

Personal Finance

January 30, 2022

It's no secret that the Bible teaches us to live our lives a little differently than the world does. And that's especially true when it comes to money.

The Bible says we're to practice contentment and not covet other people's stuff (Hebrews 13:5, Exodus 20:17). But advertisers make the life you see in their commercials so appealing. You feel incomplete, so you hand over the cash, hoping to buy that happiness.

The Bible says we're to worship God above all else and not worship idols (Exodus 20:3–4, Matthew 6:24). But people often turn their material possessions—especially money—into gods without even realizing it.

And when it comes to saving, giving, and debt, it's no different. The world says one thing, but the Bible points to a better way—a way that glorifies God and actually helps us live fuller, more joyful lives (Galatians 6:8).

Hey, we get it. It's *tough* trying to resist the world's ways when it comes to money. We've all experienced temptation in that area and buckled at some point. That's why keeping God's desire for our finances front of mind is so important.

Remember these three points next time the world tempts you with its ways of handling money. You've got this!

Number 1: The world says: YOLO! You only live once! Indulge first and save later.

God says: Pay yourself by saving. *Then* enjoy the fruits of your labor.

According to the Federal Reserve, 39% of Americans don't have the cash on hand to cover a \$400 emergency. And more than half of households couldn't live without their income for just one month. Yikes! Lots of Americans definitely prioritize the present over the future.

But Proverbs 21:20 (NIV) explains the value in saving for a rainy day: “In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.” And even beyond your own household, saving can create financial stability for future generations: “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children” (Proverbs 13:22 NKJV).

It’s okay to have some fun with your money—as long as you budget for it, and as long as you **pay yourself first by tucking some of your money into savings.**

Number 2: The world says: Spend all of your money on *yourself*. There’s no way you’ll have anything left over!

God says: Give 10% off the top and work toward being able to give even beyond that.

Here’s the truth about giving: No one gives accidentally. You have to be intentional about it. That means when you budget your money each month, the first thing you should do is set aside 10% of your income for giving—even before you put anything in savings. That’s the instruction in Proverbs 3:9–10 (NKJV): “Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.” And in Malachi 3:10, God tells us those firstfruits should be a tenth of what we produce.

Lots of people say they don’t have enough money to give. But the problem might be that they don’t make it a priority. If giving doesn’t happen first, the money will never be there. That’s part of why only 5% of all adults have given 10% of their income to a church or nonprofit organization. Among born-again Christians, only 12% tithed.

Giving isn’t a priority in the world, but it’s a priority to God.

Number 3: The world says: Debt can be a tool to buy things you couldn’t otherwise have.

God says: Debt is bad. There’s no such thing as good debt.

Over the past several decades, debt has been marketed so heavily that many people feel like they can’t survive without it. In fact, eight in 10 Americans

have debt, and seven in 10 believe it's necessary.⁴ But debt has also forced people to delay or avoid expensive life events like marriage or kids, and it's caused bankruptcy, divorce and a lot of other messes.

Proverbs 22:7 (NIV) actually says, "The borrower is slave to the lender." And in Romans 13:8, Paul calls us to pay off all our debts so that the only thing we owe each other is love.

The Bible doesn't say debt is a sin, but it has nothing good to say about it and definitely discourages it. The risk you accept when taking on debt is too great to make any possible benefits worth it. Take God's word on this one and save up to pay cash for the things other people might borrow for.

The Bible is full of wisdom about handling money according to God's teachings, not the world's. Next time you're wondering what to do with your finances, turn to His word instead of the masses!

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"Information from Dave Ramsey...Financial Peace University."