

“Don’t Bust the Bank”
Class Presented at Winter Quest 2012
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Introduction

- ✓ “Almost any man knows how to earn money, but not one in a million knows how to spend it.” – David Thoreau

- ✓ “In time we discovered something odd. Many people who live in expensive homes and drive luxury cars do not actually have much wealth. Then, we discovered something even odder: Many people who have a great deal of wealth do not even live in upscale neighborhoods. What is so profound about these discoveries? Just this: Most people have it all wrong about wealth in America. Wealth is not the same as income. If you make a good income each year and spend it all, you are not getting wealthier. You are just living high. Wealth is what you accumulate, not what you spend.” – Danko & Stanley

Purpose Statement: *Unfortunately most of us are following the examples of broke people and taking our financial cues from a materialistic culture. If we are to succeed financially we must not only be freed from such influences, but we must follow God’s plan.*

I. Whom are we Following?

- 1. Being Faithful in Every Area** – I believe its safe to say that most Christians know that they should trust God. Surely, most Christians would even affirm that they do trust God’s power, guidance and love. However, would that be true in the area of personal finances? Are we as Christians managing our money God’s way or are we basically following the way our society does it? Are we just as broke, stressed, overstretched, anxious, and in debt as everyone else, or are we different?

- 2. Today’s “Normal”** – It would seem that most often we are following those around us instead of doing things God’s way. We even find ways to justify our behaviors, by either reasoning that God does not have something to say about finances or that what we are doing is not that bad anyway. The problem is that today’s “normal” just turns out to be a very negative thing.
 - Today’s normal is to spend more than you make.
 - Today’s normal is to think in terms of debt.
 - Today’s normal is to pay more than it’s worth.
 - Today’s normal is to not have any substantial savings.

- Today's normal is to understand money only in terms of consumption.
 - Today's normal is to not look to God for financial direction and guidance.
- 3. What's God got to do with money anyway?** – Does God even have much to say about money beyond the ideas of honesty and generosity? Does God have anything substantial and relevant to say about my personal finances and the current economical crisis? As the wise man observed: “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29.18).
- 4. The good news** – The good news is that God has not left us to navigate these rough waters based on our own wits and abilities. He has not left us without revelation. Actually God has plenty to say about money and possessions, actually 2,350 verses worth of it (For a complete list, visit CrownMoneyMap.org).

Transition: As we have seen, God has not left us without direction in the area of personal finances. However, to know what God says and to actually follow are two different things. What plan are we using when dealing with our finances?

II. What's the Plan?

- 1. The “Let's see what happens” Plan** – Many are living as if not having a plan was actually a good plan.
- Government? The lottery? My kids will take of me? Eventually I'll do something? I'll just keep misbehaving but I'm confident that God will provide.
 - One survey showed that 27% of people believe that their best shot at getting a million dollars or more over a lifetime is by winning the lottery (Steve Diggs, “No Debt No Sweat”).
- 2. The “fancy-pantsy” Plan** – “Mortals make elaborate plans, but God has the last word. Humans are satisfied with whatever looks good; God probes for what is good. Put God in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place.” – Proverbs 16.1-3 (MSG)
- 3. The “Well, I Guess I do Need a Plan” Plan** – The affluent tend to answer “yes” to 4 questions (“The Millionaire Next Door” by Stanley & Danko)
- Does your household operate on a budget?
 - Do you know how much your family spends on food, clothing, and shelter?
 - Do you have a clearly defined set of daily, weekly, monthly and lifetime goals?
 - Do you spend much time planning your financial future?

Transition: It's an unavoidable conclusion that financial freedom demands a plan. Not just any type of plan but a plan that is in accordance with God given principles.

III. What's the Solution? – “Winning at money is 80 percent behavior and 20 percent head knowledge. What to do isn't the problem; doing it is. Most of us know what to do, but we just don't do it. If I can control the guy in the mirror; I can be...rich.” – Dave Ramsey (Total Money Makeover). There is a big difference between knowing and doing. A wise person is the one that:

1. Seeks to be Faithful

- “God's blessing makes life rich; nothing we do can improve on God.” – Proverbs 10.22 (MSG)
- “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Money” – Matthew 6.21
- “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” – Proverbs 16.3

2. Seeks Cooperation

- “Most people will never become wealthy in one generation if they are married to people who are wasteful. A couple cannot accumulate wealth if one of its members is a hyperspender...Few people can sustain careless spending habits and simultaneously build wealth.” – Stanley & Danko
- “Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.” – Proverbs 15.17

