

**The Bible and Personal Finances  
Part 2**

This morning we will continue our examination of certain basic biblical truths related to our personal finances.

And I can guarantee you that if we would in fact understand these basic biblical truths and apply them to our lives these truths will dramatically impact the way we are managing our financial resources. And this is a very good thing!

What does **2 Corinthians 5:17** tell us? This is what it tells us. **“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”** Christ did not save us in order that we might remain forever the same. He saved us in order to make us a new creature or to be a totally different person. And certainly one of the areas where this dramatic transformation should be evident is in the way we manage our personal finances.

But of course this transformation will not take place unless we have a thorough understanding of the biblical truths applicable to this particular area and this is exactly what I am seeking to give you in this series of messages.

So what was the first truth that we have considered? The first truth that we considered last week was that everything that we have belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1).

Isn't this exactly what the Scriptures teach? What does **Deuteronomy 10:14** teach us? **“Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.”**

If this is true then this makes us what? It makes us the Lord's stewards and not owners. And what is our primary responsibility as the Lord's stewards? Our primary responsibility as the Lord's stewards is to manage what He has entrusted to us in such a way that the Lord's purposes are served rather than ours. This is a truth that we must understand.

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Now I know that this thought might pose a threat to some professing Christians. And why would that be? It might pose a threat because they may very well believe that if they in fact choose to operate as a faithful steward rather than as a prideful owner, that they themselves might not served. But this is a lie of Satan and in fact quite the opposite it true. Not only will they not suffer loss, they will be wonderfully blessed. But how will they be blessed?

Those who have chosen to operate humbly as Christ's humble stewards rather than as prideful owners will be far more secure in respect to the vagaries of this life, more accepting of what is given and taken, and more excited about their future prospect of glory. The bottom line is this, faithful stewards will never feel shortchanged but rather wonderfully, gloriously blessed! Hopefully there is no one in this room who would believe anything other than this.

So what is the first biblical truth that we have considered that must be considered when seeking to manage our financial resources? Everything that we have belongs to the Lord. And why is this truth so important? It is important because it helps us to see that we are not owners but rather we are the Lord's stewards. And once we see this we hopefully will want to operate accordingly. And this leads us to a second very important biblical truth that every person who is seeking to operate as a faithful steward rather than an owner must know. And what is that truth?

The second truth is this is that it is more blessed to save than to borrow (Deuteronomy 15:6, 28:12). Why would we need to know this truth? We need to know this because if the Lord in His Word has actually declared this particular truth than how can we, as Christ's faithful stewards, ignore it when we are seeking to manage the material wealth that He has entrusted to us. The answer is we can't. We must seek to incorporate this truth into the way we are managing our financial resources if we in fact are striving to be a faithful steward of Christ. So where do we find this truth in the Scriptures?

Let me read for you **Deuteronomy 15:6**. **“For the Lord your God shall bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.”** In this passage the Lord is speaking to the nation of Israel and spelling out for them certain blessings that He was prepared to

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bestow upon them as a nation if they would obey Him and what does He tell them was one of those blessings? He told them that He would make them a lending nation rather than a borrowing nation.

This same truth is re-emphasized in **Deuteronomy 28:12**. Let me read this verse for you. **“The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.”**

The Lord in both of these passages was spelling out for Israel the blessings of wholehearted obedience. One of the blessings specifically identified was the ability to lend. And this ability to lend is of course predicated on their ability to save. And of course the opposite of this blessed state of lending is the practice of borrowing. So what can we conclude based on the way the Lord was prepared to bless the nation of Israel? We can conclude that based on what the Lord promised the nation of Israel in **Deuteronomy 15:6** and **Deuteronomy 26:12**; it clearly is more blessed to save than to borrow.

Over the next two weeks we will consider this basic truth. This morning we will only be focusing on the blessedness of saving and other related issues related to saving. So how is saving represented in the Scriptures?

Saving in the Scriptures is represented as wise and therefore as something that should be pursued (Proverbs 6:6-8, 30:24-25).

