the desire and ability to live at the level God provides.**

Read Philippians 4:12 - 13<sup>12</sup> I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. [Revised std edition: <sup>12</sup> I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things in him who strengthens me.]

Contentment is a condition INDEPENDENT of life's circumstances.

Yet, many people think they can only be content when they have what they want – more money, better job, bigger house, etc.

1. Saying alot in 1 Timothy 6:6 (from verse 1 – 12) <sup>1</sup> Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. <sup>2</sup> And they that have believing

masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.<sup>3</sup> If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;<sup>4</sup> He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,<sup>5</sup> Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.<sup>6</sup> **But godliness with contentment is great gain.**<sup>7</sup> **For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.**<sup>8</sup> **And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.**<sup>9</sup> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.<sup>10</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.<sup>11</sup> But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.<sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

#### Also read

- Proverbs 15:17<sup>17</sup> Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled [fattened – ready to be butchered] ox and hatred therewith.
  
- Ecclesiastes 5:12-13<sup>12</sup> The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.<sup>13</sup> There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. [“under the Sun”: on Earth – Solomon is speaking STRICTLY within the limits of our time on earth and what happens WHILE we’re pursuing the things of this life.]  
Application: If the same fate awaits everyone in the course of this life, then the logical inference is that there has to be something greater at work than just the pursuits of this life.]

2. According to Philippians 4:11b<sup>11</sup> Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

**Note:** In Philippians 4:12 (<sup>12</sup> I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.), Paul says he was “instructed.” This instruction came from the Word of God, but also from personal experience as we trust in the Lord to provide our needs (verse 19 <sup>19</sup> But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus) and see Him do it! Many Christians deny the Lord any opportunity to provide for them financially BECAUSE THEY DO NOT FOLLOW BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES IN THEIR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS!

3. Read Hebrews 13:5-6<sup>5</sup> Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.<sup>6</sup> So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
  - a. The opposite to contentment is covetousness
  - b. We are to be content with such things as we have.
  - c. True contentment rests upon the sure promise of God that He will never leave or forsake us.

**Thus: CONTENTMENT IS A BY-PRODUCT OF FAITH!**

4. Read Proverbs 30:7-9 (from verse 5)<sup>5</sup> Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.<sup>6</sup> Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.<sup>7</sup> Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:<sup>8</sup> Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:<sup>9</sup> Lest I be full,

and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

- a. With having “too much” comes the danger of denying the Lord.
- b. With having “too little”, comes the danger of taking the Lord in vain (dishonoring God) and other sins such as theft.

### **END OF GOAL # 2 – Be content**

#### **C. Goal # 3: Be Debt Free – our responsibility.**

The Word of God does not teach that borrowing money is a sin. However, it certainly discourages going into debt for the following reasons:

1. Read Psalm 37:21a <sup>21</sup> The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. Therefore the righteous (saved) have an implicit obligation to repay all debts. Also read exodus 22:14 <sup>14</sup> And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. [and many other Old Testament verses.]
2. Read Proverbs 22:7a <sup>7</sup> The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. The truth of scripture is best seen in seen in the page or two of fine print incorporated in loan documents!

There is an argument to be made that so long as repayments are made on time, and in the manner agreed upon no debt exists. While this is technically true, these Biblical discouragements nonetheless apply.

3. Read Romans 13:8a (from verse 7) <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. <sup>8</sup> Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. While this verse introduces the believer’s obligation to love his neighbor, it never the less springs from a financial context – “dues” and tribute (“taxes”) in verse 7.

To be completely debt free (including the mortgage) is the number one financial objective every believer must earnestly strive for...; and the easiest way to be debt free is to never go into debt in the first place.

### END OF GOAL # 3 – Be debt free

## II The Antagonist of Financial Freedom.

What is it that causes financial bondage? Except in extreme circumstances (e.g.: read Hebrews 11:36-38<sup>36</sup> And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:<sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;), most financial problems are a result of SIN.

Below are the ten (10) most common causes/reasons for financial woes.

### A. Covetousness – the desire for things

Covetousness is the sin of desiring things that:

- Do not belong to us. (read Exodus 20:17<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.)
- God does not intend for us to have. Read Joshua 7:20-25 (after the defeat of the Israelites by the forces of Ai.)<sup>20</sup> And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:<sup>21</sup> When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.<sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.<sup>23</sup> And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.<sup>24</sup> And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the

silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.<sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.)

1. Read II Timothy 3:1-2 (through verse 7) *<sup>1</sup> This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. <sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, <sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; <sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. <sup>6</sup> For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, <sup>7</sup> Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth., Covetousness is a mark of the last days. It is the appeal of modern advertising and a major impetus of consumerism.*
2. Read Mark 7:21-22 <sup>20</sup> And he [Jesus] said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, <sup>22</sup> Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. Covetousness is a “heart” problem.
3. Read Luke 12:13-15 <sup>13</sup> And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. <sup>14</sup> And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? <sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. The Lord tells us to beware of covetousness. This means it is a very danger to the believer.

