

FAITH and DROUGHT
Storehouses
Genesis 41:33-36

People handle money in the strangest of ways. (Story of bags of money that Joe and a friend found when helping a widow clean out her house!) That was a strange way to STORE money, but it did wind up helping this widow. There are certainly better ways to store money than to stuff it in bags along with other trash, but I think that we all agree that money SHOULD be stored to SOME DEGREE. In the story of the 7-year drought, we can learn a simple principle that Joseph utilized in order to save the lives of thousands of people. He filled STOREHOUSES with a PORTION of the crops that were harvested during the 7 years of abundance. But he did this in an orderly fashion according to a God-given PLAN. This is the LAUGHINGLY practical part of my message. We need this truth.

Wise financial management harnesses the power of percentages for stocking storehouses!

Genesis 41:33-34 NLT

33 "Therefore, Pharaoh should find an intelligent and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. 34 Then Pharaoh should **appoint** supervisors over the land and let them collect **one-fifth** of all the crops during the seven good years.

*This brings SIMPLICITY.

- It is easy to figure out no matter what your income is. ($1/5^{\text{th}} = 20\%$)
- It is not a SET AMOUNT, but a RELATIVE AMOUNT (to your uneven income.)
- Learn to PAY ATTENTION to PERCENTAGES:
 [What % of your income is going to DEBT? HOBBIES? BAD HABITS?]

*This requires INTENTIONALITY.

- You must BUDGET in order to live on the REMAINING portion of your income.
 - *Does your bank AUTOMATICALLY put a percentage in your STORAGE?
- You can use this to ABOLISH and AVOID DEBT!
[Understanding the DEBT SNOWBALL] Tackle LOWEST to HIGHEST debts.
***[Works great with short term goals.]**

- Percentage living TRAINS us to LIVE ON LESS.
 - *You won't SPEND it if you do not HAVE it!
 - *Savings is NOT the difference between the sales price and retail price!
- You must GUARD what you have STORED. **Genesis 41:35-36 NLT**

35 Have them gather all the food produced in the good years that are just ahead and bring it to Pharaoh's storehouses. Store it away, and guard it so there will be food in the cities. 36 That way there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come to the land of Egypt. Otherwise this famine will destroy the land."

- Don't STEAL from your STORAGE! **[Emergency Fund Alert!]**
 - *You cannot use your E.F. for a vacation, or eating out, or a new toy!
- WHO is IN CHARGE of setting aside and GUARDING your storage fund?
 - *Husband's and wives: Plan this! Honor this! **[How we paid off our house]**
- *This is effective only with CONSISTENCY. **[PENNIES and the Partin Family]**
 - EVERY time money comes IN, a percentage MUST be SET ASIDE.
 - This CANNOT be based on EMOTION or URGENT NEED. It must be a CONSTANT!
 - *Emotional storing (Guilt/Fear/Pressure) is RANDOM . . . at best!
 - *Remember, Joseph KEPT storing even after it grew beyond what he could COUNT! He did not let the abundance FOOL HIM. He stayed consistent!
- God prompted Joseph to use the PRINCIPLE of PERCENTAGES to help save Egypt over a SEASON of **7-14 YEARS!**
 - *This is a PROCESS; it is NOT the LOTTERY! **Theory of Finan. Relativity ☺**
 - Time slows down when saving; speeds up when spending!
 - This requires (God help us!) PATIENCE.

The concept of harnessing the power of percentages is awesome, and it can be a great blessing to your life and for your financial freedom. **But I must give you a warning here: You can apply these principles to your life without regard to God, and it will lead to your DESTRUCTION!**

Don't ignore the storehouse of your soul.

Piling up money in your own storehouse without acknowledging and worshipping the One who has blessed you with the ability to do so makes you a FOOL! Jesus told the story of an extremely rich man who had so much income that he did not have room to store it all, so he tore down his little storage facilities so that he could build several warehouses to store his wealth in. On the very day that he finished his storage plan, he died and lost it all. His storehouse was full, but his SOUL was BANKRUPT! This is why Jesus said, **"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."** Is that you? Are you so focused on filling up your earthly storehouse that you are leaving your soul empty and dry? That is a choice you are making. And this choice involves your MONEY! You cannot separate your SPIRITUAL life from your MATERIAL life. They are linked together. Jesus KNEW this, and he pressed those who listened to him to MAKE A CHOICE. **Matthew 6:24 NLT**

24 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

In every one of these messages, I have challenged you to make sure that you KNOW the difference between your SOURCE and your RESOURCES. God is our Source. Money is simply a resource. The truth is, you will either SERVE one or the other, but you CANNOT SERVE BOTH. When you surrender your LIFE to God, then he begins to teach you how to surrender your RESOURCES to him as well. And he loves to BLESS you abundantly when you surrender to him in this way.

The TRUTH is, some of you will NOT surrender your MONEY to God because you have never surrendered your SOUL to God! YOUR MONEY IS TELLING YOU WHERE YOUR TREASURE REALLY IS! **You have decided to put all of your eggs in this earthly basket. Sad. You WILL lose it all.** [C.S. LEWIS – “Aim at heaven, and get Earth thrown in; Aim at Earth, and you wind up with NEITHER!”] But if you choose to go with God and make him your treasure, then he will bless you in ways that you could not imagine. **One of the ways that he does this is by teaching us to STOCK UP treasures by GIVING them away.** This is God’s DELIGHT, and he loves to teach his children to live this way. **In fact, he has given us what one writer has called the TRAINING WHEELS of GIVING.** It is a spiritual application of what we have already learned, and it is found all throughout Scripture. It is called the TITHE.

The tithe is a faith-driven percentage plan. Malachi 3:10-12 NLT

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! 11 Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 12 "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

-It is a declaration of GRATITUDE: It ALL comes from God!

-It is an expression of TRUST: **Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV**

9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **first fruits** of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

*God urges us to TEST HIM with the tithe!

*He promises to PROTECT our income even in drought if we tithe.

-It is an act of OBEDIENCE! **Malachi 3:8-9 NLT**

8 "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings **due to me.** 9 You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me.

*Biblically: Tithing is a DEBT, not a GIFT!

-Anything less than a TENTH is NOT a tithe; it is simply a DONATION.

-It is the PRACTICE of putting your percentage into a SPIRITUAL STOREHOUSE:
Malachi 3:10a NLT
 10 Bring **all the tithes into the storehouse** so there will be enough food in my Temple.

*The Storehouse is a place committed to the spiritual life of a community.

***This is a SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT: Matthew 6:19-21 NLT**
 19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21 Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

***It is for your OWN spiritual welfare:**

- It supports MINISTRIES that build YOU up in your faith.
- It opens your heart to God's INTIMATE care **[Joe & Susan: Jamaica]**
- It STORES REWARDS for you in heaven!

***You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead!**

***It is for the spiritual welfare of the COMMUNITY around you:**

- You will be seen as a "pleasant land" that blesses others with your wealth
- Your wealth will preserve many for the glory of God!

Are you harnessing the power of percentages in your personal finances?

- *Will you commit to building an EMERGENCY FUND?
- *Will you commit to beginning a DEBT SNOWBALL?

Have you SURRENDERED your SOUL to God yet?

Are you investing as much in your FAITH as you are in your FUTURE?

- *What does your current financial portfolio say about your faith?
- *How much did you GIVE TO GOD last year?
- *Do you like the answer that you hear? [HINT: You can change it!]
- *Will you COMMIT to TITHE on your income?

Let's pray.