

Fellowship Notes ~ Sunday, January 19th, 2020



Part 3: “Build Margin (save) / Set Long-Term Goals”

Biblical Principles of Money Management

1. God owns it all – Matthew 25:14; Psalm 24:1
2. Life is a test – Matthew 25:21; Luke 16:11-12
3. The amount is not important – Matthew 25:23
4. Faith requires action – Matthew 25:24-30

The 5 Laws of Money Management

1. Spend less than you earn
2. Avoid the use of debt
3. Build Margin (Save)
4. Set Long-Term Goals
5. Give Generously

Guidelines for Building Margin (saving) and Setting Long-Term Goals

1. Building margin into your budget through planned saving will provide you the opportunity to do what God wants you to do with His resources: build His kingdom and bless others – Matthew 6:33

Two Biblical Principles for Saving:

1. God says saving is a wise thing to do, so do it – Prov. 21:20; 6:6,8

Three Categories of Savings:

1.) Emergency Savings

For unexpected, unplanned, necessary purchases

Start with a goal of \$1,000.

Build toward having 3-6 months of living expenses saved up.

2.) Replacement Savings

For larger purchases of things that are going to wear out and need replaced

3.) Long-term Savings.

These include college education, retirement, etc.

Start with your employer's matching funds (401 (k), etc.)

Never borrow from your retirement accounts

God's Order of Priority :

1. Giving / Generosity
2. Saving
3. Lifestyle (what is leftover)

Debt – Outside of God's ideal

2. It is foolish, even sinful, to hoard God's resources – Luke 12:16-21

How do you avoid the “bigger barns” syndrome?

> Understand your own tendencies toward money

> Determine the answer to this question: “When is enough, enough?”

2. Remember: you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead –
Matthew 6:19-24

Setting Long-term Financial Goals:

- 1) If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time.
- 2) Invite God into the goal-setting process.
- 3) Long-term rewards have no short cuts.

What to Include in Setting Long-term Goals:

1. Start with the tithe (10%)
2. Give generously above your tithe
3. No credit card debt
4. Save something every paycheck
5. No consumer debt
6. Eventually no car debt
7. Plan for your children's college
8. Save for cash margins
9. Retirement plans
10. House free debt plans



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The video, audio, as well as a printable manuscript of the message and this handout are available online



Week 3 ~ Sunday, January 19th, 2020

We began this series called Master Your Money 2 weeks ago and we talked about the 5 Stages of Financial Journeys (STEPS)

1. Struggling – not able to make ends meet
2. Surviving – living paycheck to paycheck
3. Stable – able to save money with an emergency fund
4. Secure – able to save for long-term goals
5. Surplus – having more than enough to live on

Then we looked at 4 basic biblical principles of money management from Matthew 25...

(Slide)

Biblical Principles of Money Management

5. God owns it all
6. Life is a test
7. The amount is not important
8. Faith requires action

Then last Sunday we introduced the 5 Laws of financial management.

(Slide) 5 Laws of Financial Management

1. Spend less than you earn
2. Avoid the use of debt
3. Build margin (Save)
4. Set long-term goals

5. Give generously

Last Sunday we studied the first 2 steps more in depth. This morning we're going to integrate the next 2 and weave them together as we study them, and next Sunday we'll wrap-up this series by looking at #5 in more depth.

We ended last Sunday in Philippians chapter 4 and took to heart 2 of the most amazing promises in all the Word of God, these were our memory verses this past week, let's say them out loud together...

(Slide)

*"I am able to do all things through
Him who strengthens me."*

Philippians 4:13

*"And my God will supply all your needs
according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"*

Philippians 4:19

(Slide) Let's move on now to steps 3 & 4, and let's say them out loud:
3. Build Margin (Save), and 4. Set long-term goals.

Let me give you this morning some guidelines for building margin and setting long-term goals. These certainly don't exhaust what we need to consider, but they provide a starting point.

Guidelines for Building Margin (saving) and Setting Long-Term Goals

(Slide) 1. Building margin into your budget through planned saving will provide you the opportunity to do what God wants you to do with His resources: build His kingdom and bless others – Matthew 6:33

Now the culture's messages about spending are loud and they're clear: if you have it, spend it. And if you don't have it, spend it anyway. Our culture will tell you that it's futile to save because you'll never get there.

You're going to have to find some shortcuts to get there. So play the lottery, try this get-rich quick scheme, vote someone into office who's going to give you a \$1,000 a month. And a host of other shortcuts that rarely pan out and don't honor God.

Before I go any further, we have to define where there is, don't we? Get where? What is the destination the world wants you to set for the course of your life? Where does it tell you you need to go with financial management, wealth acquisition and that elusive period of life called retirement?