4. Covetousness is a form of idolatry (replacing God with things). Read:
  - a. Ephesians 5:3<sup>3</sup> But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
  - b. Colossians 3:5<sup>5</sup> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, **which is idolatry**:
5. Read Hebrews 13:5<sup>5</sup> Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. [Keep your life free from the love of money]. Ephesians 5:3 “**...let it not be once named among you [Christians.]**
6. What to do about a church member practicing covetousness? Read I Corinthians 5:11-13<sup>11</sup> But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.<sup>12</sup> For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?<sup>13</sup> But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.
7. Read Exodus 18:21<sup>21</sup> Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: **One of the qualification of leadership is the hatred of covetousness.**
8. Read I Timothy 3:3 for the qualifications of a pastor:<sup>3</sup> Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; (not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money.)
9. Covetousness is a tell-tale characteristics of DAMNATION. Read II Peter 2:3-14<sup>3</sup> And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their

damnation slumbereth not.<sup>4</sup> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;<sup>5</sup> And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;<sup>6</sup> And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;<sup>7</sup> And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:<sup>8</sup> (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) <sup>9</sup> The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:<sup>10</sup> But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.  
<sup>11</sup> Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.<sup>12</sup> But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;<sup>13</sup> And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;<sup>14</sup> Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

The “Christian” who covets has their affections set on the wrong things. (Colossians 3:2<sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.) God takes care of the things we really need. (Matthew 6:32-33<sup>32</sup> (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.<sup>33</sup> But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Failure to differentiate between needs and wants will always result in money problems

**B.** The Love of Money – the desire to be materially rich.

I Timothy 6:6-10 (through verse 12) <sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. <sup>8</sup> And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. <sup>9</sup> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. <sup>11</sup> But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. <sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1. The key passage (10c) does not condemn money, but “the love of money”.
2. Read verses 17 -19 <sup>17</sup> Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; <sup>18</sup> That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; <sup>19</sup> Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. I Timothy distinguishes between those that are rich and those that will be rich.
3. The love of money is the root of all evil. This passage is an accurate commentary on the social, business, legal, and political ills of our nation.
4. For the unsaved, the love of money will eventually drown them in “destruction and perdition [a state of final spiritual ruin; loss of the soul; damnation. The future state of the wicked: hell]”

5. Read Matthew 19:16-26 <sup>16</sup> *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* <sup>17</sup> *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* <sup>18</sup> *He saith unto him, Which?* Jesus said, *Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,* <sup>19</sup> *Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* <sup>20</sup> *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?* <sup>21</sup> Jesus said unto him, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.* <sup>22</sup> *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.* <sup>23</sup> *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* <sup>24</sup> *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* <sup>25</sup> *When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?* <sup>26</sup> *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* The rich young ruler went away from the Lord sorrowful and unsaved because he loved his great possessions more than his soul.
6. From I Timothy 6:10 The love of money will cause the saved to ERR from the faith and to experience many piercing sorrows. EXAMPLES?
7. Those whom the Lord has blessed with great wealth must be careful not to trust in their UNCERTAIN riches. From I Timothy 6:17 <sup>17</sup> Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;
8. Read Proverbs 11:24b <sup>24</sup> There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Stinginess leads to poverty.

Money is a necessary part of life (and the Lord's work), but the believer must view it as a means to an end, and not an end in itself....

**Read Psalm 62:10-12** <sup>10</sup> Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. <sup>11</sup> God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. <sup>12</sup> Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

C. Greed – the inordinate desire for more than what we need.

1. Read Proverbs 25:16 <sup>16</sup> Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. TOO MUCH of a good thing makes you sick.
2. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 <sup>10</sup> *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.* <sup>11</sup> *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* Greed results when we are not satisfied (content) with what we have.
3. Greed can cause murder. Read I Kings 21:1-16 <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab King of Samaria. <sup>2</sup> And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. <sup>3</sup> And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. <sup>4</sup> And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. <sup>5</sup> But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? <sup>6</sup> And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said

unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.<sup>7</sup> And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.<sup>8</sup> So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.<sup>9</sup> And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:<sup>10</sup> And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.<sup>11</sup> And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.<sup>12</sup> They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.<sup>13</sup> And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.<sup>14</sup> Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.<sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.<sup>16</sup> And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

4. The greed of Gehazi (a servant of Elisha) caused him to be cursed. Read II Kings

[Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was cured of leprosy by Elisha]

- a. II Kings 5:15-16<sup>15</sup> And he [Naaman] returned to the man of God [Elisha], he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing [money] of thy servant.<sup>16</sup> But he said,

As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he [Elisha] refused.

- b. II Kings 5:20-27<sup>20</sup> But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.<sup>21</sup> So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?<sup>22</sup> And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.<sup>23</sup> And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.<sup>24</sup> And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.<sup>25</sup> But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.<sup>26</sup> And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?<sup>27</sup> The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.
5. Greed brings trouble HOME. Read Proverbs 15:27a<sup>27</sup> He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts (bribes) shall live. [<sup>27</sup> He who is greedy for unjust gain makes trouble for his household, but he who hates bribes will live.]

**D. Envy – resentment over what others have.**

1. Read Psalm 73: 3-9 <sup>3</sup> For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. <sup>4</sup> For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. <sup>5</sup> They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. <sup>7</sup> Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. <sup>8</sup> They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. <sup>9</sup> They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
  - a. Davis was envious at the prosperity of the wicked.
  - b. Until he got his eyes back on God. Read verses <sup>17</sup> Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their [the wicked] end. <sup>18</sup> Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. <sup>19</sup> How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.
2. Read Proverbs 14:30 <sup>30</sup> *A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.* Envy produces physical side-effects!
3. Envy over material possessions can result in malicious acts. Read what the Philistines did to Isaac when he went to Gerar in Genesis 26:14-15 <sup>14</sup> *For he [Isaac] had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.* <sup>15</sup> *For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.*
4. Read I Corinthians 13:4 <sup>4</sup> *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,* **The right response to God's material blessing on others should be one of gladness and joy.**

**Keeping up with the Jones is the sure path to financial bondage.**

**E. Overindulgence – wasteful use of money and material resources.**

We live in hedonistic society which, like Sodom of old had an abundance of just about everything. (Read Ezekiel 16:49-50 <sup>49</sup> *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.* <sup>50</sup> *And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*) What is thrown out in our society would be a treasure in many parts of the world.

