

Supplemental Resource

As mentioned in Chapter 6 “Prepare for the Choices Ahead”



Ten Financial Principles That Can Change Your Life

By Mark Anderson and Joel Beyer

As we look around our world today, we see many examples of failure. Our economy is limping along, budgets are out of balance, politicians continue to disappoint, morals are eroding and families are struggling.

When it comes to financial matters, God’s Word is very clear about how we, as Christians, should behave in these challenging economic times – actually in *any* economic time. The good news is that Biblical wisdom is always right, always relevant, and never changes.

It’s been said that the Bible contains 2350 verses that specifically deal with money and possessions. In fact, 15% of everything Jesus taught relates to this very subject. Why?

Because there is a fundamental connection between the condition of our spiritual lives and how we think about and handle money, the entries in our checkbooks, bank statements, and credit card reports reveal what we really believe and *who* or *what* our God really is.

After 24 years as a Christian and personal Financial Advisor, I’ve discovered the secret of successfully navigating the financial world and enjoying a rich life in Christ.

The secret? Biblical wisdom properly applied in everyday life. These seven basic Biblical financial principles can help you to survive and thrive as you enter the final “capstone” period of your life.

Biblical Principle #1: Accept Gods Ownership and Control

“Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything...”

- 2 Chronicles 29:11-12 (LB)

The Bible tells us that God owns and controls *everything*. As Christians, our part is acceptance, honesty, and faithfulness to this truth. We need to be faithful in the way we manage everything in our lives. This means we must manage the resources He entrusts to us according to His principles and not according to the principles of the world. It is important for us to be faithful and honest *in even the smallest things*.

Biblical Principle #2: Learn True Contentment

“For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am...”

- Philippians 4:11-13 (NAS)

The Bible tells us that godliness with contentment is great gain. But the world tells us that we will only find satisfaction in obtaining more. The only problem is more material wealth will never fill an empty heart. *Contentment is a learned behavior*. It does not come naturally to our flesh. Satan knows our weakness and he uses the media, glamour, and popular culture to seduce us into believing a lie. God has a better plan.

Biblical Principle #3: Spend Less Than You Earn

“A wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets”

- Proverbs 21:20 (LB)

This is perhaps the most important principle. Chronic overspending is a real problem in our society. It's a sign of spiritual discontentment and can ultimately lead to ever increasing debt – even divorce or bankruptcy. Many people try to fill a void in their heart with more possessions, but our empty heart can only be satisfied with more of Jesus Christ. Seek the Lord and talk with your spouse on this issue. Create a written spending plan and learn to live within your means. *God's plan works*.

Biblical Principle #4: Minimize The Use Of Debt

“Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender”

- Proverbs 22:7 (LB)

Debt is often the byproduct of overspending, which is often a byproduct of lack of contentment.

Left unchecked, debt can bring down countries (Argentina), cities (Detroit), corporations (Lehman Brothers), and families. Debt is not sin in and of itself, but debt can be a fearful master. For some, borrowing is just an easy way out of a situation that would otherwise force us to grow in our faith and character.

Biblical Principle #5: Plan For The Future

"The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty"

- Proverbs 21:5 (NKJV)

Many people have told us that they avoid planning because "things never work out the way I planned." This may be true. But the reason to plan is not because a plan will always unfold perfectly; it's to get our minds and actions aligned with our ultimate objectives. "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice. "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where—" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. Planning is the act of reviewing and organizing all elements and potential actions involved in achieving a goal or objective. Careful planning can save many hours of implementation. The first step is to clarify and define values and goals. Setting meaningful goals is the start of a great financial plan.

Biblical Principle #6: Seek Wise Counsel

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel"

- Proverbs 12:15 (NAS)

No person is an island of all knowledge. We can fall into a trap where we believe that just because we may have expert skills and experience in a certain profession or vocation we are automatically a qualified expert in another. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Most people avoid counsel for three reasons:

- **Pride:** We think we are so smart that we can figure everything out by reading a book or a magazine or through an internet search. Pride hides significant blind spots in our judgment and can lead us into making many foolish mistakes.

- Fear: We feel we should know more about a particular subject and are embarrassed to have the world discover how little we really know. So we sometimes refuse to do anything, despite the potential risks.
- Selfishness: All too often we want our own way and we don't want to be talked out of it. The wisest people we know seek counsel from trusted experts. They are intelligent and open to ideas that may not always fit their feelings because they know they are not experts in every subject. Imagine how much heartache, stress, and trouble you could have avoided over the years, if only you would have sought and heeded wise and experienced counsel.

Biblical Principle #7: Invest Long-Term, Diversify, Do Not Speculate

"Cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth...He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap ...In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good."

