

# Margins

## Lesson 5: Finances

### I. Introduction

As one author suggested, "These are the best of times and the worst of times."

#### A. The Best:

- The modern American standard of living is high. In 2015, the median household income for U.S. was \$56,515. Contrast that with the 2013 world- wide figure of \$9,733.
- One in 10 people in the world live on less than \$2/day. If you make more than \$32,400/year, you are in the top one percent of the world (2018 figures). If you make more than \$450,000 per year in the U. S., you would be in the top 1% of Americans.

#### B. Some of the Worst:

- 57% of Americans have less than \$1000 in savings. 80% of us have some form of debt. The average household carries \$15,654 of credit card debt; a mortgage of \$173,995 and student loans in the amount of \$46,597.
- The credit card debt levels are impacted by the age of the consumers: Baby Boomers: \$7,175, Gen Xers: \$8291 and Millennials: ^\$4,868.
- The average household carries \$131,431 in debt of any kind.
- Bankruptcies exceed over one million per year. And health care costs are spiraling out of control.

### II. Let's start by looking at what the scriptures have to say about money and finances:

#### A. Our Focus

1. Matt. 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."
2. Matt. 6:1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

3. Psalm 37:16-17 "Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous."
4. I Tim. 6:17 "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."
5. I Sam. 2:7 "The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts."

#### B. The challenge

1. I Tim. 6:10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
2. Ecc. 5:10. "Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless."
3. Rev. 3:17 "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. 'But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.'"

#### C. Regarding Debt

1. Rom. 13:8 "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law."
2. Prov. 22:7 "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender."

#### D. Principles regarding giving

1. Matt. 19:21 "Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
2. Mal. 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."
3. Ex. 22:25 "If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest."
4. Luke 12:33 "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys."
5. Matt. 6:1-4 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

6. Matt. 5:42 "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

E. Principles regarding saving

1. Prov. 13:11 "Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow."

2. Prov. 10:4 "Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow."

### III. Suggestions in order to restore financial margins:

A. Settle the issue of LORDSHIP in your personal and family life. Kingdom principles rule!

Phil. 2:11 "and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Matt. 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

B. Vow to "swim against the current" of our culture.

"...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

C. Determine to "live within your harvest"

Define "needs" and "wants" and develop the discipline in order to live within that framework. Make a budget and stick to it. Emphasize usefulness over fashion or culture.

D. Decrease your spending.

1. Easiest way to accomplish this is to discard credit cards.

2. Limit the size of your mortgage. Experts say that housing costs should not exceed more than 28% of your monthly gross income.

3. Eliminate debt. Debt payments for all forms of debt should not exceed 35%-40% of your monthly gross income.

E. Increase income. For a season (with a specific financial goal in mind), consider working more hours, a second job or starting a home business.

F. Increase savings. Develop a life style of deferred gratification. Learn to wait for the blessing.

1. James 5:7-8 "Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."

2. Ps. 27:14 "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."

**IV. Bottom Line:** Margins in our finances will help reduce stress and friction in the home.  
And it will increase our capacity to be generous.