The attitude of “if it’s broken, throw it away and get a new one” is endemic in our society and applies not only to material possessions but relationships as well!

1. Read Proverbs 27:7 <sup>7</sup> *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.* Overindulgence erodes an appreciation for the good things in life.
2. Read Proverbs 21:17 <sup>17</sup> *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*
  - a. 17a says the love of pleasure leads to poverty.
  - b. 17b states that the love for the finer, costlier things (exemplified by wine and oil) leads away from financial freedom.
3. Read Luke 15:13 <sup>13</sup> *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.* The prodigal son wasted his substance with riotous living. **If God blesses you with material possessions DO NOT waste them.**
4. Read Proverbs 23:21a <sup>21</sup> *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.* Another cause of poverty is over indulgence of the flesh which leads to poverty.;
5. Read Proverbs 21:20b (from verse 19 just for fun) <sup>19</sup> *It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.* <sup>20</sup> *There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.* The Bible calls a “spendthrift” a foolish man. [A spendthrift (also called profligate) is someone who spends money prodigiously and who is

extravagant and recklessly wasteful, often to a point where the spending climbs well beyond his or her means. The origin of the word is someone who is able to spend money acquired by the thrift of predecessors or ancestors.]

Christians will have to give an account of their use of money. The practice of **thriftiness** (living below your means) is to be chosen. Extravagance (living beyond your means) is to be shunned.

#### F. Impulsiveness – lack of control in spending

“Impulse buying” is a trap for many people including Christians. The usual results from impulse buying are wasted money, collected junk, and garage sales. (The adage “don’t go to the grocery store when you’re hungry is very true.)

1. Read Proverbs 21:5 <sup>5</sup> *The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.* According Proverbs, haste makes want. **Purchasing something without careful analysis is typically a huge mistake!**
  
2. Another example of the importance of careful consideration before spending money is found in Proverbs 31:16a (read verse 10-28 because it's so complimentary of a Godly wife:) <sup>10</sup> *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.* <sup>11</sup> *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.* <sup>12</sup> *She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.* <sup>13</sup> *She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.* <sup>14</sup> *She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.* <sup>15</sup> *She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.* <sup>16</sup> ***She considereth a field, and buyeth it:*** with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. <sup>17</sup> *She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.* <sup>18</sup> *She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.* <sup>19</sup> *She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.* <sup>20</sup> *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.* <sup>21</sup> *She is not afraid of the snow for her*

*household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.<sup>22</sup> She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.<sup>23</sup> Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.<sup>24</sup> She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.<sup>25</sup> Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.<sup>26</sup> She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.<sup>27</sup> She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.<sup>28</sup> Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.<sup>29</sup> Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.<sup>30</sup> Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.<sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.*

**G. Robbery (not robbing other people) – failure to tithe and honor the Lord.**

1. Read Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.<sup>34</sup> Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Seeking FIRST the kingdom of God and God's RIGHTEOUSNESS will take care of the THINGS (food, clothing, etc.)
  
2. Read Proverbs 3:9-10 (from verse 1 since it's so excellent) *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:<sup>2</sup> For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.<sup>3</sup> Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:<sup>4</sup> So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.<sup>6</sup> In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.<sup>7</sup> Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.<sup>8</sup> It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.<sup>9</sup> Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:<sup>10</sup> So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*

***According to Proverbs, when we honor the Lord with first fruits, we shall be blessed with plenty.***

3. Read Malachi 3:8 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup> Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: <sup>3</sup> And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. <sup>5</sup> And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. <sup>6</sup> For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. <sup>7</sup> Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? <sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

With the commandment to tithe comes a two-fold blessing:

- a. Read Verse 10 to see the blessings from tithing: <sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.
- b. Read verse 11 for more: <sup>11</sup> And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes [enemies and unfortunate circumstances?], and he shall not destroy the

*fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.<sup>12</sup> And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.*

It is impossible to achieve real financial freedom when the Lord is not first in our finances. Storehouse tithing is elementary to the Christian life!

#### H. Dishonesty – using wicked / questionable means to make money.

1. Read Ephesians 4 where the Bible states we are NOT to live as we did before we were saved.
  - a. Ephesians 4:22 *22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*
  - b. Ephesians 4:28a *28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*
2. Read Proverbs 10:2a *2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.* There is NO PROFIT in the treasures of wickedness.
3. God's people are not to seek financial gain through:
  - a. **CHEATING:** Read Proverbs 11:1a *1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.* Also read:
    - (i) Read Proverbs 20:10 *10 Divers [several; various; sundry; diverse] weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.*
    - (ii) Read Proverbs 20:23 *23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.*

b. **LYING (and quibbling – typically a partial truth):** Read Proverbs 21:6<sup>6</sup>

*The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*

c. **MISREPRESENTATION:** Read Proverbs 20:14<sup>14</sup> *It is naught [bad], it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*

d. **Get rich schemes:**

(i) Read Proverbs 13:11a<sup>11</sup> *Wealth gotten by vanity [excessive pride in one's appearance, qualities, abilities, achievements] shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*

(ii) Read Proverbs 28:22<sup>22</sup> *He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*

I. Slothfulness – unwillingness to labor.

Life with hard labor has been man's God-given sentence since his fall into sin (read Genesis 3:19a<sup>19</sup> *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*)

But hard work is an essential part of enjoying the blessing of financial freedom. Read Proverbs 14:23a<sup>23</sup> *In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury [extreme poverty; destitution also... scarcity; inadequacy; insufficiency.]. [In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to want.]*

Conversely, slothfulness (laziness) is a sure path to poverty. Read Proverbs 13:4<sup>4</sup> *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*

The Bible has much to say about slothfulness and lazy people.

