

How To Manage Money Before It Manages You

Many people go to financial advisers today or read one or more of the many books that advise you on managing your finances.

Today we are going to study the writings of not only the wealthiest man the world has ever known, but also the wisest: his name was Solomon.

Fortunately, Solomon recorded his wise principles on managing finances in the Christian Bible.

Principle Number One: Keep good records

Proverbs 27:23-24 [NIV] *“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever and a crown is not secure for all generations.”*

Solomon was talking to a farmer, for he lived in an agrarian society and a man’s wealth and inheritance was bound up in his livestock.

But the principle can apply to any type of wealth and inheritance.

Proverbs 27:23-24 [Living Bible] *“Riches can disappear fast ... watch your business interests closely.”*

We have seen that unless we manage our time wisely we will come under pressure.

In the same way, lack of knowing the condition of our finances will also put us under stress and pressure.

Have you said yourself or heard others say, when talking about money, *“where does it all go?”*

Someone once said, *“money used to talk, but now it just sneaks away silently.”*

Keep good records.

We need to know what we owe, what we own, what we earn and where it is going.

Proverbs 23:23 [Living Bible] *“Get the facts at any price and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can get.”*

Knowing the facts is the first step in living wisely; we need to be realistic by facing the facts, not ignoring them.

Proverbs 24:3-4 [Living Bible] *“Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.”*

More than in any other area of your life, ignorance can get you into financial trouble.

Equation:- **Ignorance of your current financial status + credit buying = disaster.**

You may say, *“I don’t have the time to keep good records.”* I reply, *“If you use the time you spend worrying about your finances to keep good records, you won’t have to worry about your finances.”*

Principle Number Two: Plan your spending

Proverbs 21:5 [NIV] *“The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as **haste** leads to poverty.”*

What is Solomon talking about when he says “haste”?

Today it is called “impulse buying”; I see it and I want it.

Do you know what is the easiest thing to do in the world?

Go into debt!

And the easiest way to go into debt is impulse dying ... buying.

This week, as I do most weeks, I received in the mail offers that I can have now and not start making easy payments until next year.

But **no payment is easy**; they are all difficult if what we are buying was not part of our plan for spending.

Credit buying is just like drug addiction: we say *“just this one time”*, and we then get hooked and then we find we are giving most of our income to pay for our impulse buying.

Principle Number Three: Budget

A budget is planned spending.

You are telling your money where you want it to go.

You take control of your spending instead of your spending controlling you.

There are many good books that can help you set up a budget; all I want to say about budgeting now is three things.

- 1) Pray about your budget, ask God to give us the wisdom to set up and run our budget.
- 2) If we are married it needs to be a mutual decision.
- 3) Set goals in three areas: a) saving; b) spending; c) giving

Principle Number Four: Enjoy what we have

Proverbs 15:16-17 [Living Bible] *“Better is a little with reverence for God, than great treasure and trouble with it. It is better to eat soup with someone you love than steak with someone you hate.”*

Sometimes we are so busy working to get more that we fail to enjoy what we have already: we are not contented and satisfied.

We get over extended financially buying things we feel we need [or deserve, as some adverts on T.V. tell us], then everyone in the family has to *“hustle”* to *“make ends meet”* then when we do *“someone moves the ends”* with something else that is needed!

Both husband and wife are working long hours, and as a result the home life soon starts to deteriorate.

Every one comes home tired, frustrated and no-one wants to talk or communicate, the children get left out of family life by absentee parents.

What Solomon is saying is there are some things more important than money and possessions.

Children need attention, our time, not things, that swallowed up our time earning the money to pay for them.

I believe that the greatest threat to marriages and families is over-commitment.

Lovely houses that are empty of family togetherness and harmony because of the pressure of long hours of work to meet the mortgage.

We tend to rationalise the situation by saying *“this is only temporary; once we get these bills paid off we will have time for family togetherness. Once we reach a certain level of prosperity then we will be able to relax and enjoy family life.”*

But that time never comes.

Because we are not satisfied and enjoying what we already have we will always want that little bigger house, car, caravan, more exotic holidays, etc., etc.

What we thought was a temporary condition all too soon becomes a habit and habits are difficult to break.

Although we may have a much higher income than we did ten years ago, this doesn't in itself solve the dilemma.

The problem is not how much income we have but what we do with that income.

If we went to college or university we could have spent, as a student, up to sixteen years of our lives learning how to make money, but not one lesson in all that time on how to spend the money we make: money management.

As a result we find ourselves under financial pressure and stress and we don't enjoy life today.

The solution is to learn contentment.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 [NIV] *“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing we will be content with that.”*

Solomon is telling us the issue is not the amount but our attitude.

Learn contentment.

This is **not** saying we should not have financial goals in our lives; we need to have goals in every aspect of our lives.

There is no contradiction between having goals in our finances and having contentment at the same time.

It just means you are enjoying life now with what you do have.

While we are working towards our goal we are not upset because we don't have it now.

Hebrews 13:5 [Living Bible] *“Stay away from the love of money, be satisfied with what you have.”*

The Christian Bible tells us it is alright to make financial goals as long as our striving for them does not hurt you, your health, physical and spiritual, or your family's physical and spiritual life, or hurt other people.

3 John 2 [Amplified Bible] *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and that your body may keep well, even as I know your soul keeps well and prospers.”*

God wants us to prosper physically [financially] on a level with our prospering spiritually.

