

Got Money?

People are born into a financial world of income, taxes, loans, creditors, investments—and even church contributions. Sadly, few are prepared to take the challenges of managing their finances at all, much less according to any biblical principles.

There are some staggering statistics: Eighty-five per cent of divorced couples indicate financial problems were a contributing factor to the erosion of the marriage. The average score for a financial I.Q. test administered to high school students was 42%. Where is the financial training needed to avoid such situations? Does the Bible address financial concerns? Absolutely! Families, and the church as a whole, would be better off if we managed money according to biblical principles. Consider some principles we need to pass on... **Disposition and Discipline!**

Disposition: The Bible has much to say about our disposition towards money. The love of it is a root of many evils (1 Timothy 6:10; cf. v.17). The Bible is not a “get-rich-quick” guide. The bible warns that an insatiable desire to have “things” is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Many have a “strike-it-rich” mentality that demands more time and attention than do spiritual concerns. Do you think that way about money? Our children need to learn from us that money, and the things it can buy, are a means to an end. Money is a tool to help us live - why? So that we can serve and glorify God!

Discipline: Having the right attitude about our money is important. We must practice biblical principles regarding money management and teach them to others. Maybe it’s time for the “cloak of secrecy” to come? We cannot expect others to live in a financial bubble, detached from the “real world,” and then be able to almost “miraculously” navigate through the financial maze of this world. It’s our responsibility to ensure that others (especially our own children) have a good understanding in this area of life. Here are some biblical principles we ought to be sharing with others. Do you believe and practice any of the following “discipline” decisions? Sweating, Saving, Spending, Selecting, and Sacrificing...

Sweating: Work in order to earn money. Parents do their children a disservice by handing money to them, for years, without ever learning to earn the income. Is it any wonder that employers find it difficult to hire individuals with a good work ethic (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10)?

Saving: “There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up” (Proverbs 21:20). People need to learn the value of both *short-term* and *long-term* saving. On the *short-term* side: dishwashers go out, new tires need to be purchased, and clothes are outgrown. These are the kinds of expenses that often create difficulties as they “take you by surprise.” On the *long-term* side of saving, teach others about Joseph, the manager who prepared for seven years of famine—*over a period of seven years*—by saving. Others should have the same kind of conviction about saving as they do about giving into the church treasury (and hopefully others have been taught to give). Financial wisdom says that the biggest mistake people make about saving for retirement is—they don’t.

Spending: There’s nothing wrong with spending. Money management is not in telling others, “Don’t buy anything.” Rather, we must educate and learn what it really costs to live in our community. Teach and learn how to spend wisely (see Proverbs 22:7-9). Maybe “shop” for clothes out of season, or compare grocery stores, or seek the special sales, etc.

The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender’s slave. He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish. He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor. (Proverbs 22:7-9)

Selecting: Teaching the idea of “some for the Lord and the rest for me,” is truly not a scriptural view of life. Help people develop a genuine budget, on an understandable level, that will imitate what people can expect later in life. The future will come. Are you ready? When possessing an allowance or working for wages, teach and learn to give, to save, and to help pay for things needed (let the “want” wait a while).

Sacrificing: Read Malachi 3:8—10, 1 Corinthians 16:2, and 2 Corinthians 8:7—9 for clarity. Do others know what you give to God? If they don’t, would you be embarrassed to tell them? Sacrificial giving is the best investment you can share with others. Train and learn to avoid financial pitfalls. Focus on being a faithful steward of all God’s blessings.

Original article by Jason Jackson (www.christiancourier.com/articles/1213-training-children-for-financial-responsibility)