**1. A lazy man is one who sleeps a lot.**

- a. Proverbs 6:9-11 <sup>9</sup> *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* <sup>10</sup> *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:* <sup>11</sup> *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*
- b. Proverbs 20:13 <sup>13</sup> *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.*
- c. Proverbs 24:33-34 <sup>33</sup> *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:* <sup>34</sup> *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.*
- d. And gives excuses. Read Proverbs 26:14 <sup>13</sup> *The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.* <sup>14</sup> *As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.* <sup>15</sup> *The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.* [<sup>15</sup> *The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.]* <sup>16</sup> *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

And talks a lot. Read Proverbs 14:23a <sup>23</sup> *In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury* [*In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to want.*]

**2. A lazy man finds excuses for not working.**

- a. Read Proverbs 20:4 <sup>4</sup> *The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*
- b. Read Proverbs 22:13 <sup>13</sup> *The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.*

3. A lazy man is one who does not take care of his tools and resources. Read Proverbs 24:30-32 <sup>30</sup> *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;* <sup>31</sup> *And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.*
4. A lazy man is one who keeps company with vain persons. Read Proverbs 28:19 <sup>19</sup> *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.*
5. A lazy man does not do a quality job. Read Proverbs 10:4 <sup>4</sup> *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*
6. A lazy man tends not to finish the job. Read Proverbs 12:27 <sup>27</sup> *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.*
7. A lazy man does not like inconvenience. Read Proverbs 14:4 <sup>4</sup> *Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.*
8. A slothful man is wasteful. Read Proverbs 18:9 <sup>9</sup> *He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*
9. Read II Thessalonians 3:10 (begin with verse 1 for context) <sup>1</sup> *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:* <sup>2</sup> *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* <sup>3</sup> *But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.* <sup>4</sup> *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.* <sup>5</sup> *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* <sup>6</sup> *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.* <sup>7</sup> *For*

*yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;<sup>8</sup> Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:<sup>9</sup> Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.<sup>10</sup> **For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.**<sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.<sup>12</sup> Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.<sup>13</sup> But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.<sup>14</sup> And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.<sup>15</sup> Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

**Note for verse 10:** Scripture does not say “could not work” Those who are physically unable to work need the help of others. Socialism (and its attendant high taxation) ultimately destroys the Biblical “work ethic” instead creating an unhealthy dependence upon MAN (government entitlements.) Dependence upon man and not God is absolutely against the foundations of the Bible: Man is saved only through God and must turn his face to God for salvation.

J. Unpreparedness – failure to plan financially for the future.

1. God’s object lesson is the ant. Read:

- a. Proverbs 6:6-8<sup>6</sup> *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:<sup>7</sup> Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,<sup>8</sup> Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*
- b. Proverbs 10:5<sup>5</sup> *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

2. Joseph's wise plan was to store up food for times of famine. Read Genesis 41:34-36<sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.  
<sup>35</sup> And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. <sup>36</sup> And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.
3. Planning well for one's financial future takes:
- Instruction: (A sound education with Biblical truths from parents and teachers.) A stiff necked individual or child will tend to poverty. Read Proverbs 13:18 <sup>18</sup> *Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.*
  - Prudence: Read Proverbs 22:3 <sup>3</sup> *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*
  - Preparation: Read Proverbs 24:27 <sup>27</sup> *Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.*
  - Diligence:
    - Read Proverbs 22:29 <sup>29</sup> Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.
    - Proverbs 27:23-24 <sup>23</sup> Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. <sup>24</sup> **For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?**

Financial planning requires a balance – we must not fail to plan for the future BUT we must not leave the LORD out of our plans either. The key is found in:

- Proverbs 16:3 <sup>3</sup> **Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.**
- Proverbs 16:9 <sup>9</sup> **A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.**

### III Axioms of Financial Freedom.

There are two basic things we need to understand in order to enjoy the blessings of financial freedom:

#### A. The Way to Obtain Wealth.

The Bible legitimizes three means by which we may obtain wealth:

##### 1. Work – the 1<sup>st</sup> way to accumulate wealth.

a. Read Ecclesiastes 5 (speaking about labor) <sup>18</sup> Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: **for it is his portion.** <sup>19</sup> Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to **take his portion**, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the **gift of God.** <sup>20</sup> For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

Notes from: <http://bible.org/seriespage/naked-truth-ecclesiastes-510-20>

- **God gives work as His gift** (Ecclesiastes 5:18). Even though you may assume that work is a curse, work is God's gift. Work was before the fall of man and work will continue into the eternal state; for ultimately work is an expression of worship. Solomon writes, "Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: **to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.**" God gives mankind work as a reward! This ought to motivate you and me to express gratitude for our jobs. When you wake up tomorrow morning, you need to thank the Lord for a beating heart and for red blood pumping through your veins. You need to thank Him for your job and for the strength He has given you to work your job.
- **Not only does God give work as His gift BUT God gives wealth as His gift** (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20). These final verses emphasize the truth that our wealth comes directly from the hand of God. Solomon writes, "Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often

consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.” These verses demonstrate that wealth is not condemned (cf. 1 Tim 6:16). The key phrase in 5:18 is “God has given riches and wealth.” But you may say, “I thought I worked for it!” Yes, but God gave you health, a country, economy, skill, and opportunity. Apart from His strength and provision, you would not have what you have. And God wants you to know that if He has given you wealth, He wants you to enjoy it. But one word to the wealthy: Enjoy the wealth God has given you without leaving Him and others out. God is good and the giver of good gifts. We want the good gifts God wants to give us. However, we often seek the gift but do not seek the capacity to enjoy the gift. Job observed that in Job 1:21[<sup>21</sup> *And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*]—that The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Job was able to say that because what God had given him as a gift of capacity was more important than the gift of prosperity itself.