Where do we see the pursuit of savings being encouraged? Let me read for you **Proverbs 6:6-8**. **“Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, (7) which, having no chief, officer or ruler, (8) prepares her food in the summer, and gathers her provision in the harvest.”** This verse was obviously designed to get sluggards or people who have a very poor work ethic off their duffs so that they might be able to accumulate what? So that they like the ants might accumulate a savings, which is implied to be a very wise thing.

Along the same line of thought let me read for you **Proverbs 30:24-25**. **“Four things are small on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise:”** And what creature was the first example of this exceeding wisdom? **“The ants are not a strong folk, but they prepare their food in the summer.”** So

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who was the first example of this exceeding wisdom spoken of in **Proverbs 30:24**. According to **Proverbs 30:25**, it was the ant. And why was the ant considered so exceedingly wise? The ant was considered wise because they prepare their food in the summer or they are willing to work in order to save up their food in order to prepare themselves for future need.

So what do you think? If we are in fact seeking to be a faithful steward of Christ and have committed ourselves to manage the resources that He has entrusted to us to serve His purposes rather than ours should this include an effort on our part to accumulate a certain amount of savings? It would seem that it would in light of the fact that the Lord has made it very clear in His Word that those who in fact work at doing this are considered to be exceedingly wise.

I know that there most likely are people here this morning, though appreciating the value of savings, who have not as yet accumulated any. Is this a sin? No! Savings has not been commanded it is simply encouraged and considered to be a blessed thing. But still we should strive for it. And I believe that certainly here in America it is certainly well within the reach of every professing believer in this room.

I would like this morning to help you to get there by making a few suggestions. First of all, we need to have some goals related to savings. And why is this so important? Without saving goals the likelihood of us accumulating any significant savings is pretty much nil. Therefore this morning I would like to present to you a few savings goals that I believe will serve you well.

First, strive to set aside in your checking account one month's living expenses that will provide you instant liquidity in case of sudden emergency. This means that if your family makes \$3000 a month then you would purpose to have no less than \$3000 in your checking account at any given point in time. This will make it possible for you to respond quickly to an emergency that might come upon you suddenly. And could this happen? It is not a matter of whether it could happen; it is only a matter of when it is going to happen. So in light of this it would seem very wise for us, I believe, to make provisions for this. Would be this a good goal? Absolutely. How could it not be a good goal? Just imagine how this might change your life.

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So what is the next savings goal that I believe we should establish beyond this initial savings buffer that we have provided for in the checking account? I would suggest the following:

Strive to set aside in an interest bearing account two to six months of living expenses that would provide you a source of money during a protracted emergency. This means that if you bring home \$3000 a month you would eventually have \$6000 to \$18000 dollars saved in this interest bearing account. This money will hopefully provide the money you might need during an extended emergency until you are able to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate your new circumstances.

Is this a good goal? How could it not be a good goal? Something like this could keep you solvent after you lose your job at least until you were able to find another job or it might be able to keep you solvent while you are recovering from some kind of lengthy illness or the debilitating effects of a serious injury. This seems to me to be an excellent goal and one that we should be striving for.

Now notice the first two goals that I have shared with you are related to emergency situations. The first one is related to the short-term emergency and the second to the more protracted emergency.

So now let me share with you a word of caution. An emergency fund is exactly what it says. It is an emergency fund. What constitutes an emergency? This is for you to decide. But if it were up to me I would tell you that needing money for a family vacation would not constitute an emergency. I would tell you that needing money for Christmas presents would not constitute an emergency. An emergency fund is an emergency fund. It should only be used when we are lacking what is necessary to preserve life or in order to fulfill righteousness. But there is still another savings goal that needs to be pursued concurrently with the other two. So what might this savings goal be?

Strive to save for future anticipated needs so that when that future anticipated need arrives you will have the money.

What might be some of those anticipated needs? It might be such things as braces for the children or the replacement of a car. Yes, we need to be saving

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for emergencies, but we also need to be saving for the things that we place an extremely high value upon if we can in fact do this.

For Lynn and I, the three goals that we established that we were saving toward while at the same time we were saving for emergencies were a Christmas fund, a vacation fund, and a car replacement fund. We were not putting in a lot but we were putting money into these funds.

