

# HOW TO AVOID A FINANCIAL COLLAPSE

## Figuring Out Your Finances - Part2

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**Intro:** A lot of people think that the Bible doesn't have anything to do with life today: That's baloney! Issues like money and possessions are ALL THROUGH the Bible. In fact, In the Bible, there are 40 verses on baptism , 275 verses on prayer , 350 verses on faith , 650 verses on love -- and 2,350 verses that relate specifically to finances and material possessions

The Bible has TONS to say about how to manage the money and blessings that God has for you. It's the oldest and most reliable financial guide in the world. So today, I want to talk to you about the Bible's:

Principles for Financial Sanity

...keeping money matters from driving you nuts.

Would you agree that as Americans, we have more than ever before?

- 20% of Americans have items stored in the U.S.'s 40,000 storage facilities. USA Today 2003
- \$58 billion for soda products, \$24 billion in jewelry store sales, \$8 billion for movies theaters, \$13 billion for chocolate products, \$38 billion in vending machine sales, \$11 billion for comp/video games, \$7 billion greeting cards, \$23 billion for toys, \$91 billion in lawn/garden industry, \$23 billion for pets. Source: Empty Tomb Research

Would you also agree that we have more stress than ever before?

- Average credit card debt per U.S. household is \$8400. Source: Cardweb.com
- Americans spent more on legalized gambling (\$2500 for every American) than on groceries. \$650,000,000,000 (\$650 billion) was spent on legalized gambling in 1997 compared to \$450,000,000,000 spent in grocery stores. Source: Focus on the Family article on the 1997 US abstract reports
- 1.5 million bankruptcies in 2002 (more than the ENTIRE decade of the 1960's).US Courts
- Financial problems are the largest contributing cause of marital stress and divorce.

God predicted this over 3,000 years ago:

“The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.”  
(Ecclesiastes 5:12)

In other words, more money = more stress. That's backwards from the way that we usually think. We think “If I had more money, I could relax.” But check out these quotes:

“I was happier when I was doing a mechanic's job.”

— Henry Ford (1863-1947), American industrialist

“Take it from me. . . fame and fortune are not what they're cracked up to be.” - madonna

“I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.” — John D. Rockefeller,

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Sr. (1839-1937), American industrialist and philanthropist

SO WHAT IS THE ANSWER? How can I find financial sanity in all of the stress? How Can I avoid financial collapse and the stress that comes with it!

The Bible says that God uses money to test you. In fact it's all through the Bible but Jesus said this in Luke 16:11 *"If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches."* Circle "handling worldly wealth". He's talking there about money management. Today I want us to look at God's five financial principles for financial stability. Last week we looked at the first two so today we will look at the last three.

### 3. SAVE FOR THE FUTURE

This is obviously the **Principle of Saving**. Proverbs 21:20 *"The wise man saves for the future* According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the savings rate in January of 06 was a *negative 0.7%* -- that is, the average American household spent 0.7% more than it made- Motley Fool 2006. The savings rate has been in a steady decline since spending most of the 1970s above 10%. 06-08 were a negative savings rate -- the first time since the Great Depression.

This year's dramatic shift in the economy found many Americans without a 'rainy day' fund. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and saw their

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401(k) wiped out. Do you know what has happened? Personal savings rate has climbed to its highest level in the past 15 years while U.S. consumer outstanding credit plunged in recent months. Having directly seen the impact of facing a recession without a cushion, many Americans are becoming thriftier and savvier in managing their money

read recently that the average Japanese family saves 25% of their income – puts it in Proverbs 13:11 says “*Money that comes easily disappears quickly. But money that is gathered little by little will grow.*” Look at this verse. First, “*Money that comes easily disappears quickly.*” Did you know the Bible says this: Don’t get involved in get rich quick schemes.

Many times in Proverbs it says, Do not get involved in get rich quick schemes. Easy come, easy go. They are a sure sign for disaster. Instead it says, add it up, gather it little by little. That is consistent regular savings. So Plan your spending. Save for the future.

There’s a fourth principle of financial stability.

#### **4. The Principle of Tithing. RETURN A CERTAIN PERCENT TO GOD.**

The Bible calls this the Principle of Tithing. In the Old Testament Ten percent of all a person made went back to God. Most of you are familiar with this truth, But some of you are new so I need to review this. The Bible says in Malachi 3:10 and many other places.

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*“Bring to My storehouse a full tenth [that’s the word “tithes”. Tithes means ten.] of what you earn. Test Me in this,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour out all the blessings that you need.’”* Notice that’s a promise. God says the first ten- percent of all I make goes back to Him. Why do I do that? Why did God say to give ten- percent back to Him? Beats me! I haven’t the slightest idea of why He said to give ten percent back. He could have said to give fifty percent. He could have said give ninety percent and you live on ten percent.

But God instituted the principle of tithing for three reasons. It takes care of your past. It takes care of your present. It takes care of your future. Whenever I tithe, if I make ten bucks, the first dollar goes back to God. If I make a hundred bucks, the first ten bucks goes back to God – right off the top. Why? Three reasons.