- **When we ask God for blessing, we should also ask Him for the gift of capacity so we can enjoy the blessings He gives.** Our recognition of God as the one who gives the capacity to enjoy His blessings allows us to relax and enjoy whatever He gives. Principle: We must be more occupied with the giver than with the gifts.

- b. A saved man should engage in honorable employment. Read Ephesians 4:28 <sup>28</sup> Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

- c. **The work ethic expected of God’s children:**

- (i) Read Ephesians 6:5-8 <sup>5</sup> Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; <sup>6</sup> Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; <sup>7</sup> **With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:** <sup>8</sup> **Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.**
- (ii) Read Colossians 3:22-23 <sup>22</sup> *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;* <sup>23</sup> **And whatsoever ye do, do it**

***heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; <sup>24</sup> Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*** <sup>25</sup> But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

2. Savings and Investments – the 2<sup>nd</sup> way to accumulate wealth.
  - a. Read Proverbs 21:20 <sup>20</sup> *There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.* [How things have not changed in 3000 years.]
  - b. Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 <sup>1</sup> *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days [ship your grain across the seas].* <sup>2</sup> *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight* [INVEST in multiple ventures because you don't know what's going to happen!]; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. <sup>3</sup> If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. <sup>4</sup> He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. <sup>5</sup> **As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.** <sup>6</sup> In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.
  - c. Read Matthew 25:14-30 <sup>14</sup> *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.* <sup>15</sup> *And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.* <sup>16</sup> *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.* <sup>17</sup> *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.* <sup>18</sup> *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.* <sup>19</sup> *After a long*

*time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.<sup>20</sup> And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.<sup>21</sup> His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.<sup>22</sup> He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.<sup>23</sup> His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.<sup>24</sup> Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:<sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.<sup>26</sup> His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:<sup>27</sup> Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.<sup>28</sup> Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.<sup>29</sup> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.<sup>30</sup> And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [then in verses 31-46, Jesus explains the rewards/punishment for the just/wicked and why.]*

Remember: there is a Biblical balance to be maintained. We must avoid covetousness, the love of money, greed, etc. BUT be prudent, responsible, and prepare any eventuality.

### 3. Gifts – the 3<sup>rd</sup> way to accumulate wealth.

- a. Read Proverbs 13:22a *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.* [NIV: A

good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.]

- b. Read Proverbs 19:14a <sup>14</sup> *House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.* [NIV: Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.]
- c. Read II Corinthians 12:14 (gifts from parents) <sup>14</sup> *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* [NIV: Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.]

#### B. The Way to Drain Wealth.

The greatest menace to financial freedom is **debt interest!** Interest greatly multiplies debt, often making it virtually impossible to be debt free... ever!

For example:

- Borrowing \$100,000 on a 30 year conventional (fixed rate) loan in order to purchase a modest home (\$125,000) home [assumes a 20% down payment of \$25,000] means you will actually pay:
  - \$240,000 @ 7% interest
  - \$264,000 @ 8% interest
  - \$316,000 @ 10% interest
- To purchase a new \$25,000 car with 25% down and a bank loan of \$18,750 at 10% means you will actually pay:
  - \$21,800 for a 3 year loan

- \$22, 825 for a 4 year loan
- \$23,900 for a 5 year loan

**Contemporary interest rates have been maintained at lower rates,  
BUT this is a political/economic decision at the highest levels  
which has long term consequences for the nation.**

- Credit card debt is the biggest killer of financial freedom. Interest on credit card debt is computed daily (and added in daily) and this combined with the usurious interest rates makes it difficult to pay off the debt. For example a \$1000 credit card debt paid off at 18.8% APR making minimum monthly payments takes 5.5 years and costs \$1,625.

### What does the Bible say about interest?

1. Read Deuteronomy 23:19-20 <sup>19</sup> *Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of **any thing** that is lent upon usury:* <sup>20</sup> *Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

Israelites were forbidden to charge interest to their brothers but could lend with interest to strangers. [Usury is defined contemporarily as: the lending or practice of lending money at an exorbitant interest. But in this scripture, it means any interest paid for the use of money or goods/services.]

2. Read Leviticus 25:35-38 <sup>35</sup> *And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner [temporary stayer]; that he may live with thee.* <sup>36</sup> *Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.* <sup>37</sup> *Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.* <sup>38</sup> *I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to*

give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. God's people were not to take advantage of people in need, but to "relieve" them.

3. Read Luke 6:35 (from verse 30 to understand general Christian concepts spoken by Jesus) <sup>30</sup> *Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.* <sup>31</sup> *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.* <sup>32</sup> *For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.* <sup>33</sup> *And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.* <sup>34</sup> *And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.* <sup>35</sup> *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.* <sup>36</sup> *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

4. **In Summary:** The principle of love taught in these verses is to give to those in need as your Father in Heaven does the same with you. Read:

- James 2:15-16 <sup>15</sup> *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,* <sup>16</sup> *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*
- Read I John 3:17-18 <sup>17</sup> *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* <sup>18</sup> *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

**Danger:** Personal financial dealings between members of a Baptist church is an area where offenses easily occur. Well intentioned loans, sales, and partnerships between brothers and sisters have been used by Satan to literally destroy friendships and churches. Three (3) rules to follow:

- Never charge interest to a brother in Christ.
- Never loan anything with the expectation of repayment.
- Never co-sign a loan for a brother.