This will allow us to avoid the pitfalls that the love of physical wealth can bring.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 [Amplified Bible] *“But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish, useless, Godless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction and miserable perishing, for the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray, and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute mental pangs.”*

There are three enemies of contentment.

1 Televisions: *“I see it and I want it. How could I have lived without it up to now?”*

2 Magazines: Again, putting pressure on you to buy what you desire but don't need.

3 Mail Order Catalogues: *“Only 50p a week and I can have it now.”* But the 50p's soon add up to many £1s.

Principle Number Five: Share with others in need

Proverbs 11:24-25 [Living Bible] *“It is possible to give away and become richer! It is possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything. Yes, the liberal man shall be rich! By watering others, he waters himself.”*

When we share with others, then God shares with us.

This is the very opposite to what society tells us.

It says get everything you can, then you will be financially secure.

The Christian Bible tells us to share with others in need, for what we sow we will also reap.

Proverbs 19:17 [Living Bible] *“When you help the poor you are lending to the Lord, and He pays wonderful interest on your loan.”*

When you see someone in need and you give to them, God accepts that as if it was a loan to Him.

How would you like to have God in your debt?

Nobody gives better rates of interest than God.

There are more promises about money than any other topic in The Bible.

Jesus spoke more about money than He did about heaven or hell.

Over half of the parables in the New Testament relate to money management.

Why?

Because it is such an important part of our lives.

If our finances are not under God's control then not much of my life is under God's control.

The priorities in our lives are shown in two ways: how we use our time and how we use our money.

Because of all the promises that God has made in His Word, I do not hesitate to encourage people to give to others in need, for God will reward them.

Generosity is a matter of faith.

Proverbs 22:9 [Living Bible] *“Happy is the generous man, the one who feeds the poor.”*

Proverbs 28:27 [Living Bible] *“If you give to the poor, your needs will be supplied! But a curse is upon those who close their eyes to poverty.”*

The best time to start giving is when we are in debt, for we then prime the pump for God to pour out blessings.

Principle Number Six: Tithing, return the first 10% back to God

Proverbs 3:9-10 [Living Bible] *“Honour the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income and He will fill your barns with wheat and barley and overflowing your wine vats with the finest wines.”*

Too often we offer God the “leftovers” not the “first part” of our income, we give from what is left after all the bills have been paid.

From the very beginning of time tithing was the principle guide to our giving to God, to honour and thank Him.

What is behind tithing:

1 The past –

We give a tithe to God in gratitude for what He has done for us in the past. Our life, our health, our ability to work and make the money of which we are tithing.

2 The present –

To teach us to put God first in every area of our life.

Deuteronomy 14:23 [Living Bible] *“... the purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.”*

When we sit down after receiving our pay and write out a cheque for 10% to give back to God it is a weekly/monthly reminder of where we should have God in our lives, first place.

So it then helps me set my priorities in life.

3 The future –

Tithing is a statement of faith in the future, a demonstration of our trust in God to provide all we need in the future.

Luke 6:38 [Living Bible] *“For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down and shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give, large or small, will be used to measure what is given back to you.”*

If we put God first in our finances He will help us with them.

Malachi 3:8-10 [Living Bible] *“Will a man rob God? Surely not! And yet you have robbed Me. What do you mean? When did we ever rob you? You have robbed me of the tithes and offerings due to me, and so the awesome curse of God is cursing you, for the whole nation has been robbing me. Bring all the tithe into the storehouse so that there will be food enough in my temple; if you do, I will open up the windows of heaven for you and pour out a blessing so great you won’t have room enough to take it in! Try it! Let me prove it to you!”*

God gives us a challenge.

God says, *“I dare you to put me first in every area of your life and see what happens.”*

If we ignore this challenge it is only our loss!

When we rob God we are really only cheating ourselves out of a blessing.

Some people suffer from the disease cirrhosis of the giver; others, when it comes to giving, stop at nothing.

The best time to start tithing is when you are in debt, for you will then have God on your side to help you with all the other unpaid bills.

It is not a matter of not being able to afford to tithe, it is a matter of not being able to afford not to tithe.

Follow the principles that God has given us in His Handbook For Life or Handbook for Happiness – we will be blessed, we will be able to manage money before it manages us.

- 1 Keep good records
- 2 Plan your spending
- 3 Budget
- 4 Enjoy what we have
- 5 Share with others in need
- 6 Tithe – return to God the first 10%

MONTHLY INCOME & EXPENSES

Gross Income Per Month	8 Entertainment & Recreation
Salary	Eating Out
Interest	Baby Sitters
Dividends	Activities/Trips
Other	Vacation
	Other
Less:	9 Clothing
1 Tithe	10 Savings (Emergency Fund)
2 Tax	11 Medical Expenses
Net Spendable Income	Doctor
	Dentist
3 Housing	Drugs
Mortgage (rent)	Other
Insurance	12 Miscellaneous
Council Tax	Toiletries, Cosmetics
Electricity	Beauty, Barber
Gas	Laundry, Cleaning
Water	Allowances, Lunches
Sanitation	Subscriptions
Telephone	Gifts (incl. Christmas)
Maintenance	Cash
Other	Other
4 Food	13 School/Child Care
5 Automobile(s)	Tuition
Payments	Materials
Fuel	Transportation
Insurance	Day Care
Licence	14 Investments
Maint/Repair/ Replace	Total Expenses
6 Insurance	
Life	
Medical	
Other	
7 Debts	
Credit Card	Income vs Expenses
Loans	Net Spendable Income
Other	Less Expenses

