

FINDING FINANCIAL FREEDOM

We in America are living on the precipice of a fall into financial failure. I am certainly no economics professor, and my avowed methods would be declared foolish by those who are, but I hope you will listen to me today for your personal good and the good of the church we all love.

The pursuers of personal wealth seem to have ignored the facts that face them. We are no longer a wealthy nation. Our perception of wealth is based upon a lie—owing a lot is not wealth!

Our country is burdened by debt. The current national debt as of December 7, 2021 was \$28,909,682,281,000.00

That figure is no longer accurate! It was on Dec, 7 2021, but not now. The reason is, it is changing by \$14,850,000,000 per day. That is over a million dollars per minute. That my friend is over 525 billion dollars per year and that is if we quit spending any additional funds right now.

We have squandered the great wealth of this land and along with it the personal wealth of virtually every American. Your share of the current national debt is 87,000 per person.

That means that those of you who have 4 children are ½ million in debt before you count your payments and credit card debts.

Yet, we Americans sit back and count the stimulus checks and marvel that anyone would think there is a problem. There is a problem and it is the appearance of affluence.

In case you are wondering what this has to do with the Word of God, I beg of you to listen further.

Few are the couples who have not at one time or another had a confrontational discussion regarding their lack of finances. In fact, most marriage counseling guides list money problems as being high on the list of why couples break up. In my own years of counseling troubled couples, I have determined that the others are right in assigning high culpability for marital problems to finances. I would differ with them only slightly in how far up the list it ranks.

A case could be made that almost all money problems among Christians are spiritual in nature. There are two main plans for financial success—the world's way, and God's way.

The world's way is to think logically about your finances. For instance: if you have one hundred dollars income, you pay your bills and save what you can for your needs. If there is anything left over, God gets it!

The Lord's way is to obey Him with tithes and offerings and trust Him for your needs—if there is anything left over, you get it!

Most young couples start out logically.

Before long they are in financial trouble. No matter how much they make, it just doesn't seem to go around. It is never enough! They have accepted the financial philosophy of the swamp in Washington D.C. and their excess has become an abscess on their success.

It is then that they begin to cast blame for their woes. Usually, they look at their partner for the source of the problem. "He doesn't make enough" and "she spends too much" are oft heard phrases by those who counsel troubled marriages because of finances.

Everywhere one looks today, we see people struggling to pay bills and keep their marriages intact. I believe it is because they chose the world's way instead of God's way.

God has made a promise to us in Malachi. You are aware of it. Let me read it to you anyway.

(Mal 3:8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

(Mal 3:9) Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

(Mal 3:10) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

(Mal 3:11) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Either God told us the truth in this passage or He lied to us. I believe the book! God cannot lie! It is against His nature! His promises are true!

One cannot rob God and receive His blessings. If you know someone that appears to be the exception to the rule, I want you to know that their so-called blessing is not coming from God—it is coming from satan himself, the original counterfeiter also counterfeits blessings.

Families are troubled financially because they believe the world instead of God! I am going to make three statements this morning. You may argue with them if you wish, but you will remain deceived until you accept the truth of them and let them dictate the rest of your life.

(Luk 6:38) Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

God says plainly: do it my way and you will have abundance—do it your way and reap the desperate consequences.

God's way is simple:

(1) WHEN HE BOUGHT YOU, EVERYTHING YOU HAVE BECAME HIS!

(1Co 6:19) What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

(1Co 6:20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

A) MANY APPROACH SERVICE TO GOD AS IF HE NOW OWNS THE SPIRIT, BUT NOT THE BODY

1) He now owns you totally, body, soul and spirit.

2) Everything you are and everything you have, is because of Him.

B) ANYTHING, INCLUDING FINANCES, WHICH YOU KEEP BACK FROM HIM, IS STEALING FROM HIM!

1) Many people would never steal from another person, yet, give no thought to stealing from God.

2) God is entitled to all of your money—He owns it all—He just requires 10% to go into His ministries.

3) We do not show love toward God with tithes—He requires an offering for that.

(2) HE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO USE WHAT IS HIS WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES!