#### IV Actions for Financial Freedom.

(The methods of actually achieving and maintaining financial freedom.)

##### A. Financial Freedom from the Past.

If a believer is in debt, how can he get out of debt?

Getting out of financial bondage is never easy and it takes time. Like most serious problems of our own making, it will take time to fix.

The TWO basic requirements to becoming free from debt bondage are:

1. Sanctions – “Coercive measures designed to ensure compliance.”
  - a. Reverse the cause of the debt
    - (i) Honestly identify the cause(s). Read Psalm 139:23-24 <sup>23</sup> *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:* <sup>24</sup> *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
    - (ii) Confess these causes as sin (i.e. agree with God that it is in fact sin). Read I John 1:9-10 <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* <sup>10</sup> *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
    - (iii) Forsake it daily.  
Read Galatians 5:24 <sup>24</sup> *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

IT IS VITAL that you and your spouse are in agreement before the Lord and each other on these matters.

- b. Refuse to continue borrowing. The addition of additional debt has to STOP. So-called easy credit was more than likely the culprit in the first place. Therefore more borrowing cannot help with the solution.

Debt is an addition and painful to break. There is no painless way to get out of debt. Thus the need for discipline bathed in constant prayer and vigilance.

**2. Surplus – “Securing funds for debt elimination.”**

After identifying the root cause and arresting the ‘bleeding’, the next step is to create a surplus. THIS MEANS LIVING BELOW YOUR MEANS in order to fill in the debt hole.

a. Obtaining a surplus.

- (i) TRIM THE BUDGET – remove all wants, buy less expensive ‘needs’, buy in bulk, quit eating out, learn to do your own repairs, ... in other words: “cut back and cut out.”
- (ii) SELL/ELIMINATE NON-ESSENTIAL ITEMS – the second car, club memberships, reduce insurance, and all the material goods and luxuries we all have but do not need.
- (iii) SET MORE MONEY (e.g. get a second job) but never at the expense of family and church! Read:

1. Titus 2:4-5 (verses 1-8 for context) <sup>1</sup> *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:* <sup>2</sup> *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.* <sup>3</sup> *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;* <sup>4</sup> ***That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,*** <sup>5</sup> ***To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*** <sup>6</sup> *Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.* <sup>7</sup> *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works:*

*in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,<sup>8</sup> Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

2. Hebrews 10:25<sup>25</sup> *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

**Drastic situations call for drastic measures.**

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b. Using a surplus

- (i) List all your debts in descending order (largest to smallest).
- (ii) Apply surplus to smallest debt first, until it's paid off.
- (iii) Add the monthly payment of the paid-off debt to the surplus and begin applying this surplus to the next smallest debt.
- (iv) Continue the process until all debts have been eliminated (including the mortgage).
- (v) Most people can be completely debt free in 7-10 years using this method.
- (vi) Remember, the discipline applied to the beginning of this process must be continued throughout the process.
- (vii) If you get a raise or more money comes in, apply these funds to the debt... don't spend it.
- (viii) THE #1 GOAL IS TO ELIMINATE DEBT.

When tackling debt, even a little extra added to the monthly payments can make a huge difference. Example: Making an extra payment each year to a 30 year mortgage note takes 7 years off the length of the loan!

**B.** Financial Freedom for the Present.

The best way to enjoy financial freedom is to use a budget. A budget is a simple, yet sound financial method of financial management which requires planning, communication, and discipline.

Read Proverbs 27:23-27 <sup>23</sup> *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.* <sup>24</sup> *For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?* <sup>25</sup> *The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.* <sup>26</sup> *The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.* <sup>27</sup> *And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.*

- The instruction of verse 23 is to know the state of, and to look well into the management of our income.
- The promise of verse 27 is that there will be ENOUGH for our own needs and those of our household, and those that depend upon us.

**1. Planning A Budget****a. Where am I right now?**

- (i) What is my income?
- (ii) What are my basic needs?
- (iii) What are my current commitments?

**b. Where do I need to go?**

- (i) Am I truly working to become debt free?
- (ii) Are there any unusual needs coming up?
- (iii) What special savings goals am I trying to reach?

**c. How do I get there?**

- (i) Read Proverbs 16:3 (verses 2-9 just for context) <sup>2</sup> All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weighth the spirits. <sup>3</sup> Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. <sup>4</sup> The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the

wicked for the day of evil.<sup>5</sup> Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.<sup>6</sup> By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.<sup>7</sup> When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.<sup>8</sup> Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.<sup>9</sup> A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

We are admonished to commit our works (**planning** and actualization) to the Lord so that our thoughts shall be established. Planning a budget should be considered a matter of wise stewardship. Therefore, a spiritual exercise as much as an arithmetic one.

## 2. Prioritizing In A Budget

- a. The Lord must be first. Read Proverbs 3:9-10<sup>9</sup> Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:<sup>10</sup> So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
- b. Don't worry if you get things wrong and are corrected by the Lord. Read Proverbs 3:11<sup>11</sup> My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:<sup>12</sup> For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.
- c. Taxes MUST be paid. Read Romans 13:6-7<sup>6</sup> For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.<sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.
- d. Debts MUST be paid. Read Psalm 37:21<sup>21</sup> The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

- e. The family must be provided for. I Timothy 5:8<sup>8</sup> But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
- f. The future must be saved for. Proverbs 6:6-8<sup>6</sup> Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:<sup>7</sup> Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,<sup>8</sup> Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.
- g. Plan for unknown eventualities. Assume worst case and have surplus and insurance. Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6<sup>1</sup> Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days [ship your grain across the seas].<sup>2</sup> Give a portion to seven, and also to eight [INVEST in multiple ventures because you don't know what's going to happen!]; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.<sup>3</sup> If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.<sup>4</sup> He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.<sup>5</sup> As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.<sup>6</sup> In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

### 3. Producing A Budget

- a. Step ONE – determine your gross monthly income. Even if you are paid weekly, it is more practical to budget monthly.
- b. Step TWO – subtract from your gross monthly income the tithe (10%) and your monthly taxes. The remaining amount is your “net spendable” – the object of your budget.

