Control Your Money

Many people live above their means and are too proud to downsize.
Financial difficulty is a tool the devil uses to apply pressure to the lives of many believers. He wants to distract, disrupt and ultimately destroy us. And he knows that when we're consumed with debt he can keep us from fulfilling our God-given purpose.

Many people are in financial trouble because they're living above their means and have too much pride to downsize. As a result, they waste their energy working two and three jobs to finance a lifestyle God never promised.

Though I'm passionate about this subject, I'm no expert. In fact, I told my congregation some time ago that I developed good money-management skills as a result of being broke for so long.

But here's what I do know: When we obey God and implement the following principles in our lives, a harvest will come. Second Kings 4:1-7 is a good illustration of how faith, exercised with obedience and fiscal responsibility, can lead to a healthy financial future.

The text says there was a widow who was broke, in debt and disgusted with her life. She explained her situation to the Old Testament prophet Elisha: "'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves'" (2 Kings 4:2, NKJV).
But when he asked her what did she have in her house, she told

him a pot of oil. Elisha instructed the woman: "'Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few'" (see v. 3).

In today's credit culture, you can finance just about anything. That's because lending institutions make billions of dollars from the interest we pay. Borrowing isn't wrong. But when we do it excessively, it becomes sin.

God was setting up something explosive for this single mother. He wanted her to know that her financial problem wasn't in charge of her destiny. He was.

That's the lesson some Christians need to learn. During tough times we must trust Him and when our blessings come, we'll have no problem making Him the priority.

Next, Elisha told the woman to gather her sons, go inside and shut the door. In other words, everybody in the house had work to do. As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children a good work ethic.

My father taught my siblings and me to work diligently and not to expect other people to finance our futures. Because we obeyed him, all six of us are saved, serving in ministry and financially stable.

The Bible indicates that the widow obeyed Elisha and continued to pour the oil, but how many times have we failed to follow His commands? We sit in church, hear a message that will change our lives, but go home and do nothing about it.

Scripture says that when the woman ran out of jars, the oil ceased. God will bless you according to your ability to handle, hold or house money. That’s why it’s important to open up a college fund, and savings, vacation and Christmas accounts. God cannot release your harvest if you don’t have a barn to put it in.

Finally, Elisha tells the woman to sell the oil, pay her debts and live off the rest with her sons. Pay your bills! When the woman paid everyone she owed, including the people from whom she borrowed the jars, she became debt free and a business owner.

Major debt enslaves us, but financial stability frees us to pursue the plans of our Father. God wants to reverse the curse and change our lives.

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