(Mal 3:9) Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

A) THEY WERE CURSED AND COULD NOT PROSPER BECAUSE THEY HAD REVERTED TO THE WORLD'S WAY

(Hag 1:5) This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you!

(Hag 1:6) You have planted much but harvested little. You have food to eat, but not enough to fill you up. You have wine to drink, but not enough to satisfy your thirst. You have clothing to wear, but not enough to keep you warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

(Hag 1:7) "This is what the LORD Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you! NLT.

1) Many times couples blame each other, but it is the Lord's doing!

2) You can't make enough to prosper by robbing God—sooner or later, He will take it from you!

If satan gives it to you, sooner or later, he too will take it away!

B) HOW WOULD YOU TREAT SOMEONE WHO STOLE FROM THEIR BENEFACTOR?

1) It is different to steal from someone you don't know, and someone you do know.

2) It is far worse to steal a dime from someone who gave you a dollar!

(3) YOUR INCREASE WILL TURN TO DECREASE IF YOU DO IT YOUR WAY.

A) MANY PEOPLE TODAY FORSAKE TRUST IN HIM AND DECIDE TO PROVIDE THROUGH DEBT. (432 million credit cards)

1) The average family in America today has almost \$20,000 on credit cards. Those who make a lot of money have a much greater debt.

2) Most cards are designed to keep you paying for a lifetime. Average interest is 19%

B) SOME DECIDE TO NOT GIVE TITHES AND OFFERINGS UNTIL THEY GET "CAUGHT UP" IN THEIR BILLS

1) The big problem with this kind of thinking is that those people view all their money as theirs!

2) We are stewards—once we become Christians, none of it belongs to us—you are just entrusted to use it for Him!

C) THE AVERAGE HOME TODAY IS DESPERATE BECAUSE THEY HAVE ROBBED GOD AND VIOLATED HIS PRINCIPLES.

1) People become slaves to the world because they are so indebted to the world!

2) God says to use what He gives to us, wisely!

(GIVE TITHES AND OFFERINGS, PUT THE REST TO WORK FOR HIM SO THAT YOU CAN GIVE EVEN MORE OFFERINGS.)

(4) YOU WILL THRIVE IF YOU DO IT HIS WAY!

(Luk 12:13) And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

(Luk 12:14) And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

(Luk 12:15) And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

(Luk 12:16) And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

(Luk 12:17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

(Luk 12:18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

(Luk 12:19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

(Luk 12:20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

(Luk 12:21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

(Luk 12:22) And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

(Luk 12:23) The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

(Luk 12:24) Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

(Luk 12:25) And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

(Luk 12:26) If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

(Luk 12:27) Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

(Luk 12:28) If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

(Luk 12:29) And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

(Luk 12:30) For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

(Luk 12:31) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(Luk 12:32) Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

(Luk 12:33) Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

A) HIS WAY IS TO TRUST HIM FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS.

1) We want to trust Him until it looks to us like things are out of control

2) We are the crowning act of creation—surely God pays most attention to us.

(Luk 12:24) Look at the ravens. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds!
NLT.

B) HIS WAY IS TO NOT HOARD!

1) Hoarding tends to make one believe they are responsible for their good fortune.

2) Hoarding tends to cause a person to forget their dependency upon God

C) HIS WAY IS TO GIVE AT ALL COSTS

1) He says, if you don't have enough to give alms, sell something!

(Luk 12:33) "Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven have no holes in them. Your treasure will be safe – no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. NLT.

2) Our primary text says the way to get is to give.

(Luk 6:38) Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Families are being wrecked financially because they leave God out of their portfolios. They begin to look more toward the interest the world can give them, than what God can give them.

With God's help, we are going to begin a stewardship campaign. You may be already giving far above what God requires of you. If so, just sit back, amen me when I preach, and watch God work in our church. If you are already faithful in your giving, I am not asking you to give more, but I am asking for your support as I try to teach us all about being good stewards of God's blessings to us.

What God wants most from us is for us to make Him preeminent in our lives—not just the “spiritual side” but in totality. He wants you; your heart, your soul, your body, and your strength.

Make no mistake; He has ways of getting what He wants!