- c. Step THREE – list every expenditure you know or can possibly anticipate. If possible, study your previous spending habits and use them as a starting guide.

	Net income =	\$ 77,700	\$ 6,475		
	Imaginary Budget				
	Category	Last 12 Months	Monthly	% of net	Suggested
1	Housing (mortgage, insurance, taxes, utilities, maintenance)	\$ 25,920	\$ 2,160	33%	33%
2	Food + household supplies	\$ 9,200	\$ 767	12%	13%
3	Auto (insurance, gas, Maintenance)	\$ 4,450	\$ 371	6%	13%
4	Insurance (health, life, disability)+medical	\$ 2,900	\$ 242	4%	13%
5	Personal (clothing, hair stuff)	\$ 1,200	\$ 100	2%	7%
6	Debt Elimination	\$ 22,224	\$ 1,852	29%	6%
6a	Vehicle 1	\$ 7,800	\$ 650		
6b	Vehicle 2	\$ 3,480	\$ 290		
6a	Credit 2	\$ 1,200	\$ 100		
6b	Credit 3	\$ 6,000	\$ 500		
6a	Credit 4	\$ 2,412	\$ 201		
6b	Credit 5	\$ 1,332	\$ 111		
7	Entertainment + recreation	\$ 5,500	\$ 458	7%	5%
8	Misc. Giving	\$ 1,200	\$ 100	2%	5%
9	Savings	\$ -	\$ -	0%	5%
10	Miscellaneous	\$ 2,800	\$ 233	4%	4%
11	Professional expenses	\$ 3,600	\$ 300	5%	0%
		\$ 78,994	\$ 6,583	102%	104%

#### 4. Preserving a Budget

- Determine to stay within your budget guidelines. Be discipline. Be prayerful. This discipline and determination must be shared equally and fairly between husband and wife. It should be explained to older children as necessary.
- Balance your checkbook and other accounts every month and compare actual expenditures to budgeted expenditure. **Formalize this process.**
- Never supplement your income with debt.
- Dispose of your credit cards. For someone who is financially responsible, a credit card is a handy convenience. But, it is risky and can become a catastrophe!

- e. Be accountable to a trusted friend. Someone who is not under financial bondage.
- f. Place all addition income to paying off debt.

**Take control of your money before it takes control of you.**

### C. Financial Freedom for the Future.

This final section looks down the road of life at some of the real benefits and blessings of becoming debt free and living debt free. It involves setting aside of money for future needs (and wants). It is an exercise which requires both a Biblical balance and godly wisdom.

In this case, compound interest becomes a true friend.

Remember the rule of 72: divide the number 72 by the interest rate to determine the approximate number of years it will take to double your money (excludes inflation).

For example: \$1000 invested at 10% compounded annually doubles to \$2000 in:  $72/10 = 7.2$  years. Inflation (assume 3%) reduces this money's value to about \$1650 as seen to the right.

<b>Without Inflation</b>				
	rates =	0.1	0	
period	start	interest	inflation	balance
1	\$ 1,000	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 1,100
2	\$ 1,100	\$ 110	\$ -	\$ 1,210
3	\$ 1,210	\$ 121	\$ -	\$ 1,331
4	\$ 1,331	\$ 133	\$ -	\$ 1,464
5	\$ 1,464	\$ 146	\$ -	\$ 1,611
6	\$ 1,611	\$ 161	\$ -	\$ 1,772
7	\$ 1,772	\$ 177	\$ -	\$ 1,949
8	\$ 1,949	\$ 195	\$ -	\$ 2,144

<b>With inflation at 3%</b>				
	rates =	0.1	0.03	
period	start	interest	inflation	balance
1	\$ 1,000	\$ 100	\$ 30	\$ 1,070
2	\$ 1,070	\$ 107	\$ 32	\$ 1,145
3	\$ 1,145	\$ 114	\$ 34	\$ 1,225
4	\$ 1,225	\$ 123	\$ 37	\$ 1,311
5	\$ 1,311	\$ 131	\$ 39	\$ 1,403
6	\$ 1,403	\$ 140	\$ 42	\$ 1,501
7	\$ 1,501	\$ 150	\$ 45	\$ 1,606
8	\$ 1,606	\$ 161	\$ 48	\$ 1,718
9	\$ 1,718	\$ 172	\$ 52	\$ 1,838
10	\$ 1,838	\$ 184	\$ 55	\$ 1,967
11	\$ 1,967	\$ 197	\$ 59	\$ 2,105

The exact mathematical number of years (to three decimal places) is calculated to the right. NOTE the negative effect of inflation for savings but typically has a positive effect for debt helping offset interest cost!

variables	$P := 1000$	$F := 2000$
compound interest formula $F = P \cdot (1 + i)^n$		
solving for n:	$i := 0.10$	$n := \frac{\ln(F/P)}{\ln(i + 1)} = 7.273$
	$i := 0.07$	$n := \frac{\ln(F/P)}{\ln(i + 1)} = 10.245$

## 1. Saving For The Short Term

Common sense dictates that funds be saved for emergencies, unexpected needs, and specific wants (vacations, etc.)

