

The Financial Freedom Seminar

God's Got the Plan – Do you have the faith?

-I got some good news, "I just saved a ton of money on my _____".

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-There is a lot of pain and heartache in many people's lives because of money. Can that ever change?

If you haven't taken the "Financial Health Quiz" at the end of the first lesson, please take it.

God has the plan – do you have the faith?

-**Hebrews 11: 1** - Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

-**Romans 10:17** - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

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### Three Foundational Truths about Money

#### 1) God owns it all.

-**Psalm 24:1** - "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it".

Our wealth belongs to us in the same way that a child's bedroom belongs to the child. The room actually belongs to the parent, but the child is given temporary charge over it.

#### 2) God talks often about money.

-2350 verses in the Bible on money.

-Jesus talked often about money

\*His parables - 16 of 38 deal with money or possessions – 42%.

\*In the NT, 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith - but more than 2000 on money!

\*One out of 10 verses or 288 verses in the Gospels, deal with money.

-Why? – because our heart is where our treasure is.

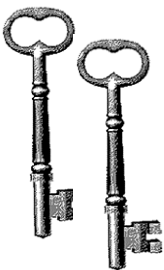
#### 3) God has a plan so that money is a blessing.

1 **Timothy 6:17** – "(God) richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." And share!

*God has the plan – do you have the faith?*

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Four Keys to Your Financial Freedom



Key #1 - Give to God first.

Key #2 – Live on less than your current income.

*How to live on **less** than your current income?*

1) **Make Christ your #1 satisfaction.**

-Financial problems stem from spiritual problems. Jesus: "Your treasure is where your heart is".

-**Luke 12:15** - Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

-Money and things were never meant to be substitutes for the Lord.

-**Philippians 4:11-13** - Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

-Money and possessions won't fulfill you.

-**Ecclesiastes 5:10** - He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

-Solomon the wisest man who has ever lived puts it this way in this passage in Ecclesiastes –“it is vanity” – “empty achievement” – “a worthless cause”.

-The Beatles were right – “Money can't buy me love”

-The Rolling Stones were right - “I can't get no satisfaction” no matter how hard we try... from the things of this earth.

- Someone has rightly said - "He Who Dies with the Most Toys, Still Dies"

2) **Slash your standard of living.**

-Know the difference between a want and a need.

Discuss - Don't let the world define what you need. Share some pressure you have recently received regarding a material thing. “You don't have a _____”?!!

-What do we **really** need?

-**1 Timothy 6:7-10** - But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

-Take the “cold turkey approach” – Harmful addictions go away best through starvation.

-Smaller house

-Sell what you aren't using regularly

-Kill the cable TV

-Sell what you really can't afford to pay down debt

-Quit eating out

-What else? _____

3) Get out of debt.

There is a major epidemic problem in this country today. Consumer debt – unsecured debt (not auto or mortgage if collateralized) – is it just plain greed?

-60% of Americans debt spend- credit card debt.

-Average credit card debt of debt spenders is \$12,000.

-Personal Credit Card Debt - cardweb.com which tracks credit card debt (while at the same time advertising and encouraging more use of credit cards) says in:

1990 \$216 Billion in credit card debt.

1995 \$378 Billion

1999 \$569 Billion

2006 \$807 Billion

But companies continue to keep sending us Credit card offers – why?

-**Proverbs 22:7** - The borrower becomes the lender's slave.

- Plastic prison bars - credit card debt is tearing apart lives like very few things today.

-**TEAR UP THE CREDIT CARDS!**

The average person drives on a bond-financed highway, in a bank-financed car, fueled by charge card-financed gasoline, going to purchase furniture on an installment plan to put in a savings and loan-financed home.

-So what's the alternative to debt spending?

-**"Delayed gratification"** – Wait, wait, wait - When we debt spend we actually lower our purchasing power. Don't pay interest on interest.

How to get out of debt:

1) Give to God first (see frequently asked questions below).

-If your pie has shrunk because of debt, get a bigger pie!!

2) Refinance/consolidate what you can. "You don't have because you don't ask" (James 4:2).

-Professional and lay free help – www.financialhope.com

2) Pay off small loans first.

3) Pay off high interest debts.

4) Pay back all debts – even after bankruptcy. –**Psalm 37:21** - "The wicked borrow and don't pay back".

4) Develop a **3 month emergency fund (minimum)**. (*3 months of expenses*)

-We must prepare for lean times.

-**Proverbs 30:24-25** - Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer;

One of the major reasons people first get into debt is unexpected expenses.

5) Save **10% of your income (minimum)**.

