

FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Discipleship II - Chapter 11

FOUNDATIONS FOR FINANCIAL success

In all probability, those born after 1965 will earn and spend more than one million dollars each in their lifetime. Needless to say, money is a very important topic for us to study. It is especially important to the Christian because God will one day call us into judgment for our financial stewardship (see Matthew 25:14-30). A Christian must have a biblical foundation for financial success!

THERE ARE MANY MYTHS ABOUT MONEY

Christians are very willing to subscribe to many un-biblical notions about finances. For instance, some Christians believe the following:

1. **Poverty is next to spirituality.** This notion causes many nuns and priests in the Catholic church to take a “vow of poverty” and renounce all ownership or opportunity for financial pleasure. Unfortunately, many genuine Christians seem to hold the same philosophy. They are astonished by the pastor’s new car or concerned about the spiritual depth of the rich.

The Bible does not teach that a man needs to be poor to be spiritual. In fact, Job, Abraham, Solomon, and many other Biblical heroes were far from paupers. The godly man that meditates upon Biblical principles is promised prosperity (Psalm 1:3; Joshua 1:8) not poverty.

2. **Money brings happiness.** Surveys have shown that a higher percentage of Americans with grade-school educations living in poverty report themselves happier than do college-educated, wealthy Americans. In other words, money does not necessarily bring happiness. I Timothy 6:9 says “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.” It does not teach that money brings happiness.

3. **“Money is the root of all evil.”** This famous statement is a misquotation of I Timothy 6:10. The Bible does not teach that money is the root of all evil. It teaches that “the love of money is the root of all evil.”

4. **“Everything will turn out alright in the end.”** Those that hold to this philosophy often use it as excuse to fail to plan. They claim to “live by faith” and “depend upon God” when in actuality they fail to provide for their future as the Bible commands (Proverbs 6:6-8).

There are many more financial myths held by well-meaning Christians, but these four seem to have the largest group of followers. These myths do not give us a foundation for financial success.

THE BIBLE SAYS MUCH ABOUT MONEY

The Bible is a book filled with lessons for living. It is our authority for financial success and it says a great deal about our possessions. Did you ever stop to think that 16 of Christ's parables deal with money. Every one of Christ's recorded sermons refer to money and possessions. More is said in the New Testament about money than about heaven and hell combined. Five times more is said in the New Testament about money than about prayer. Over 2,000 New Testament verses deal with money than material things.

The Word of God says much about our possessions because God created man with a dependent nature. It is God's desire to see men once again become dependent upon Him and release their dependence upon worldly possessions. The natural man depends upon financial prosperity for future security. The Godly man depends upon God for all present and future security (Matthew 6:19)

GOD OWNS IT ALL

Biblical financial success begins when we accept the fact that God owns everything! These are great proofs of this statement:

1. The Bible teaches that God owns everything. He owns the earth and her inhabitants (Psalm 24:1), all of the cattle (Psalm 50:10), the silver and the gold (Haggai 2:8), and the Christians (I Corinthians 6:20).
2. Death teaches that God owns everything and reposes his goods when we die!

Because God owns everything, we should realize that man owns nothing. (He never has and he never will!) He simply possesses God's property for a short time.

Because God owns everything, He demands that we be content with what he loans to us (I Timothy 6:8).

God wants us to manage the money that He loans us in a responsible manner! After all, we own nothing. God owns everything. He allows us to be overseers of His possessions and He says, "It is required in stewards (overseers)

that a man be found faithful” (I Corinthians 4:1). There is a day coming when we will give account before God for our stewardship (Luke 12:48). Are you ready for God to examine your financial dealings? You can be if you are willing to learn His guidelines for money management. Here are a few:

Save money. When saving money is mentioned, people often envision greedy, “squeaky” miser. This is a wrong picture. The Bible says, “There is a treasure to be desired and oil in the house of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up” (proverbs 21:20). In other words, the wise man saves and the foolish man spends. Be careful here - we don’t save money to look better than others or because we just love money (Proverbs 30:8-9; I Timothy 6:10). We save money for definite purposes. Some honorable reasons to save include college, giving, spending desires, starting a business, and paying off debts. If people would learn to save at least 10 percent of their income throughout their lifetime, there would be no need for social security. Presently, only 2 percent of all Americans will be financially independent at age 65.

