

SERIES: Upside Living in a Downside Economy*

Message: Re-Balancing Life's Investments!

November 15th, 2009

Text: James 4: 7-11

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

Intro: Proverbs 27:23; 28:19; 13:11, Psalm 37:21

Right PRIORITIES + Right ACTIONS = Right RESULTS!

I. Right PRIORITIES (see James 4: 7-10)

a. **Submit to God. Matthew 6:33**

b. **Resist the Devil**

1 John 2:16 ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

Matthew 4: 1-11

C. Draw near to God. How? REPENT!

James 1:7-8

Luke 16:13 “You CANNOT serve God and mammon!”

“A man’s pocketbook is the last piece of him to be converted!” –

Martin Luther

Matthew 6:21

“The worst kind of fool is the person who believes that God exists but who lives as if God’s directives are not to be taken seriously!”

–Dr. Michael Slaughter

D. HUMBLE yourself! Promise: He will RAISE you up!

“The bottom line is that anything less than the will of God in every dimension of our financial lives is not an option. We must say, “Lord, I want what you want, and by the strength that comes through your grace, I’m willing to work at it until I do it!” --Dr. Michael Slaughter

II. Seven Right ACTIONS. James 2:26 “Faith without works is dead.”

1. Do the first right thing: Planned GIVING to GOD.

1 Corinthians 16:2 ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, [to give]

John 6:35 “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” See also Matthew 6:33, Malachi 3: 6-12

“There is greater joy in sacrifice than when we give just out of our excess!” **Francis Chan**

“There is only one Master of the human heart, and that is not religion but Jesus Christ. But woe be to me if when I see HIM I say – I will not. He will never insist that I do, but I have begun to sign the death warrant of the Son of God in my soul. When I stand face to face with Jesus Christ and say—I will not, He will never insist; but I am backing away from the recreating power of His Redemption. It is a matter of indifference to God’s grace how abominable I am if I come to the light; but woe be to me if I refuse the light.” --**Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, July 18th.**

2. Seek wise COUNSEL through an accountability group or counselor.

Proverbs 15:22 “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors, they succeed.”

3. Write or rework a BUDGET. The 10 – 10 – 80 plan!

4. Perform PLASTIC surgery and reduce your DEBT.

Proverbs 22:7 “... the borrower is the slave to the lender!”

5. Set future GOALS and practice delayed GRATIFICATION

Jeremiah 29:11 “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope!”

Hebrews 11:1 “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen!”

6. Nurture and attitude of GRATITUDE and CONTENTMENT!
Philippians 4: 11-12, “*I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty.*”

7. PRAY, PRAY, PRAY! James 4:8-10
Philippians 4:6-7, Philippians 4:19

III. Right RESULTS

How to prosper in any season ... “*In every work they he (Hezekiah) began ... he did it with all his heart (for the Lord). So he prospered!*” (2 Chron. 31:21)

Colossians 3: 22b-24 “... *but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.*”²³ *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,*²⁴ *since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*”

2 Corinthians 9:8-11

*Outline of this message from Michael Slaughter

INDIVIDUAL OUR GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Read James 4:7-8, Proverbs 27:23 & Proverbs 28:29. The economic crisis is perfect timing to begin reevaluating and rebalancing your life priorities and practices. To do so you must first check to make sure your priorities match up with God’s priorities and not the priorities of this world. It is too easy to get caught up in selfish humanism or materialistic security and not focus on committing to God’s will and God’s ways, especially as they deal with finances.

- Do you think the current economic crisis could have a silver lining for your life? Explain.
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- Name one priority in your life right now that might need to be changed or re-examined?
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- Which world view do you struggle with the most: seeing yourself as the center determining your own priorities and values –or- finding security and meaning in “things?”

Read Psalm 24:1 & Malachi 3:10-11. Once you have right priorities you must begin adding the right actions if you want to reap the right results. The first right action is planned and consistent giving back to God. Giving back to God in resources, talent, and time proclaims that you trust God with what you have as well as shows your recognition that all things are God’s anyway. You aren’t the rightful owner of anything, all things belong to God. And when you give to God first you demonstrate your obedience and faith in God.

- How are you trusting in God right now in your financial life? Are you committed to doing whatever God determines for you?
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- Do you truly consider your possessions as really owned by God? How would that belief affect what you do with your possessions?

Read Proverbs 15:22, Proverbs 22:7, and Jeremiah 29:11. The next right actions include some very practical steps like seeking wise financial counsel, writing and sticking with a budget, performing plastic surgery on your credit cards, and setting future goals to attain. Each and every one of these steps is not only biblical based but a must-do if you want to properly prosper, but all the more in uncertain financial times.

--Do you have a household budget? Does it need to be reworked or refigured so that your priorities match God’s priorities?

- Name some of your life goals? How are you planning to reach those goals and is God a part of the picture?
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- Describe a time you delayed instant gratification for future goals and/or God’s will? What happened?

Read Philippians 4:11-13 & James 4:8-10. Finally, right actions also mean having an attitude of gratitude and praying to God to keep yourself aligned with where God would lead you. These right actions will keep your life and your finances in balance as God determines your next steps to building the kingdom of Christ.

--What are your goals for your financial future? Do they include God’s desires?

- What right priority do you need to pursue or right action do you need to take to become more in line with God’s work and will for your life right now?