3. Seeks Counsel

- “List most of the problems we face, financial pain has its roots in the bad decisions we have made all along the way. As with most bad decisions, we are filled with shame and fear that others will find out. To admit financial failure is to admit that something in our lives is out of control, and we don't like to do that. So instead of bringing the problem into the light where it can be addressed, we try to hide it from others and often from ourselves. Things go from bad to worse until, finally, the house of cards falls in on itself. That's when what we had hoped would remain a private struggle suddenly becomes public.” – Steve Diggs
- “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” – Proverbs 15.22
- “He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.” – Proverbs 28.26

4. Seeks Real Achievement

- “It is unfortunate that some people judge others by their choice in foods, beverages, suites, watches, motor vehicles, and such. To them, superior people have excellent tastes in consumer goods. But it is easier to purchase products that denote superiority than to be actually superior in economic achievement. Allocating time and money in the pursuit of looking superior

often has a predictable outcome: inferior economic achievement.” – Stanley and Danko, “The Millionaire Next Door”.

- “It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury – how much worse for a servant to rule over princes! – Proverbs 19.10

5. Seeks the Right Behavior

- Webster’s defines “frugal” as “behavior characterized by or reflecting economy in the use of resources.” The opposite of frugal is wasteful. We define wasteful as a lifestyle marked by lavish spending and hyperconsumption. It’s an undeniable reality that the affluent tend to be frugal people (“The Millionaire Next Door” by Stanley & Danko)
- “He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.” – Proverbs 21.17

6. Seeks Awareness

- “Caveat Emptor” – Buyer beware! “Most well-known products are well-known because companies spend millions on ‘brand recognition’, position their products in your mind as better because of brand. Physiological studies measure your body’s reaction to color, label design, and shelf position. The astute company knows what your heart rate, retina reaction, pupil dilation, peripheral vision, protein release, adrenaline release, and many other reactions are to their product and/or their packaging or shelf position...Buyer beware!” – Dave Ramsey (Financial Peace)
- “A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life.” – Proverbs 22.3-4

7. Seeks to Delay Gratification

- “As a people we have forgotten how to delay pleasure. We are living in a society that microwaves everything. We must have it, and we must have it now! As Brian Tracy, a well-known motivational speaker, says, ‘We are being taught by everything around us to have dessert before dinner.’ Now we are paying for our lack of knowledge and discipline.” - Dave Ramsey (Financial Peace)
- “God won’t starve an honest (righteous) soul, but He frustrates the appetites of the wicked. Sloth makes you poor; diligence brings wealth. Make hay while the sun shines – that’s smart; go fishing during harvest – that’s stupid.” – Proverbs 10.3-5 (MSG)

8. Seeks Freedom

- “Debt has been sold to us so aggressively, so loudly, and so often that to imagine living without debt requires myth-busting. We have to systematically destroy the inner workings of the myths. Debt is so ingrained into our culture that most Americans can’t even envision a car without a payment, a house without a mortgage, a student without a loan, and a credit without a card. We have been sold debt with such repetition and with such

fervor that most folks cannot conceive what it would be like to have no payments. Just as slaves born into slavery can't visualize freedom, we Americans don't know what it would be like to wake up to no debt." – Dave Ramsey (The Total Money Makeover)

- "The gullible believe anything they're told; the prudent sift and weigh every word. The wise watch their steps and avoid evil; fools are headstrong and reckless." – Proverbs 14.15-16 (The Message Bible)
- "Debt is the worst poverty." – Thomas Fuller
- "Debt is the slavery of the free." – Publilius Syrus (1st Century)
- "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave." –Proverbs 22.7 (NAS Bible)
 - The Slave is always ruled by other influences (victim mentality).
 - A Slave spend more than he makes
 - The finances of the slave are always dependant on debt
 - The slave always pays more (fees, interest rates, etc)
 - The slave does not have the habit of saving
 - The slave does not follow God's path (Proverbs 28.26)

Transition: *"Just as riches are an impediment to virtue in the wicked, so in the good they are an aid to virtue." – St. Ambrose*

Conclusion

- ✓ **Practical Steps to staying free from Materialism:**
 1. Make financial decisions based on your plan. "Plan your life, live your plan".
 2. You are not helpless – Learn to say "No".
 3. Understand your motives: Needs vs. Wants. And yes, there is a difference.
 4. Slow down. Never purchase some big-ticket item without waiting overnight.
 5. Only buy what you can afford. Pay cash!
 6. Seek counsel from people that are godly and wise with their money, not from your broke relative or from your "girlfriend" that's going to encourage you to purchase one in every color.
- ✓ **Isn't it about time we learn?** "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy." – Proverbs 29.1

Bibliography – Helpful Resources

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- Dayton, Howard. "Your Money Map", Moody Publishers, Chicago.
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- Ramsey, Dave. "Financial Peace", published by Penguin Books USA Inc.
- Ramsey, Dave. "The Total Money Makeover", published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.