

Financial Foundations

Foundation #1: God Owns Everything

God is the sole proprietor of everything you have; your clothes, your house, your car, your children, your computer, your CD player, your investments, your sports equipment, your lawn and garden—and everything else imaginable. The Old Testament prophets and leaders set forth the truth that God owns all the wealth in the world.

Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him."

1 Chronicles 29:11 "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. 12 Wealth and honor come from you."

Foundation #2: Give to God First

Giving is an act of worship. Giving is loving the Lord God with our whole heart, soul and mind. Giving is an act of faith. It is saying to God, I believe that God can enable me to do more with what remains after I give, than I can on my own by keeping the whole 100%.

Proverbs 3:9-10 "Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income and He will fill your barns to overflow." It says the "first part" of all your income. Not the leftovers. People often ask, "Should I tithe on the net or the gross?" What do you want God to bless, the net or the gross?

Does God bless those who give faithfully?

Proverbs 22:9 "He who is generous will be blessed."

Proverbs 11:24-25 "It is possible to give away and become richer. It's also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything. Yes the generous man shall be rich. By watering others, he waters himself."

Foundation #3: Keep Good Records

Have you ever heard people say, "I just don't know where my money goes?" We don't know because we don't look. We don't look because we don't want to know. We don't want to know, because then we'll have to take action.

Proverbs 23:23 "Get the facts at any price." People who are financially free manage their money by design, not by default. Engage anyone who is financially free in conversation about money management and you will soon hear him talk about his goals for giving, saving, investing, etc. He knows what's coming in and what's going out and is making conscious choices all along the way.

Proverbs 27:23 "Riches can disappear fast, so watch your business interests closely. Know the state of your flock." There are so many helpful systems out there, everything from sophisticated computer software to old fashioned systems that use envelopes to sort out your cash by category. The point is that if you want to spend wisely, you have to keep good records.

Foundation #4: Plan Carefully

Financial freedom is never determined by how much money you make. It's determined by how you spend what you make.

Proverbs 21:5 "Plan carefully and you will have plenty. If you act too quickly you will never have enough." The number one reason for financial pressure is not that we don't make enough, but we don't spend it wisely. People are making incomes in six digit figures but they're still in debt. That shouldn't be. This foundation involves the principle of budgeting. Budgets, like diets, get started with great enthusiasm, but eventually fail because they tend to focus on what we can't do rather than what we can do. Just as diets say, "Don't eat," budgets say, "Don't spend." Therefore, you may prefer using the term "spending plan." The idea behind a "spending plan" is that within the limits of your available funds, you freely spend money on those things that have the most meaning to you. A spending plan helps you make good spending choices ahead of time.

Proverbs 21:5 "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."

With a Spending Plan you tell your money where you want it to go rather than wondering where it went. Christ Fellowship will be offering the following studies this fall, which can help you in developing a wise "spending plan."

Foundation #5: Render to Caesar

Of course the government wants its share, in the form of taxes. However, this foundation has to do with keeping a clear conscience and obeying God.

Matthew 22:21, Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Romans 13:6-7, the apostle Paul elaborated on that saying, "This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor."

For most of us this one is pretty easy. Our taxes are taken out of our checks before we ever see them. For those who are self-employed, you need to plan carefully to meet your tax obligation. Gross income minus Tithe and Taxes equals Net Spendable Income. From the Net Spendable income, you meet your family needs; such as housing, food, medical, transportation, entertainment and so on.

Foundation #6: Save for the Future

What is the purpose of saving? Here's where the Bible differs from the world's thinking in a major way. The world thinks you save money for security. If I could just accumulate a big enough bank account I would be financially secure. The problem is, there is no such thing as financial security. No matter how much money you've got, you could lose it instantly. We've all seen the news about Enron Corp. and the nearly 400 employees who lost their jobs and their entire retirement savings because of the company's financial collapse. So why do we save? The Christian saves for stewardship reasons, not for security reasons.

Phil 4:19 "My God shall supply all your needs." Now that's real security.

We need to: Save for Retirement

Proverbs 13:11 "He grows rich who accumulates little by little." American Demographics magazine said, that when most Baby Boomers hit retirement they are going to be poor and flat out broke. They're not saving anything. Retirement looks a whole lot better when we have something stashed away to help us enjoy it.

We need to: Save for the Expected

Proverbs 21:20 "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has". Everything on this earth will eventually need repair or

replaced. Also, every year the same annual events occur: birthdays, Christmas, anniversaries, school clothes, and vacations. We should look ahead and plan for them.

We need to: Save for the Unexpected

Proverbs 27:12 "A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." What happens when you have a traffic accident and need \$500 to cover the deductible? What about when you get a call from across the country that summons you to a close family member's funeral?