The usual vehicles for this kind of savings are:

- Insured – bank accounts, CDs (no risk but low interest)
- Uninsured – Money market accounts – variable risk but higher interest.

Having money available for the short term also demands discipline. For example, if you have \$10,000 set aside in an immediately available account (for emergencies), will you have the discipline NOT to touch it for “wants?”

## 2. Saving For The Long Term

Most retired people will automatically receive a limited amount of income from some government sponsored social program. And, most people will find it difficult to live solely on that income.

Planning to have additional income for retirement has become a matter of necessity. The attitude of working until you die is noble but presumptuous.

The first and best long term investment is to be debt free and to stay debt free. Read Proverbs 12:24<sup>24</sup> *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.* Be diligent during your working years to attain and maintain being debt free.

With regard to “long term” saving to be used for future income, remember to diversify! Ecclesiastes 11:<sup>1</sup> Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.<sup>2</sup> Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.<sup>3</sup> If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.<sup>4</sup> He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.<sup>5</sup> As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who

maketh all.<sup>6</sup> In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

## TWO KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL LONG TERM SAVINGS

- Start early – consider a person who invests \$100 monthly at 11% (- 3% for inflation) [compounded annually] who saves for 20 years.  
Look at the magic of monthly compounding in the second computation.
- Don't touch it.

**Is investing the same as gambling?** In a sense yes and in a sense no. All investment plans have some risk involved. The question is really a question of informed risk vs. chance. A roulette wheel has 100% chance. It is pure gambling and therefore

evil. Investing with a “will be rich” motive (read I Timothy 6:9a<sup>9</sup> *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*) These individuals will tend to be involved in high risk adventures which include gambling. Read Proverbs 23:4-5<sup>4</sup> *Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.*<sup>5</sup> *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.* **Investing can be conducted in an informed and reasonably safe manner, but it is a personal matter for each believer based on the understanding that the Lord expects us all to be good stewards over all He has blessed us with.**

$$A := 1200 \quad i := (0.11 - .03) = 0.08$$

$$n := 20 \quad F := A \cdot \left[ \frac{(1 + i)^n - 1}{i} \right] = 54914$$

$$n := 40 \quad F := A \cdot \left[ \frac{(1 + i)^n - 1}{i} \right] = 310868$$

$$A := 100 \quad i := (0.11 - .03) = 0.08$$

$$n := 240 \quad F := A \cdot \left[ \frac{\left(1 + \frac{i}{12}\right)^n - 1}{\frac{i}{12}} \right] = 58902$$

$$n := 480 \quad F := A \cdot \left[ \frac{\left(1 + \frac{i}{12}\right)^n - 1}{\frac{i}{12}} \right] = 349101$$

### 3. Saving For The Next Generation

The Bible instructs us to pass on an inheritance to those who follow us in life. Read:

- Proverbs 13:22b <sup>22</sup> ***A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.***
- Proverbs 19:14a <sup>14</sup> ***House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.***
- II Corinthians 12:14 <sup>14</sup> ***Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.***

Furthermore, read Genesis 48:21-22 <sup>21</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

<sup>22</sup> Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow. We see an example of Jacob passing on a special legacy to Joseph. This was “one portion above” that which was given to the other sons, **based upon Jacob’s prerogative and insight.**

The best thing we can do for the next generation is to live debt free. However, there are two other important considerations to saving and preparing for the future – after one has gone home to the Lord in glory:

- a. Life insurance – this is a method of forced savings designed to ensure a wife and children are not left destitute in the case of the unexpected death of the husband. It is more important when the family is young. If this method is chosen, the proceeds of a life

insurance policy should be sufficient to pay for funeral costs, provide income for at least 5 years, and assist with the education of children (etc.)

Life without enjoyment and/or preparing for death is also spoken of in Ecclesiastes 6:3 <sup>1</sup> *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:* <sup>2</sup> *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger [the government in taxes? Or family outsiders?] eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.* <sup>3</sup> *If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.* <sup>4</sup> *For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.*

- b. Last Will & Testament – a written document detailing how assets and personal possessions are to be distributed. A will is presupposed in Hebrews 9:16-17 <sup>16</sup> *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.* <sup>17</sup> *For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.* This is an important document not only assuring the passing down of an inheritance according to one's wishes but is also a means of bequeathing ones final blessing to the Lord's church and work.

FINANCIAL FREEDOM is a strength and blessing throughout life – and after this life has ended.

**Memory verse:** I Timothy 6:10 <sup>10</sup> *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

**Lesson Outline****I The Aims of Financial Freedom.**

- A. Goal # 1: Be Rich Toward God – our Motive.
- B. Goal # 2: Be Content – the measure of our Faith.
- C. Goal # 3: Be Debt Free – our responsibility.

**II The Antagonist of Financial Freedom.**

- A. Covetness – the desire for things
- B. The Love of Money – the desire to be materially rich.
- C. Greed – the inordinate desire for more than what we need.
- D. Envy – resentment over what others have.
- E. Overindulgence – wasteful use of money and material resources.
- F. Impulsiveness – lack of control in spending
- G. Robbery – failure to honor the Lord.
- H. Dishonesty – using wicked / questionable means to make money.
- I. Slothfulness – unwillingness to labor.
- J. Unpreparedness – failure to plan financially for the future.

**III Axioms of Financial Freedom.**

- A. The Way to Obtain Wealth.
- B. The Way to Drain Wealthy.

**IV Actions for Financial Freedom.**

- A. Financial Freedom from the Past.
- B. Financial Freedom for the Present.
- C. Financial Freedom for the Future.