Avoid debt. For the wise steward, “debt” needs to become a dirty word! Proverbs 22:7 says that “the rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” Those that go into debt often fail to see the future consequences of their action (Luke 14:28). Financial circumstances can be subject to change.

The wise steward is willing to be content (Luke 12:15) and to patiently wait for the Lord to supply his needs (Matthew 7:7).

There are two rules to follow when taking a loan:

1. Never borrow money if you are not reasonably certain about your ability to repay.
2. Never borrow money to purchase an item whose value is shrinking. Examples are automobiles, furniture, and clothing.)

Give. “It is more blessed to give than to receive!” Acts 20:35). Therefore, Christians should be giving people, but to whom should we give?

First, we give to God at least 10 percent of all which he gives to us. We need to say with Jacob, “All that thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth unto thee” (Genesis 28:22). Christians are to joyfully give back to God through the church (I Corinthians 16:2), remembering that God promises to bless those who give (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Second, we give to others as God lays them upon our hearts (Proverbs 19:17).

God wants us to give!

Have a plan. To be an effective steward, you must plan what you will do with your money before you receive it. Your plan should consider that you need to give God 10 percent, save some (if you're going to college - save a lot), and spend some. Draw up your own plan and then stick to it!

FROM YOUR READING

1. What are four commonly held "myths" about money?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
2. _____ New Testament verses deal with money and materialism.
3. Why does God's Word say so much about our possessions ?

4. What should teach us that we own nothing? _____

5. List four Biblical guidelines for money management that the lesson discusses and give one Bible reference that supports each of the first three guidelines.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
6. What two rules should we follow when taking a loan?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

GROUP TIME

Luke 16:10-11 Our _____ growth is related to our financial faithfulness.

The number one cause of conflict in our American families is _____.

DEBT

- a. Proverbs 3:27-28 _____

- b. Proverbs 6:1-5 _____

- c. Proverbs 22:7 _____

- d. Proverbs 37:21 _____

LOANS

- a. Psalm 112:5 _____

- b. Proverbs 19:17 _____

- c. Luke 6:34-35 _____

- d. Deuteronomy 23:19-20 _____

SAVING

- a. Proverbs 21:20 _____

- b. Proverbs 6:6-8 _____

- c. Luke 12:16-21 _____

GIVING

- a. I Corinthians 16:2 _____

- b. Malichi 3:10 _____

- c. Proverbs 3:9-10 _____

- d. II Corinthians 9:6-8 _____

- e. I John 3:17-18 _____

GOD OWNS ALL

- a. Psalm 24:1 _____

- b. Psalm 50:10 _____

- c. Philippians 4:19 _____

- d. Matthew 6:33 _____

BIBLE STUDY

The following material is given for your personal Bible study and Christian growth. The basic assignments for the course are given and a special “achiever” assignment is suggested for those who desire to go the extra mile. Before you begin, pray that God will allow you to really grow through this endeavor.

SCRIPTURE ASSIGNMENT

1. Match the following principle to the proper verse:

_____ It is better to give than to receive.	a. Proverbs 28:22
_____ Don't covet - be content.	b. Luke 12:15
_____ Avoid debt.	c. Psalm 24:1
_____ Save money.	d. Proverbs 22:7
_____ Avoid get-rich quick schemes.	e. Proverbs 6:6-8
_____ God owns all.	f. Acts 20:35

2. Find and list at least three of all the great financial principles found in Luke 16:10-13.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. Read Luke 16:11 again. “Mammon” means money. What do you think “the true riches” are that Christ speaks of? _____

4. How must this challenge us financially? _____

5. Find and list at least two of the great principles about giving which you find in II Corinthians 9:6-8.
- a. _____
- b. _____
6. Read Proverbs 6:1-5. What do you think the Bible teaches about “co-signing?” _____
- _____
- _____

Achiever’s Question

1. Find and list at least three financial principles in Matthew 6:19-34:
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
2. List at least four godly Bible characters who were very wealthy.
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Old Testament Books: Learn the names of the 12 minor prophetic books this week. (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggi, Zachariah, and Malachi)

Verse: Matthew 6:19-20

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

Achiever's Verse: Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

1. Estimate how much money God allowed your household to make last year - \$ _____.
2. Estimate how much money you added to your savings and investments last year - \$ _____.
3. Estimate how much money you gave back to God last year - \$ _____. (If the amounts in number 2 and 3 are less than 10 percent of the estimated amount in number 1, you need to do something about it!)