First, in my past. It’s a statement of gratitude. Whenever I tithe it’s saying, “God, I realize all this came from You and if it wasn’t for You I wouldn’t have any money anyway. I wouldn’t have my life. I wouldn’t have my intelligence, my health to work. So in gratitude realizing it all really comes from You the first ten percent goes back to You in gratitude.

In the present. It’s a statement of priority. It says, “God, I want You to be number one in my life so right off the tip, the first part of my money goes back to You as a statement of priority that You’re number one in my life.” I could say

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God's number one but if I'm not tithing He's really not number one. What I do with my money and what I do with my time really show what's important to me.

It's a statement of faith in God in the future. "God, You've made all these promises – this is one of them – that you'll take care of me if I put You first in my money. So, I'm going to tithe.

Even though I don't have it, I'm going to give the first ten percent back to You in a statement of faith that I believe that You will take care of me in the future."

Gratitude in the past. Priority in the present. Faith in the future. Notice that God says "test me in this, says the Lord." Circle "test me." This is the Pepsi Challenge verse of the Bible. There's only one place in the Bible where God says you can prove He exists. He says, "Prove Me, test Me. See if I won't keep My promise. Tithe." So I dare you. I dare you to tithe. I dare you to say, "Ok, God the first ten percent goes back to you. See if God won't keep His promise.

When are you supposed to do it? Next verse "*On every Lord's day [that's Sunday] you should put aside something from what you've earned during the week and use it for the offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn.*" 1 Corinthians 16:2 This is the Principle of tithing in the New Testament- A Certain Amount based on what you have earned-on the Sunday to the place you fellowship with other believers. So in the New Testament it is no longer a legalistic obligation but a It's to be a weekly reminder.

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God, You're first. Obviously God doesn't need my money. He doesn't need your money either. So why does He say to do this? It's what it represents. The Bible says "*Wherever your treasure is, your heart is also.*"

We spend most of our lives talking about money, thinking about money, earning money, spending money, saving money, investing money, getting anxious about money.

God says He wants this area of our life to be in His control too. He doesn't need my money but He wants what it represents – my heart. If I give a regular and consistent portion of my income then, my heart really isn't with Him.

Keep good records, plan your spending, save for the future, return ten- percent back to God. One more principle if you want to be financially stable.

#### **5. ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE**

This is the **Principle of Contentment**. This one is being violated all over America. Ecclesiastes 6:9 says "*It is better to be satisfied with what you have than always to be wanting something more.*" In America, people are so busy getting more they do not have time to enjoy what they have. They buy these beautiful houses and then they're never there because they're out working. It goes like this: First phase, your yearnings exceed your earnings. So you go out and find a house you really want. You can't afford it but you really want it. Or a house or a car or a boat or some event or something. And you overextend yourself

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financially because you're reaching for something a little too high for. Then as a result, you're overextended and you have to constantly hustle to make ends meet. You're working really hard to make ends meet and after year after year of hustling, family life begins to deteriorate. Everybody is exhausted. Everybody gets cranky. You don't have time for each other, much less time for the kids. We have an epidemic of absentee parents.

Kids don't need things. They need parents. I worry about what affluence is doing to our kids. I think about this a lot. I know we have these myths: "I'm going to give you quality time." Kids don't need quality time. They need quantity time. Quality time is a myth. If I were to ask my kids, "Would you rather have a real good quality minute of Dad's time or would you rather have me just hang out with you all day?" There's no question about what they're going to say. They just want me to hang out with them. I don't necessarily have to be doing what they're doing. It's just being around. We may sitting on a couch and they're playing a game or watching TV and I'm reading or something but at least we're together and there's some interaction there.

Hebrews 13:5 "*Be content with what you have.*" The Bible tells us that you will never ultimately be satisfied by things. Isaiah 55:2 says "*Why do you spend your money on that which doesn't satisfy?*" Why do things not ultimately satisfy? They do for a while. You get a new gizmo and it's cool! But six months later it's

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not cool any more. You get a new car, a new painting, a new dress, a new something and it's great but in six months, a year, it's not new anymore. Things don't change so human beings get bored with them. We like to see some change. Human beings are constantly changing. But things don't change. That's why you have to redecorate, because the things you use to think were so cool, isn't cool any more. It isn't appealing any more. Things don't change. So ultimately nothing is ever going to satisfy you. No thing is ever going to satisfy you ultimately.

The root of all your financial difficulties, the root of your financial stress and problems is at the bottom level an issue of values and trust. What's going to be more important? People or things? Things or relationships? And what am I going to trust in to make me happy? God or material blessings? Whatever I trust for my happiness, whatever I trust for my security is my god.

**Conclusion:** Here's the fact: If you are feeling the pressure of finances in your life today, and if you are spending it all and saving nothing and if you find yourself, as a couple, constantly arguing about this issue, that is a warning light of a deeper problem. It's not your real problem.

There's a deeper problem. All the financial pressure is a symptom.

What's the real problem? Out of control finances are a symptom of an out of control life. Mismanaged money is a symptom is a symptom of a mismanaged life.

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Yes, you do need God's principles of money management but you need more than that. You need a life manager. His name is Jesus Christ. He can do the job that you can't do.