-Is your money burning a hole in your pocket? Do you spend it as soon as you get it?

-Proverbs 21:20 - In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.

In 2005, the personal savings rate in the United States was negative 0.5 percent, which was by far the lowest of any industrialized nation. In France, the savings rate was 11.6 percent. Germany figured in at 10.6 percent. Japan's rate measured 6.7 percent. - Source: Forbes magazine (Sept. 5, 2006).

-Financial Freedom - Victorious Testimony – An anonymous letter from one of our members:**

"Dear Joe,

We had \$15,000 in credit card debt when you preached a sermon on finances. In your sermon, you said credit card debt was an evidence of greed. Well, the Lord really hit me hard with that, as I had never thought of myself as a greedy person. But the Lord showed me the truth of that as I began to think about the way I used credit cards to allow me to do what I really wanted to do. You demonstrated from the Word that the way out of debt, and the way into financial blessing was to give to the Lord out of grace and a thankful heart.

You encouraged us that ten percent was only a beginning point, and that we should also give to the poor. In response to your sermon, we began to do several things: 1) Stop using credit cards 2) Tithe first before paying bills or saving, from our gross and not net - "giving from the first fruits". 3) Adopting a child from Compassion International (we call this the FBCWR "Compassion Challenge" – to adopt one child for \$32 a month to help the poor and to get the gospel to them – which is what Compassion Intl. does). 4) Giving occasional thank offerings unconnected to tithing, just as we saw God bless us in other non-finance related areas.

We just can't believe how God has blessed since then - raises, better pay and benefits, unexpected bonuses, tax refunds, etc. It's hard to describe to another person how you know it's supernatural, but when it happens you know it's God, and you can just see the flow of God you have talked about several times in sermons related to money and giving.

It seems like money starts to move toward you instead away from you, when you do it God's way. Our credit card debt is down to \$1900, and rapidly diminishing.

The greatest thing really is the spiritual blessing. God showed us an interesting spiritual truth - Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". We usually take that in a negative sense, but there is also a positive truth there - when you give your money to God and His people, your heart becomes bound up in God and His people - it truly blesses you spiritually with a greater love for God and His people.

Thanks for preaching the Word, Joe, even the hard truths - it has changed our lives so much!

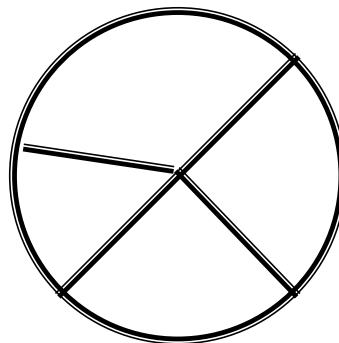
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### ***-Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ***

#### **1) How can I give when I don't make much money – should I pray for a raise?**

Faith is the bottom line for your bottom line – God asks us to go first. When we give, He promises to give us a bigger pie.

When you can't seem to add another expense to your pie chart ...



Get a bigger pie!

– Consider that Jesus did not chase down the widow in the widow's mite story (below) to return her money. Why do you think He didn't chase her? \_\_\_\_\_

**-Luke 21:1-4** - And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

-Maybe we should not ask, "How much am I giving to God?" but, "How much am I keeping for myself?"

**2) Should I give to God first when I am in debt?** - Depends on how much blessing you want.

1) Making the Lord our priority will open our eyes to how we spend the rest of our money.

2) If God promises to make our pie bigger and rebuke the devourer if we give generously to him first, then giving to God first will help get us out of debt faster!

3) Larry Burkett, who helped more Christians get out of debt and get back on track than anyone who has ever lived, taught "the first check we write should be to God and not even a creditor".

4) Even secular sources recognize the value of prioritizing giving to God first.

- Stephanie Boddie, Ph.D., assistant professor of social work at Washington University in St. Louis. "People who donate money on a regular basis take a closer look at where their money is going. This can lead to more financial responsibility in the areas of debt repayment and asset building. Planned-giving practices such as tithing help congregation members focus on their spending and saving habits because they pay more attention to how they use the rest of their money."

- The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act of 1998, signed by President Clinton, had allowed tithing and charitable giving up to 15% of income under the federal bankruptcy code.

- The US Congress believed bankruptcy had become too easy and passed the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act in 2005. Congress later amended the law to overturn a court trial based on the Act which had disallowed tithing.

*So giving to God first while in debt is protected **and even encouraged** by secular law.*

*God has the plan – do you have the faith?*

### **Food for thought:**

Where is your faith attacked when it comes to spending? \_\_\_\_\_

*See you next time!*

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