The answer to that is easy: It's the American Dream of course. The American Dream is your destination. Do whatever you have to do to get to the point where you have resources set aside – legal or illegal – so when you are able – the sooner the better, you can retire and set on a beach someone drinking a Bud Light with not a care in the world!

I was listening to a radio show this week about financial management. And this guy called in to the host and described his situation. He and his wife are in their mid-70's, they're retired, they've got a networth of about \$1.2 million dollars.

They have an income of \$15,000/mo. and they only need half that to live on. So his question was, should they continue saving they're money or should they do something else with it?

And the host very excitedly said, "Congratulations! You're rich!" Then he they played the sound of people clapping their hands and celebrating. He went to say, "You've achieved the American Dream..."

You're at the top of the mountain. You don't need to save any more money, in fact what you need to do now is to take your excess and spend it. Go out and enjoy life."

And after that I don't know what else he told the guy, because I turned off the radio and almost puked in my truck. Which is saying something, cause that's a cardinal sin for me cause I hardly even eat in my truck! 😊

That's the biggest bunch of garbage I've ever heard! And I guarantee you that poor guy and his wife sitting under some shade tree somewhere in Florida is going to take that advice and waste the resources God has blessed him with, thinking that he's reached the pinnacle of what life is all about!!!

The American Dream's not what life is all about, Let me show you what life is all about, this verse is our memory verse for this week, let's say it out loud together...

(Slide)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

Matthew 6:33

So you tell me, what is life all about? Is it about the American Dream or is it about something else? What 3 words describe what the life of a follower of Christ is supposed to be all about? A: The kingdom of God

And again, this statement comes with a promise: if we do what Christ says to do, and seek first HIS kingdom and HIS righteousness – that is, what He says is right to do, the promise is that all these things will be added to us.

Here's the million dollar question: What are "all these things"?

READ Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus says if we take care of God's business – His kingdom, and His righteousness – He'll take care of us – of you! Worry becomes a thing of the past when we take care of God's kingdom and His righteousness first.

There's no need to worry because God's got it all in control and He'll provide everything we need – from the food that we need, the clothing we need, and a roof over our heads. Now these are the biggie's, the big needs that we have on a daily basis.

So the point Jesus is making here is if God can take care of your biggest needs, don't you think He has the ability to take care of your smaller needs, and all your in-between needs as well? Yes, He does.

STORY: The Car God provided our family when we were in the process of planting Fellowship back in 1995. We had a need, and we were doing our best to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness – and God came through!!! Praise the Lord!!!

(By the way, this Thursday, January 23rd, is the 25-year anniversary of the first meeting of the founding members of this church. We met in our living room when we lived over on Columbine Cr. in Echo Valley. I praise God for those 19 adults who were present that night and possessed within their hearts the desire to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness here in Norwalk!!!)

So we've established that God wants us to seek His kingdom and His righteousness and bless others and when we do He'll take care of us. Now one of the ways we use our God-given resources wisely for the benefit of God and His kingdom is by saving.

Now the Bible presents two principles in regards to saving our resources:
(Slide) 1. God says saving is a wise thing to do, so do it.

“The wise store up choice food and oil, but fools gulp theirs down.”

Proverbs 21:20

The Bible goes on further to stress that if we'll save a little over time, that little will turn into a lot.

(Slide)

“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”

Proverbs 6:6,8

It's like a leaky faucet. Have you ever had a leaky faucet? If a faucet drips once per second, in one week that drip every second will add up to 50 gallons of water in just a week's time.

If you have a faucet like that, now you know why your water bill is so high. Kinda make's you want to go home and get that faucet fixed, doesn't it?!!!

Well the same principle is also true of money. If you save a little over a long period of time, guess what? It adds up to a whole lot of money.

For example, if today, you saved just 1 dollar and you put it in your piggy bank. (SHOW PIGGY BANK)

And you did that every day for the next 45 years of your life, at the end of 45 years, you'd have...

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A Dollar a Day for 45 years... \$16,425

Invested that Dollar in a Mutual Fund with a 10% rate of return... \$274,250

Charged a Dollar a Day with a 20% interest rate... \$-7,265,012

(Slide) Let me give you 3 categories of Savings:

1. Emergency Savings

For unexpected, unplanned, necessary purchases

Start with a goal of \$1,000.

Build toward having 3-6 months of living expenses saved up.

2. Replacement Savings

For larger purchases of that are going to wear out and need replaced

NOTE: The best and easiest way to hit these goals is to have these funds directly deposited into your accounts so it makes it hard for you to spend them before saving them.

3. Long-term Savings.

These include college education, retirement, etc.

Start with your employer's matching funds (401 (k), etc.), taking full advantage of what is provided for you.