This might seem overwhelming to you. But I know this can be done. I know this because Lynn and I were able to do this. But how did we do this? This brings me to the second thought. Not only do we need goals but a plan to reach those goals. And certainly the Apostle Paul understood that a plan needed to be in place when people were striving to accumulate a certain amount of savings.

The Apostle Paul understood this. So where do we see this in the Scriptures? Let me read for you **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**. **“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. (2) On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. (3) And when I arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem.”**

So what is going on here? Apparently these Corinthian believers as well as believers from other churches had pledged a certain amount of money for a particular relief project that we know from other Scripture was a relief project for poor saints in area of Judea. But Paul knew that this savings goal for this particular relief project would not be achieved without a plan.

So what was his plan? Paul encouraged Corinthian Christians to regularly and frequently set aside money into a savings account dedicated to the project they had committed themselves to (1 Corinthians 16:2).

This is the same kind of plan that we will need to embrace if we are going to achieve the type of savings goals that we believe as the Lord’s stewards that we should be pursuing. We need to exercise the same kind of discipline to regularly and frequently set aside money into a savings account dedicated to achieve our specific goals in respect to our savings. So what does this mean for us practically?

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Paul's plan would require that whenever when we are paid or receive money to immediately place a certain portion of that money into a dedicated savings account that should be considered untouchable.

If we would in fact put this plan into effect we will have a very good chance of reaching our saving goals. How do I know this? I know this because Lynn and I, in spite of my relatively low salary over most of my ministry life and in spite of the fact that Lynn chose not to work for over 20 years when our children were at home, were able to do it.

Did all the money that we were able to save come from my salary? No! There were certain financial gifts that came to us over the years and there were also those yearly tax refunds. But we did not squander these expressions of generosity toward us nor did we squander our tax refunds. We put a certain portion of all that we received into savings and that discipline over the years has been blessed. Can you do the same if you haven't already? I believe so?

But let me warn you. It will not be easy nor will it be quick. In fact, there will be times when you feel as if you may never get there. But if you can appreciate the significance of the following four phrases you will be far more likely to be encouraged by your progress in respect to your specific savings goals. So what are these four significant phrases?

Use it up

Wear it out

Make it do

Do without

Hopefully you see the importance of these four phrases. They may not be phrases that are often practiced by the world but they can and should be practiced by us as the Lord's stewards in order to achieve the savings goals that we believe that the Lord would have us to pursue.

Obviously the further away we are from the specific savings goals that we have established would mean that we would be required to expend far effort

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to apply these phrases to our financial decisions that what we might after many, if not all, our savings goals have been achieved. This hopefully will provide many people here this morning who have a great deal of work to do some measure of hope.

But now let me ask you a question. Since you know that the Lord considers savings to be a blessed thing, are you prepared this morning as a steward of Christ to discipline yourself for the purpose of saving in order to pursue what you believe are reasonable savings goals? I would hope that your answer would be yes!

Could this be costly to you in terms of the pleasures and comforts of this world? Yes, of course it could be costly. In fact, I would expect it to be costly. If we actually purpose to take a certain portion of our income off the top from all our various sources of income and place that money into an untouchable savings account to be applied to our various savings goals of course it will limit the amount of money we have to enjoy the various comforts and pleasures of life but we should not fear this. Why?

We should not fear living on less in order to save because the Lord has made it very clear to us in His Word that having a savings is truly a blessed thing.

What have we learned? We have learned that we are not owners but rather we are the Lord's stewards. We have learned that as the Lord's stewards we are to manage the resources that He has given us not to serve our purposes but His purposes and in doing this we will be blessed. And we have learned that if we in fact as the Lord's stewards are seeking to manage our financial resources to serve His purposes rather than ours it will invariably lead us to establish certain savings goals.

Why would it invariably lead us to establish certain savings goals? It would invariably lead us to establish certain savings goals because we know based on God's Word that He considers savings to be a blessed thing.

May God give us the grace to discipline ourselves for the purpose of saving not only that we might be blessed but also most importantly that He might be glorified.