

Four Keys to Financial Freedom

Part 3: "Spend Wisely"

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- Tell about something you "had to have"—but which soon disappointed. What lesson did you learn?
- Do you have clothes in your closet (or some other purchase) which still have the sales tag on them? What does that say about your cravings, contentment, and self-control?
- Most months, do you spend less than you earn—or more?
- Are there any family necessities you've been delaying (eg, saving for children's college, etc.)?
- Have you ever been owed something (salary, rebate, etc.)—but had to wait for your due?

Read Proverbs 3:28. Are there any debts you owe, but which you've delayed payment?

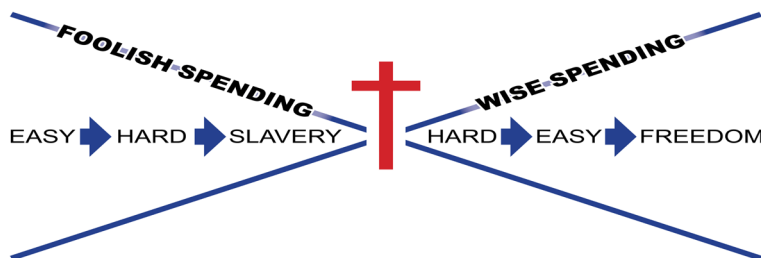
- Review the diagram to the right.

Mark it where you currently are.

Mark it where you were five years ago.

Mark it where you'd like to be in five years.

Realistically, what changes will be required to get there?



- If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? How would you explain it in **plain language** that anyone could understand?

Application-Challenge

- Spend less than you earn.
- Take care of necessities.
- Pay your taxes.
- Practice prompt payments.
- Eliminate debt.

Are you in financial bondage?
For hope and help go to:
tcc.org, Keyword: MoneyWise

Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Sermon Summary

We are in the middle of a four-part sermon series on how to experience financial freedom, and today we are going to look at the third principle: learning to spend money wisely. Proverbs 21:20 says, “The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.” Financial freedom doesn’t require great wealth, but rather the proper management of whatever assets and funds you do possess. That is financial faithfulness.

Jesus once told a parable about a businessman who went on a journey and entrusted his estate with his servants. The idea was for them to run the business wisely in their master’s absence. And of course, when he got back, there would be an accounting. In this parable, the master represents Jesus, and the servants represent us. The point of the parable is to remind us that one day he will return, and we will be evaluated and judged according to how well we have managed his resources. He will want to know...

[1] Did you *earn* money *honestly*?

[2] Did you *give* money *generously*?

[3] Did you *spend* money *wisely*?

[4] Did you *invest* money *carefully*?

The Bible calls those who manage their money God’s way “good stewards.” A good steward is someone that uses money wisely and who desires to please God. As a good steward, you need to be faithful, whether God has given you a lot or a little to manage (Luke 16:10-12). There are several reasons that wise spending seems hard. **[1]** Initially, it seems difficult simply because you are more familiar with doing things your way than you are with doing things God’s way. New things always start out difficult and awkward. **[2]** Next, wise spending is hard because it takes time to make a budget. In fact, most people resist doing so. Even if you resist making a budget, however, remember: you already have a budget! You just don’t know what that budget is and where your money is going. A budget you know about is always better than a budget you don’t know about. **[3]** A third reason wise spending is difficult is because it requires you to put off immediate gratification spending.

If you want to follow God’s guidelines, consider these principles as you prepare your monthly budget.

[1] Spend less than you earn (Proverbs 21:20). One of God’s principles is not to spend all the money that you have. Spending everything you earn makes it impossible to save or ever have anything extra to invest carefully. You must learn to live within your income. If your income suddenly changes, say it goes down, you must make commensurate cuts in your spending. It’s not rocket science, but it is advice that is widely ignored.

[2] Take care of necessities (1 Timothy 5:8). In other words, take care of your family by providing for their basic needs. Necessities include food, clothing, shelter and basic transportation. The Bible makes clear that God considers meeting these needs for your family very important.