Never borrow from your retirement accounts

What Should Be the Order of Priority for Your Money?

(Slide) CULTURE ORDER:

1. Lifestyle (spending to achieve the level of lifestyle you desire). This usually leads to debt.
2. Debt
3. Saving and/or Giving

GOD'S ORDER:

1. Giving / Generosity
 2. Saving
 3. Lifestyle (what is leftover)
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4. Debt – See this as outside God’s ideal for you and thus avoid it whenever possible.

Here’s the second principle in regards to saving...

(Slide) 2.) It is foolish, even sinful, to hoard God’s resources (Luke 12:16-21)

Turn to Luke 16. Read vs. 16-21.

What’s the difference between saving and hoarding? Saving is putting aside money for appropriate goals. Hoarding is stockpiling beyond our needs or using our goals as excuses to have more and more material things.

(Slide) How do you avoid the “bigger barns” syndrome?

- 1.) Understand your own tendencies toward money

What is your personal history in how you’ve handled your money? What is your family history? How are you currently handling money? Think about these things, understand your own tendencies, and if necessary, begin adjusting priorities.

- 2.) Determine the answer to this question: “When is enough, enough?”

At some point you have to draw a line and decide, this is where we stop – stop spending needlessly, stop trying to keep up with the Jones’s, stop trying to fulfill the American Dream.

With God’s help, we have to draw the line, put a cap on our spending and our lifestyle, and even our saving, and take what God has blessed us with and share with others for His kingdom sake.

Quote by Randy Alcorn:

When a man retires at sixty-five, studies show his chances of having a fatal heart attack immediately double. Our minds and bodies weren’t

made to be shut down. Nowhere in Scripture do we see God calling healthy people to stop working. So before we think about saving for retirement, we should reexamine our thinking about retirement itself. How much of what we think and assume is based on our culture, and how much is really based on God's Word and the leading of His Holy Spirit?

Of course, it's perfectly legitimate to work without pay. You might donate labor to ministries and volunteer. But as long as God has us in this world, He has work for us to do. The hours may be shorter, the work different, the pay lower or nonexistent.

But He doesn't want us to take still-productive minds and bodies and permanently lay them on a beach, lose them on a golf course, or lock them in a dark living room watching game shows.

Is saving large amounts of money for retirement as essential as we're constantly told? Paul commended the Macedonian believers in 2 Corinthians 8, not for clinging to the little they had, but for giving beyond their means.

The Macedonian Christians had virtually no material things, yet they gave beyond their means to the point of leaving themselves impoverished. If they didn't need to think of tomorrow, why do we—with all our material wealth—need to be so concerned about storing up earthly treasures for thirty years from now?

I'm not saying we can't use or shouldn't have a retirement plan. I do. But as God's children, we need to think differently about them. Our brothers and sisters in other ages didn't have them, and neither do most non-American Christians today. Yet they've found God absolutely sufficient to meet their needs. Usually the wealthy are most consumed by retirement planning simply because they have the resources to think in those terms.

I agree with Larry Burkett's assessment of the saving-for-retirement obsession: Retirement planning so dominates the thinking of Christians who have sizable incomes that they overkill in this area enormously. The fear of doing without in the future causes many Christians to rob God's work of the very funds he has provided. These monies are tucked away in retirement accounts for twenty to forty years. God's Word does not prohibit but rather encourages saving for the future, including retirement, but the example of the rich fool, given by the Lord in Luke 12:16-20, should be a clear direction that God's balance is "when in doubt—give; don't hoard."

We must ask the same question about our retirement savings as all savings. Is this reasonable planning, exercising foresight as Proverbs commends? Or is it an alternative to trusting God, a backup in case God doesn't come through? How is maintaining a generous retirement plan fundamentally different from the rich fool storing up for his later years to live out his life in comfort and security? We know what Jesus thought of that man's retirement plans. Why should we assume He thinks differently about ours? We should study this passage and compare our attitudes, behavior (including giving), and plans for the future to that man's, and ask how different we are from him. If there's no difference, obviously we need to change something."

Guidelines for Building Margin (saving) and Setting Long-Term Goals

(Slide) 2. Remember: you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead – Matthew 6:19-24 (READ)

The whole context of what we looked at in regards to saving in verses 25 through the end of the chapter, is set up here in these verses where Jesus teaches about how we should handle our possessions.

His main idea is simple: it's pointless to build up a whole lot of possessions and material goods in this life, because before we know it this life is done and over and we can't take any of those things with us to the next life.

BUT... we can build up possessions in heaven with how we handle our money down here through our giving, through generosity to God and His kingdom, and to others, and we'll have those possessions in heaven for all eternity!!!