- Ecclesiastes 11:1,2,4&6 (NKJV)

When we are younger, investing can help us build future security and freedom. When we are in our "capstone" years, investing may be more about providing an inflation-adjusted income that we can live from for the rest of our days. Nobody knows with certainty what "investment" will outperform in the future. Nobody. The Bible tells us that patience and discipline are the keys to successful investing. It's the tortoise principle, not the hare.

Biblical principle #8: Give Generously

"Honor The Lord with your possessions and with the first-fruits of all your increase..."

- Proverbs 3:9

The Bible tells us to give generously of God's resources. The world teaches us that charity begins at home and that he who dies with the most toys wins.

In his book, *Managing God's Money*, Randy Alcorn reminds us that giving is a form of grace. We love because God first loved us and we give because He first gave to us. Giving isn't just God's way of raising money, it's His way

of raising children.

We are to start our giving with the tithe, or tenth, of our income and then give beyond the tithe in the form of what the Bible calls a "free will" offering. Such offerings are to come out of the abundance of the love and grace that the Holy Spirit has poured into us.

As we approach the home stretch of our time on this earth, God wants to see His children reach full maturity. And since everything belongs to Him and there is no limit to His desire to entrust more into the hands of His most generous givers, why would we want to be anything other than lavishly generous with His resources?

Biblical Principle #9: Pass On A Living Legacy

"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children..."
- Proverbs 13:22

Most of us are familiar with Proverbs 13:22. Certainly in Old Testament times, where wealth consisted of land and animals, the only way the next generation could survive was to inherit family property. Even so, God warned against too much wealth being passed too easily. "An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end." (Proverbs 20:21)

Clearly, the transfer of wealth is an act of wise stewardship that must be considered carefully and bathed in prayer. It must be designed and implemented to encourage and reward continued good stewardship by the next generation. To do otherwise can easily deny the next generation the privileges and blessings of a scripturally based work ethic. The results of such unrestrained wealth transfer often include untold amounts of wasted wealth, as well as the devastation of wasted lives given over to addictive and immoral lifestyles. Henry Ford observed that "fortunes tend to self-destruction by destroying those who inherit them."

While our world teaches us to leave as much wealth to our heirs as we can to make their life easier, the Bible teaches the only legacy worth leaving is a legacy that passes on biblical principles for living God-honoring lives. To pass on wealth without the biblical tools for wise management is like giving a teenager the keys to the car without first teaching him how to drive.

Biblical Principle #10: Set Your Estate In Order

"Set your house in order, for you will die..."

- 2 Kings 20:1.

God's warning to King Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah is the same warning He gives all of us. Death is coming so we would all be well advised to set our estates in order. And since few of us know the day and time of our passing, the prudent thing to do would be to get it done sooner rather than later. Failure to do so is to ignore what could be the most profound single act of stewardship most of us will ever make.

For believers, while death is not to be feared as it is the gateway to eternity with our loving savior, it is an opportunity to exercise what may be our final act of stewardship. As such, we should approach our graduation to eternity with the same biblical perspective that we brought to the management of our estate during our lifetimes. Remembering that our estate is on loan from its true owner, planning for the transfer of His wealth to the next generation means the prayerful, deliberate incorporation of our spiritual values into the traditional estate planning tools used by lawyers for hundreds of years. It may mean appointing someone other than your children to manage long term investments while the beneficiaries are "learning to drive." Remember the Proverb about the consequences of leaving too much too quickly. Or, perhaps, it means continuing your support obligations to needy children or that missionary on the field. There is nothing inherently wrong with "ruling from the grave" if the plan has been well thought out and biblical principles are being applied.

About Joel Beyer and Mark Anderson (Chapter 6)

Joel Beyer is an award-winning Christian author, speaker, and advisor in the areas of financial planning, money management, and life transition support. Since 1989, Joel has developed a proven process that helps his clients to manage their financial world, pursue their goals, and live a higher quality of life. Joel lives in Ramona, California, with his wife, Cecelia, serves as an elder and board member at Calvary Chapel Ramona, and serves as membership co-chair and charitable foundation board vice president for the Rotary Club of Escondido. Joel can be reached at (760) 788-5953 or through his website at www.joelbeyer.com.

Mark A. Anderson has been practicing law in Southern California since 1981. His office is located in Escondido, California. Mr. Anderson has been conducting estate planning

seminars for nearly twenty-five years. Various churches, parachurch ministries, and corporations (including Forest Home Christian Conference Center, Emmanuel Faith Community Church of Escondido, Heritage Village Retirement Center, Morgan Stanley, and Edward Jones) have sponsored the seminars and benefited from his expertise in wills, trusts, and tax law. He has addressed audiences across the country and has been the guest of numerous radio programs. In 2006, he was asked to speak at the annual conference for Operation Mobilization in Germany. In addition, he is the national planned giving director for Operation Mobilization USA. Mr. Anderson has helped thousands of individuals achieve greater security, maximize charitable giving, and be better stewards of their wealth in the most cost-effective manner possible.