[3] Pay your taxes (Romans 13:7). This verse answers the question as to whether or not God wants you to pay your taxes. He does. You don’t need to pay more than the government says you owe, but you do need to pay what you owe.

[4] Practice prompt payments (Proverbs 3:28). Don’t use money that you have committed for services already rendered to pay for other things that you want. That money has already been spent. Are you quick to pay your bills and debts? If not, you are violating this Biblical principle and it will eventually catch up with you. It is the law of sowing and reaping. Whatever you sow, you will surely reap!

[5] Eliminate Debt (Proverbs 22:7). The Bible says that the borrower becomes the lender’s slave. You have a Biblical obligation to pay your debts. Foolish spending usually involves both self-indulgence and poor planning; both are indications that you are not following God’s plan.

If left unchecked, these foolish decisions will eventually lead to financial slavery, the evidence of which are things like: overdue bills, revolving debt, bondage to lenders, property decay, family poverty, worry, and depression. Even though starting out God’s way may seem hard, financial slavery is much, much worse. Although the path of wise spending starts out hard, it does become easier as you consistently follow God’s principles. The benefits of wise spending will be that your needs will be met and you will have extra to give and eventually invest. As you continue on the path of wise spending, not only will it become easier; you will ultimately experience financial freedom.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Imagine the following scenario: You open the News & Observe and read this ad...

Wanted: Manager for luxury resort complex. Duties include management of beachfront hotel, restaurant, and guest services. Compensation includes free use of all facilities (suite of rooms, restaurant, laundry services, pool, and company vehicle), in addition to salary and health plan. Call: 126746844267 ext. 4.2 (1 Corinthians 4:2) for details, application, and interview.

Monday—*You applied, and got the job!*

- How cool is the compensation package? Room service, pool, valet parking (*of your free vehicle*)!
- What do you think you'd like most about that job? What do you think you'd like least?
- Compare and contrast managing a resort and managing the actual resources God has given you.

Tuesday—*What does the boss want?*

- Look up the word "steward" and "manager" at dictionary.com. What do you learn?
- Read 1 Corinthians 4:2. What one thing is required of stewards/managers?
- What do you think the resort owner wants out of this situation? Is that reasonable? Why or why not?

Wednesday—*What do you, the employee, get out of it?*

- The boss wants a well-run resort, one that makes a profit. Is that fair? Why or why not?
- Is this job worth your faithful, conscientious labors? Why or why not?
- What might be the perils of having such posh employment? What might you be tempted to do?

Thursday—*What if you happen to enjoy your job? Is that OK?*

- Think again about the arrangement: in exchange for responsible, customer-oriented management of the resort, you get to live in an ocean-front suite. You **neither** cook nor do dishes, laundry, or clean bathrooms! When the company vehicle needs repair, it's not on your dime; it's a business expense.
- Do you resent the fact that you're **not** the owner? Do you resent it that the owner is very wealthy?

Friday—*Read Luke 12:37-48, then...*

- What does the Master (aka, "God") do for faithful managers (v. 37)? Does that surprise you?
- According to v. 37-38, what does "faithfulness" look like? As God's manager, are you doing that?
- According to v. 45-47, what does "unfaithfulness" look like? Are you unfaithful in your stewardship?
- In the eyes of unfaithful stewards, how do you think the Master appears?
- How reasonable is the Master in the case of incompetent stewards (v. 48)?

Saturday—***Prepare to worship your Lord tomorrow with your church family (Psalm 133:1)...***

Tomorrow Pastor Doug will wrap up this series on financial freedom, exploring the role of "investing carefully".

- Of the four keys to financial freedom—earning honestly, giving generously, spending wisely, and investing carefully—which one plays the **least** significant role in your financial dealings?
- What are examples **careful** investing in your **current** life-stage?
- What are some examples of **careless** investing from your past?
- **How free** do you feel financially?