When I give, and when you give, we're making deposits into the bank of heaven. And no one ever robs the bank of heaven. That bank is insured not by the FDIC, but by the TGIA – The Great I Am.

The bank of heaven has never shut down because it's impervious to the changing winds of financial depressions and recessions. What we've deposited into the bank of heaven by our faithful giving in this life will be there when we get there, and it will last for forever.

Now here's an unstated idea that Jesus is saying here: How you and I manage our money and our God-given resources now, gives evidence to what we believe and what we say we believe about God, about heaven, and about eternity.

You say you believe these truths? You say you believe Jesus when He says that you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead? Question: How much then are you sending on ahead by your giving to God and in your generosity to others?

If you could log onto the app that God's Heavenly Bank uses, and you could see how much you've sent on ahead already by your giving, what would your balance reveal? Would you rejoice? Or would you drop your head in shame?

If you think you'd feel that way now, do you really think it's going to be any different when you actually ARE in heaven, and God pulls out your deposits and shows them to you and gives them to you as He looks down into your eyes...how do you think you'll feel then?

I wonder how many Christians there are who are members of Bible-preaching churches like ours, who teach God's principles for Mastering Your Money...

And they know what God says In His Word and they know what God wants them to do, and still they refuse to give even a single penny to the kingdom of God through their local church?

They don't have a problem buying another couch that's going to rot in a dump someday. They don't have a problem spending money on another car or another trip, or a new cell phone plan, or on anything that in itself isn't wrong to have...

But instead of spending out of their excess, they're spending resources they know God wants them to give so His kingdom can spread around the community and around the world!

And when they get to heaven someday I wonder if they're going to be shocked by how little they've sent on ahead and they'll wish they could do it over, but it's too late.

So let's touch on long-term goals and then we'll call it a day.

In case you've missed this so far, long-range goals aren't just goals that deal with issues of retirement or what you're going to do in your twilight years. Long-term goals include thinking and planning for eternity as well.

Here's what you need to remember about setting long-term goals:

(Slide) 1.) If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time.

In other words, if you don't set goals, you're going to hit your target, which will be nothing. You'll get to the end of your life and not only will you not have what you need in your twilight years, you won't have anything in the Bank of Heaven either when you show up there.

(Slide) 2.) Invite God into the goal-setting process.

It's His money, right? No one wants you to use it more wisely than He does, right? So Pray and ask God to show you what He wants you to do in regards to giving and being generous, and savings for retirement, and steps you need to take now so when you get to your twilight years and eventually to heaven, you'll have the resources HE wants you to have.

In His book Master Your Money, Ron Blue gives some really good steps on the goal-setting process. I highly encourage you to get his book and read it.

(Slide) 3.) Long-term rewards have no short cuts.

So what are some long-term financial goals you should consider?

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Setting Long-term Goals

1. Start with the tithe (10%)

This is the baseline of obedience to God. It's the starting point.

Can you start by giving 2%? Then 3, then 4, etc.? Yes, but understand, you're not honoring God and being obedient until you actually tithe 10%.

Disobedience is still disobedience. God can help you do this and we can too. (Freed-Up Financial Living Class)

2. Give generously above your tithe (as you are able increase this over time)

3. No credit card debt.

A couple once purchased a washer/dryer and the plans called for them to make payments for 2 years. The payments were \$47/mo., but on the statement they got in the mail, it said they could just pay \$23 a month. So they did that.

After 2 years they were all excited to have their washer/dryer paid off. But then they got another statement that said they still owed money so they called the company and found out that for 2 years they had been paying the minimum amount each month which was the interest on the balance, it wasn't the balance.

They literally still owed the total price for the washer/dryer after 2 years because all they paid was the interest.

4. Save something every paycheck.
A good goal is again 10%.
5. No consumer debt
- (Slide)
6. Eventually, no car debt.
7. Plan for your children's college.
8. Save for cash margin (3-6 months of expenses)
9. Retirement Plans
10. House-free debt Plans

I want to encourage to sit down with your spouse (if you're married), pray together and ask God to help you set long-term financial goals that honor Him.

Now if you cut the first two categories, don't expect God to give you wisdom and help you. He's not going to help you dishonor Him. But He'll help you if your heart's desire is to honor Him faithfully.

Then if you feel so led, meet with your financial planner, and ask their assistance as well. Before we get any further into another year, set some long-term goals that will help you make the most of God's resources that He's allowed you to manage.

On the radio program I was listening to this week, they made this statement, "Money doesn't come with instructions." And they're absolutely right.

That's why we need the manual to handling money – God's Word – and when we do things God's way, money doesn't become something we love or loath or are afraid of or something that destroys us.

It becomes a means of building God's kingdom, of blessing others and of storing up treasures in heaven forever.