

Financial Freedom

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Freedom through Contentment . . .

Do you struggle with managing money? Do you never seem to have enough to make ends meet? Maybe you secretly envy the financial wealth of others. Whether you have a great deal of money or very little, until you really believe that the money in your possession is not your money but God's money, your finances will always be a source of discontent. Our heavenly Father owns it all, yet we worry and fret over not having enough. We manipulate to get more . . . then agonize over losing what we have. Freedom from this preoccupation with money (financial bondage) involves more than having enough money to bask in the shade of a prosperous lifestyle. It's more than learning to budget expenses, to save regularly, to invest wisely. True financial freedom is being content with what God gives you. And contentment is a matter of the heart!

*"Keep your life free from love of money,
and be content with what you have."
(Hebrews 13:5)*

Q: "Will I be wealthy if I follow God's financial principles for managing money?"

God gives no guarantees about being wealthy. He has different reasons for allowing poverty in the world and for giving wealth to those who do not honor Him. But God does give us many principles in the Bible to help us become wise in the matter of money. Ultimately, we are to trust in His sovereign control over all things, knowing that He does have a plan and a purpose, even in what may seem unfair.

*"The rich and the poor meet together;
the LORD is the maker of them all."
(Proverbs 22:2)*

Q: "Many parables that Jesus told focus on handling money. Why did Jesus link our spiritual condition so closely with finances?"

Sixteen of the 38 parables deal with the relationship between money and our spiritual motivation. Why? Perhaps because the two basic sins of idolatry and greed are closely associated with the love of money.

*"You may be sure of this, that everyone
who is sexually immoral or impure,
or who is covetous (that is, an idolater),
has no inheritance in the kingdom
of Christ and God."
(Ephesians 5:5)*

Signs of Possible Debt Problems

Before you become enslaved to debt, it would be wise to look at the negative habits you may have already developed and to begin to change the way you handle money. If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you may have a debt problem.

- Do you pay only the minimum on credit card balances?
- Do you get cash advances from credit cards to pay other expenses?
- Do you acknowledge that you have no savings account that's steadily accruing money?
- Do you use savings to pay credit card bills?
- Do you send in payments past the due dates?
- Do you avoid opening your mail?
- Do you put money in the bank after you have paid your bills?
- Do you wait until the last minute to pay your taxes?
- Do you have family conflicts over money?

*"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."
(Romans 13:8)*

Lifestyles That Lead to Debt

- Living life with distorted values (Matthew 6:1)
- Living life through escape mechanisms (Luke 12:15)
- Living a life of indolence (Proverbs 10:4)
- Living life by means of credit and borrowing (James 4:13–14)
- Living life unprepared (Haggai 1:5–6)
- Living a life of selfishness (Jeremiah 5:28)

*"The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor."
(Proverbs 12:24)*

Key Verses to Memorize

*"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"
(Luke 16:10–11)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Matthew 6:25–34

Five Principles of Managing Money

1. The Law of *Contentment* (Philippians 4:12)

- Remind yourself that God owns it all!
(Psalm 50:12)

2. The Law of *Self-control* (Colossians 3:5)

- Start by transferring ownership of everything you own to God. (Haggai 2:8)
- Separate yourself from the financial sins of greed and idolatry. (Romans 6:1–2)

3. The Law of *Stewardship* (Matthew 25:23)

- Recognize that you are accountable to God for how you spend money.
- Return the first tenth of your earnings to God—this must be a commitment. (Genesis 14:20)

4. The Law of *Giving*

- Give on a regular basis. (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- Give sacrificially by giving up some of your own desires. (2 Corinthians 8:3)

5. The Law of *Petition*—How to Pray for Your Needs

- Are you willing to accept God's will with a submissive heart? (Mark 14:36)

Canceling Debt

Identify Your Debt Situation

- Make an inventory of your assets.
- Identify your income.
- Describe your debts.
- Approximate your monthly bills.

Consider Your Lifestyle

- Consider what you could do without.
- Look for what you can substitute.
- Reconsider gift giving.

Establish Financial Goals

- List future expenditures.
- Consider future career changes.
- Prepare for family changes.
- State your future financial goals.

Take Action with Your Finances

- Pay extra on your debts.
- Change your lifestyle.
- Establish a savings plan.
- Establish a giving plan.

*“Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.”
(Proverbs 6:5)*

Related Financial Freedoms . . .

- Abortion Prevention:
Not a Choice, but a Child
- The Blended Family:
God's Recipe for Success
- Infertility:
Building Hope from Broken Dreams
- Parenting:
Steps for Successful Parenting
- Pregnancy . . . Unplanned:
I'm Pregnant?

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Financial Freedom:

Principles of Wise Money Management.

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. For this section see Kay Marshall Strom and Douglas R. Donnelly, *The Complete Adoption Handbook*, rev. and updated ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 138-9.
2. Strom and Donnelly, *The Complete Adoption Handbook*, 139.
3. Frederica Mathewes-Green, *Real Choices: Offering Practical, Life-Affirming Alternatives to Abortion* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1994), 128; Sylvia Boothe, *No Easy Choices* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 1990), 43-56.



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