

Kingdom Financial Stewardship: Keys to Financial Health

Keys to Financial Health

Money—it's something we all deal with every day. Whether we're earning it, spending it, or saving it, how we manage our money shapes our future. Yet, despite its importance, financial management is something many people struggle with.

Imagine a life where you're not constantly worried about bills, unexpected expenses, or running out of money before your next paycheck. A life where you have the financial freedom to pursue your dreams, travel, invest in your future, and help those you care about. Sounds great, right? But for many people, money is a constant source of stress rather than a tool for security and opportunity.

The truth is financial stability isn't about earning a huge salary—it's about how you manage the money you have. Some people earn millions and still end up in debt, while others with modest incomes build wealth over time. The difference? Smart money management.

Managing money is both a head issue and a heart issue. Emotions come into play sometimes that hinder us from managing our money properly because of what we may feel or habits or cravings of our hearts. So, we need guardrails to protect our financial health. These guardrails help us to maintain safety as we move towards our financial goals and destination.

There are four keys to Financial Health. These keys are guardrails that are necessary for excellent Financial Health. These keys will protect you from financial irresponsibility and impulsive spending.

Key #1 – Live Within Your Means

Living within your means sounds easy, but it is difficult to implement. Sometimes the desires and appetites of our hearts get in the way and make us do foolish things financially. When we live within our means, these impulses and desire are autocorrected.

The 10th commandment addresses this yearning to overspend compulsively and foolishly. It says, **"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."** – Exodus 20:17 NIV

"Covet" means to have an intense desire for something that belongs to someone else. It goes beyond simple admiration—it's a strong, often unhealthy craving to possess what someone else has, whether it's their belongings, relationships, or status.

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In the context of the **Tenth Commandment**, coveting refers to an envious longing that can lead to resentment, greed, or even unethical actions. Instead of being grateful for what we have, coveting makes us focus on what we lack, which can lead to dissatisfaction, harm to our relationships with others, and financial ruin.

When you live within your means, you must practice contentment.

What is contentment? Contentment is being satisfied and **at peace** with what you have. It means appreciating what you already possess rather than constantly longing for more or comparing yourself to others. True contentment doesn't mean you stop striving for improvement; it means that your happiness isn't dependent on acquiring more wealth, possessions, or status. It's about finding joy in the present and recognizing that fulfillment comes from gratitude, not just material success.

Paul reminds us that contentment comes through relying on Christ, not external circumstances.

He says in Philippians 4:11-13 The Message, "...Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.

We know this last statement as: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

1 Timothy 6:6-8 (NIV) "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."

In other words, true wealth is found in trusting God and being content, not in material possessions. The 10th commandment warns us against envy, greed, and the desire for things that belong to others.

Matthew 6:31-33 The Message – If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

When we live within our means we are telling God that we trust him to provide our daily bread, our needs.

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Key No. 2 – AVOID DEBT

In our American culture, debt is seen as a normal part of life. We take out loans for homes, cars, education, and sometimes even for things we don't truly need. But the Bible warns us about the dangers of debt and the burden it places on our lives.

Debt is a trap that robs us of our peace, joy, and money. It impacts our mental health. Many of you can't sleep at night thinking about how you're going to pay your bills. Your robbing Peter to pay Paul. It's time from the debt trap.

Credit card debt is wearing us out.

Proverbs 22:7 Good News Translation - Poor people are slaves of the rich. Borrow money and you are the lender's slave.

Many of us are Credit Card slingers. What is that?

Do you remember the gunslingers in old westerns shows? One cowboy would challenge another to a gun duel. After counting off 20 paces, the fastest one who could turn around and whip out his gun was the winner. Well, some of us are like that gunslinger: you are whipping out that credit card so fast. Your eyes see something they want and what do you do? You whip out that credit card. For some it clothes, cars, and others it is gadgets.

You whip it out at Nordstrom's; whip it out at Season's 52 or Steak 48; whip it out at Five Central and 5015; whip it out for March Madness.

Just slinging everywhere. We are living beyond our means; overextended and it is wiping you out.

Pew Research Center reports that 57% of Black Americans have credit card debt and 33% of Black Americans report they have more debt than they can manage.

Romans 13:8 NLT: Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

I like the way The Message (Romans 13:8) reads: Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along.

If you want your financial position to become healthy - AVOID DEBT!!! ATTACK DEBT!!! and free yourself from debts enslavement.

Living debt free is the good life.

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Key No. 3 – Create a budget and live by it.

Financial freedom comes with a budget. A budget ensures that you know how much money you have, how much money you're spending, and where you're spending it.

Luke 14:28-30 The Message - “Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn’t first sit down and figure the cost so you’ll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you’re going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: ‘He started something he couldn’t finish.’”

Jesus is saying, “don’t be the laughingstock. Assess the money coming in and money going out, so you won’t run out of money. Set a budget. After setting a budget, after paying your tithes and bills, if you don’t have enough money then **WAIT** (a four-letter word).

Delay gratification! Instead of impulsively buying, develop the discipline to save first.

Proverbs 21:5 Good News Translation - Plan carefully and you will have plenty; if you act too quickly, you will never have enough.

Ask yourself some questions? Do I have the funds to sustain my lifestyle? Based on my budget, what adjustments do I need to make? What am I willing to give up?

A budget helps you to think ahead and plan for fixed and variable expenses. It will also lead to financial freedom if you stick with your budget. It helps you to control your spending and not spend money unnecessarily.

Proverbs 27:23-27 The Message - Know your sheep by name; carefully attend to your flocks (don’t take them for granted; possessions don’t last forever, you know). And then when the crops are in and the harvest is stored in the barns, you can knit sweaters from lambs’ wool and sell your goats for a profit. There will be plenty of milk and meat to last your family through the winter.

What does this mean? First, you must understand the context of the Scripture. The writer of this Scripture lived in an agrarian society so many illustrations and examples reference this type of lifestyle. Let’s pull the meaning into the 21st century. The writer is saying, “know your financial state.”

A budget helps you to know the lay of the land, your financial landscape. Everyone needs a budget, regardless of whether you have a \$1 million or \$100. Everyone needs a budget.

One lady said, I didn't realize until I started keeping track of my money as to what was going on. She said, every time I passed by a vending machine, I popped in \$1.50 to get

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a can of soda or some juice. She said, I didn't realize that I was spending \$50 a month, \$600 a year, on these juices and drinks that wasn't even healthy anyway and wasn't adding to the quality of my life. But she was only able to make changes when she knew where her money was going and how much was going.

Some of us must have a cup of Starbucks every day. That really adds up. A favorite seller at Starbucks is the Caramel Ribbon Crunch Frappuccino with soy or almond milk. A Grande costs \$7.45. If you drink one Monday thru Friday that rings up to be 37.25 per week or \$149.00 per month or \$1,788 per year.

How many of us could use \$1800 in a better way?

A budget is more than just a series of numbers of a page; it is an embodiment of our values.

A budget helps you to take control of frivolous spending, reduce wasteful spending, and apply your money in better ways.

Slide No. 3 – Budget Apps

Here are Budget Apps to help you get started.

Key No. 4 – Ask God to Help You with Your Finances

God cares about your financial health. He wants to be a part of every area of your life, including your finances.

James 1:5 The Message - If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought.