

“Strapped”

“Money is fun if you’ve got some.”
(Dave Ramsey)

How many have done something stupid with money? Everyone else is lying! Today we’re going to start with a foundation and talk about the heart and money.

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”
Proverbs 22:7

Servant: *ˈebed* (eh’-bed); a servant, a slave, in bondage.

- Love to get married, can’t afford it.
- Love to start a family—have more children, one at home.
- Little larger house, rented whole life.
- Hate my job—would love to do something different.
- Help someone in need, Mission Trip, Offerings

We’re strapped, we’re in bondage.

- Average household debt in the U.S. is now 136% of the household income. (U.S. Government)
- For those carrying a balance, the average credit card debt is \$14,517. Shoes, golf clubs, lattes, and DVDs.
- The average 21-year-old owes \$12,000. By 28, they owe \$78,000.
- The average number of U.S. households living paycheck to paycheck is 55%. Lose job—can’t make rent or house.

That means if our church is average, over a half of you, if you lost your job or didn’t get paid you couldn’t pay the house payment, the rent payment, or the car payment. You are in big, big trouble and over 50% of the people in our country are living that way today. It’s no wonder there’s so much tension!

STRAPPED is normal: house payments, car payments, student loan payments, credit card payments, sleepless nights, marriage tension, worrying all the above.

I believe with all of my heart if you’re a follower of Jesus we are not called to be normal, we are called to be different; we are not like this world. You don’t have to settle for normal, it’s when everyone else is strapped and giving you advice, “Well you’re always going to have a car payment!” If you believe that you always will, but there is a better way and we want to look at what God’s Word says.

Money is one of the most visible measurements of the condition of your heart. It’s one of the best outward measurements of your inward spiritual condition.

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Scripture: 2/3 parables dealt with \$ & possessions; Gospels: 1 of 10 verses deal directly with money; 2,300 verses in the Bible ... 5 times as many as prayer and faith.

The Temptation of Money & Things ...

WE ARE TEMPTED TO SERVE MONEY.

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

Matthew 6:24

Isn't it interesting of all the things Jesus could have said, you can't serve God and power, popularity, yourself, sexual desires, etc. ... He said “money”. Why? I'm guessing because He knew that for many people money and things would be the number one competitor for our hearts.

If you've ever bought something you didn't need ... you've served money. If you've hoarded and not given ... you've served money. If you've fought to move up the corporate ladder at the expense of your family ... you've served money.

WE ARE TEMPTED TO LOVE MONEY.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

1 Timothy 6:10

Money is not the root of all evil. Money is neutral, you can use it for good or you can use it for evil. It's the love of money that's wrong. Poor people don't think they love money because they don't have much of it. But they can be obsessed with having more. Why? Because they love money.

A lot of people would say, “*Rich people obviously love money!*” That's not always true; there are a lot of rich people that they're just rich because they're good at what they do. And they don't love money they've got money, they use money, they leverage money, but money doesn't have them. They've got it but they don't love it.

Many people misinterpret what money is supposed to do, money is neutral; it's how you use it that matters. People think, “*If I just had more money that would solve all my problems.*” And they'll say, “*If I had more money I wouldn't have to work so much.*”

The reality is, generally speaking when people get more money they tend to work more; they get more responsibility, higher paying jobs, more stress, more things to manage, and the reality is, generally speaking more money means more work.

“*If I had more money I wouldn't have to be in debt*” ... if you're in debt when you don't have much ... chances are when you have more money you'll have more debt!

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“If I had more money I’d be more generous” ... studies show that the more money people make the smaller percentage of their income that they give.

Money isn’t good, money isn’t bad, it’s what you do with it. Money is a magnifier; it makes you more of what you already are. Jerk. Rich jerk. Generous. Incredibly generous!

Do you love money? Christians know the Scriptural answer is supposed to be “NO!”

“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.”
Ecclesiastes 5:10

Many are under money’s power and don’t even know it. The issue isn’t how much we make, it’s how much we spend. We are life-styling ourselves into bondage, we are spending more than we make into bondage. And so we start to think, “All I need is more money!” No!

If we are spending more than we make that’s a lifestyle problem, which is a real indication of a spiritual problem, that we are trying to find meaning in the things of this world. And the reality is, most of us don’t need more money what we need is more Jesus!

When we’ve got Him we’ve got the wisdom to do what’s right with the money that God provided. It’s my prayer that those of you that are in bondage would call it what it is and say,

“I’m strapped, I’m in bondage, I’m in debt, I’m a slave, I’m a servant and I don’t want to be that way anymore. Everybody else is that way, all of my friends ... But I’m sick of it, I’m sick of fighting about money, I’m sick of worrying about money, I’m sick of not being able to do what I feel like God’s calling me to do because I don’t have enough money. I’m sick of not being able to help people because I don’t have enough money!”

My prayer is that we’ll step out of the normal mold and say, *“I want to honor God with my money.”*

Are you tired of being STRAPPED? Do you hate being under power of money?

A Godly Perspective on Money ...

**WE DON’T SERVE MONEY—WE SERVE GOD.
MONEY SERVES US AS WE SERVE GOD.**

How can money serve us?

Money buys us time. If we have money we can trade money for time. If you’re out of debt you might hire a house cleaner and buy you 4 or 6 or 8 hours a week while you bless someone else with income and you’ve got time to spend with your kids or to serve in the community or to serve at your church; you just bought yourself time.

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Money gives you options ... where to live, what job to pursue, vacations, etc.

Money allows you to bless others ... where do You want me to be a blessing today God?

- Create Sacred Spaces, Invest in the Next Generation, Reach Beyond Our Walls, sponsor a child, take a missions trip, etc.

I want to take you on a journey through this series that I believe can change your life. If you're strapped you get unstrapped. If you're already debt-free, you start living even a more radical life of generosity.

What if you got there? No more financial debt ever again? You're debt-free!

Let no debt remain outstanding except the continual debt to love...

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another...”
Romans 13:8

The one debt you can never repay, the sin debt that God paid for you through the blood of His Son Jesus who shed His blood and died so you could live free?

Imagine it, what could you do? No car payment ever again, no credit card payment ever again, no student loan payment ever again. What if you were so crazy you had no house payment ever again?

What if you could devote the rest of your life to sharing the love of Jesus generously with everyone around you because you don't serve money, you serve God. Money serves you as you serve God.

It's possible if you work hard, if you're wise, if you're faithful with a little bit, guess what? God will trust you with more. It's my prayer that God would trust you with a lot more and you'd use it for His namesake to make a difference in this world.

If someone was to look at your checkbook, what could they tell about you based on the way you spend your money?

In what ways have you been tempted to love and serve money?

What steps can you take to ensure you are serving God and not money?

Let's Pray!

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What are some things you’ve said no to in order to avoid debt? What things might you need to say no to?

What was the most “questionable” thing you’ve ever purchased on credit? What did you learn from your experience?

Describe a time when you struggled with self-control. How did it affect you and what did you do to address it?

What’s your vision for your financial life? What might be standing in the way of you accomplishing your vision?

Old Rule: If you didn’t have the money to buy something you wanted you weren’t allowed to buy it.

Before Great Depression: 2% homes had a mortgage against them, 40 years later: 2% of homes did not have a mortgage against them and that’s how quickly things changed!

What’s happened is that there has been an entitled mindset in generation after generation – *“I deserve the same lifestyle as my parents! I want to have the same home and drive the same car and take the same vacations because I deserve it and I deserve it now!”*

What we have is a generation of pretenders. We’ve got the stuff, but we’ve also got the debt. We don’t really own the stuff and what we are is strapped.

“One man **pretends to be rich**, yet has **nothing** ...”

Proverbs 13:7

There are three groups of people: the “haves”, the “have not’s”, and the “have not paid for what they got”; they are the pretenders, in debt and in bondage.

Three essential values for us to become unstrapped and debt-free ...

1. EMBRACE THE VALUE OF SELF-CONTROL.

“Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks **self-control**.”

Proverbs 25:28

If you do not have financial self-control, you are like a city without walls, you are defenseless to attacks, you are vulnerable to debt and beyond, you have no defense against the ploys of the evil one financially. With no self-control you will end up in trouble.

Women & Spending – nickel and dime it over time, hair, nails, shoes, belts, etc.

Men & Spending – all at once ... time share, boat, truck, electronics, etc.

I’m not saying don’t enjoy life, just wait until you get out of debt to first! Learn to say “NO” for a little while so you can say yes for the rest of your lives.

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2. EMBRACE THE VALUE OF SACRIFICE.

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before him endured the cross ...”
Hebrews 12:2

What was the joy? The joy of pleasing God and knowing that you and I would have access to God through His sacrifice. For the joy set before Jesus, what did He do? He made the sacrifice, the brutal sacrifice for something He wanted even more, the joy set before Him.

Sacrifice is giving up something you love for something you love even more.

- Give up cable television for a debt free Xmas.
- Stay in a small house—one of you can stay home with kids.
- College: 2 roommates so you can graduate w/no student loans.
- Give up eating lunch out for \$112k over a lifetime.

The problem in our culture today is we’re asking the wrong questions. People are asking when we go to buy something, “*How much down, how much a month?*” Instead of, “*How much is the real cost, how much is this going to cost me over the months and months of payments?*”

- Those carrying a credit card balance average: \$14,517 (trip to Disney & a home theater)
- If you pay \$217.93 per month on \$14,517 at 18%, it will take 40 years to pay off debt (totaling \$104,606.40).

That’s one expensive trip to Disney isn’t it? That’s expensive, that’s what the real cost is. That’s what’s happening to you.

- If you invest \$14,517 at 12% for 40 years = \$1,350,820.94.
- If you invest \$14,517 and add \$217.93 per month at 12% over 40 years = 3,597,615.75

How much of a difference do you think you could make in this world if you had money like that? How much of a difference do you think if you’d break out of the mold, and instead of doing something like everyone else does, you be weird and you’d have some sacrifice and some self-control.

3. EMBRACING THE VALUE OF PLANNING.

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?”
Luke 14:28

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Don't you want to first see if you have enough money before you go and try to buy it?

“The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.”

Proverbs 21:5

You can wander into debt, but you can't wander out, you've got to get a plan.

Resource: Financial Peace University (Dave Ramsey)

THE FIRST TWO BABY STEPS

1. Save \$1,000 For Emergencies.

Things are going to break, you're going to get a ball through your window, your refrigerator is going to break down, your car's going to get a flat tire, and your kid is going to stick a marble up his nose and you're going to have to go to the emergency room to try to get that thing out okay.

How are you going to get a thousand dollars? I don't know, but you're going to get it. You're going to sell some stuff; e-bay and Craig's list are now your best friends. Sell everything until the kids are nervous! You may get a second job, you may clip coupons, etc.

2. Do The Debt Snowball.

This is the absolute best and fastest way to get unstrapped and to free yourself from the bondage of debt. What I'm about to cover with you is one of the most important things that you could ever learn about your personal finances. Are you ready? Let's do it!

Debt		Total Owed	Min. Payment	New Payment
Lowes	18%	\$450	\$50	50 + 200 = 250
Target	18%	\$650	\$30	30 + 250 = 280
Parents	0%	\$1600	\$200	200 + 280 = 480
Visa	18%	\$1800	\$30	30 + 480 = 510
Car	10%	\$7000	\$400	400 + 510 = 910
School	6%	\$9000	\$200	200 + 910 = 1110

This is an imaginary list of our debts, what we owe to others.

- 1st Column: people or businesses we owe.
- 2nd Column: the amount that's owed to each one.
- 3rd Column: the minimum payment.

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Find an extra \$200 a month – take a second job delivering pizzas, eliminate cable, mobile data plan, take lunch, make coffee, etc.

Payoff paying minimum payments = 120 months.

Debt snowball payoff = 21 months. (Difference of 99 months)

Additional \$1,110 invested at 8% for 99 months = \$153,992.30.

I pray that you get a little bit excited about the possibility of not living a life strapped, that you can do this with the help of God. As you're faithful to God you can do this, but you've got to get a little crazy, you've got to get a little weird, you've got to get focused, you've got to get a plan, you've got to have a sacrificial attitude, you cannot live like everyone else. The more passion that you get about this the faster it can be done and the more good decisions you're able to make.

Don't sell out and live in bondage and in debt and unable to do what you want to do as the debt piles up over the years. I pray God speaks to you because I can't convince you, but if God can convince you it can be totally transforming.

Managing money is one of the most spiritual things that we do, it's one of the most visible outward evidences of where our heart is spiritually and what we do with what God trusts us with matters. If you're faithful with a little God will trust you with much.

Sacrifice, self-control and planning, and you can make a huge difference.

What do you think your life could look like one day with no credit card payments, no car payments, no student loan payments?

What do you think you could do for the glory of God if you broke free from this world's broken system and live for a while like no one else so one day you could give like no one else, all for the glory of the One who gave His Son Jesus just for you?

It can be done; have hope, don't give up, fight like crazy and watch as God delivers you from the bondage of debt.

How has your life been affected by debt? Which of the three Biblical values to acting your wage do you struggle with most and need to focus on improving? If you are struggling with debt, what immediate steps do you need to take to address it?

APPLICATION: Complete the debt snowball worksheet.

Let's Pray!

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Do you consider yourself to be more of a spender or a saver? Explain.

Share a time in your life when you learned about the importance of planning for the future.

What are some of the obstacles you’ve encountered that hinder your ability to invest for the future?

How are you investing for the future? What steps might you need to take to improve the way you invest?

What long-term goals do you have for your financial life? How are you progressing in accomplishing these goals?

Today I want to talk to you about saving money and investing money. There are really basically two types of people. There are those who tend to like to save and there are those who maybe have the spiritual gift of spending; spenders and savers. **(Joshua vs. Jenna)**

“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”

Proverbs 6:6-8

“In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil,
but a foolish man devours all he has.”

Proverbs 21:20

Modern translation: *he lives paycheck to paycheck; he eats everything that comes in.*

I don’t want to make anybody feel bad that shouldn’t feel bad (Single moms making minimum wage fighting like crazy and just the fact that you’re paying your bills is miraculous!).

The reality is, if 55% or more of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, that’s a lot of people that are foolish eating up all that they have and not saving anything. So, let’s talk about saving. What will we save for?

1. Emergencies – plumbing breaks, car repairs, etc.
2. Purchases – couch, suit, kitchen table, car, etc.
3. Future – college, teeth, retirement, etc.

The problem is many people are not doing this because they don’t know how to **prioritize** their dollars. There are needs and there are wants; people are buying what they want and don’t have enough money for what they need. Each month we have a certain amount of money to live off of and we’re going to give a priority to each dollar that comes in. **How do we prioritize our dollars?**

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Illustration: \$100 cash in 10's ...

Payday	\$100
• Tithe –	- \$ 10
• Expenses –	- \$ 70
• Emergency Fund –	- \$ 20

Embraced sacrifice & self-control –
cut expenses by \$20

Good news: you've been tithing and God blessed you. You got to babysit this month and you got an extra \$10 for babysitting. You also sold something on eBay and you got \$20.00. So we tithe from our income, this goes to God and that gives us an extra \$29.00 to put towards our emergency fund and guess what? Before long, it's payday again and the cycle continues.

Not only did you get \$100 for your normal job, but an extra \$10 again for babysitting and your rich uncle died and left you \$20 totaling \$130 this month. The priority, the first 10% goes to God through the tithe, and then we put the next \$70.00 toward our expenses and we've got \$47 to go toward our emergency fund. In no time at all you'll have your **\$1,000 emergency fund** and you've accomplished the first priority. Congratulations!

After the emergency fund we tackle debt ... debt snowball. Here's how it works: payday ... tithe ... expenses ... everything left – DEBT! Don't give up, hang in there, watch for the blessings of God and put it all toward your debt, you will become debt-free (except for the house).

Celebrate! NOT with a shopping trip to Neiman Marcus, YES ... go to a movie, buy popcorn & over-priced candy, why? Because you are now debt-free and the priorities change once again.

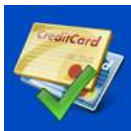
Next Priority: Invest or build wealth. You've been faithful to God with the tithe and God has blessed you with a raise. Your new income is now \$130 a month. Congratulations!

The first 10% goes to God in the tithe. **Then the priorities actually rotate.** We give to God first and then second we invest for our future.

How do we invest? We take 15% of our income and put it into a pre-taxed retirement account. That's about \$20, then we pay our expenses.

What do we do with our money left over? We can give an offering, we can give to someone whose in need, we can help feed hungry children, we can invest more, and you can even get your nails or buy that iPad!

If we're faithful with what God gives us He will trust us with more. We're going to give up something we love for something we love even more. We're going to say no for a little while so we can say yes for the rest of our lives. And if we'll live like no one else, one day we can give like no one else, because if we're faithful with a little God will trust us with a lot.



Debt Free - Pay Off your Debt With Debt Snowball Method
By Mobile Innovations LLC

Let’s talk about investing ...

TWO WAYS TO MAKE MONEY

- **PEOPLE MAKING MONEY.**

“... If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”
2 Thessalonians 3:10

Single ladies; don’t just marry a guy with potential, marry a guy with a job, okay! If you don’t work you don’t eat, you’ve got to work and you can make some money.

There is a second way to make money that a lot of people don’t realize: your money can actually make money as well.

- **MONEY MAKING MONEY.**

And Jesus told a parable that illustrates this beautifully in Matthew 25. He said that a master gave five talents to one guy and two talents to another and one guy to a third. And the third guy went and buried the talent and got nothing. But the guy with five talents Scripture says ...

“The man who had received the five talents went at once and
put his money to work and gained five more.”
Matthew 25:16

The good news is money works 365 days a year, money works when you sleep.

RULES OF INVESTING

1. Don’t Invest In Things You Don’t Understand.

“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established;
through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.”
Proverbs 24:3-4

Be very, very careful that you get good advice. Learn from somebody who is a great investor. Find someone who is a mentor. Sometimes the best investment that you make is the one that you don’t make if you don’t understand.

2. Don’t Put All Your Eggs In One Basket.

Grandma will teach you that and so will the Bible.

“Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know
what disaster may come upon the land.”
Ecclesiastes 11:2

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Don't put all of your money into one thing because if that one thing falls apart and there's disaster there then you are in a lot of trouble.

*“Investing is a lot like manure, if you put it all in one place it starts to stink;
but if you spread it out it makes things grow.”
(Dave Ramsey)*

3. Don't Try To Get **Rich Quick**.

Have any of you ever been trapped by an investment that you thought was a sure thing that you didn't really understand?

“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish
and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”
1 Timothy 6:9

Sometimes the best way to double your money is to take your money, fold it over and put it in your pocket and walk away and not try to get rich quick.

Don't sprint your way into greed and destruction and trouble. We are way better off not to be sprinters as investors, but literally to be marathon investors; that we just want to be consistent and we want to be faithful and we want to be consistent and we want to be faithful and we want to be consistent and we want to be faithful.

“... he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.”
Proverbs 13:11

MONEY + TIME + CONSISTENCY = WEALTH.

Little by little by little .. tithe, pay the expenses, pay off all the debt. We're not in bondage to money, we're not going to be strapped; the borrower is a servant to the lender, we're not going to be like that. Invest long term, 15% into retirement, pay a little bit here, buy some mutual funds, buy a little piece of little rental property; whatever it is, faithfulness, consistency; over time.

How many of you could save \$5 a day? (Example: a little money over time with consistency):

If you invested \$5 a day at 12% interest, because we're talking over a long period of time:

5 years	\$12,250
10 years	\$34,505
20 years	\$148,388
30 years	\$524,244
40 years	\$1,764,716
50 years	\$5,858,750

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Those of you who are young should be dancing because you can do it at this age! Once you get older it's not as easy. If you start now, money plus consistency plus time, you can do, how much could you do with money like that?

If a 30-year old makes \$48,000 a year, never gets a raise but saves 15% of his income into a 401(k), that's \$600 a month, invest it at 12%; by the age of 70, this guy will have \$7,058,863!

How many of you would like to be a great investor?

Invest in money ... people ... marriage ... children ... parents ... church ... etc.

What's your vision for your financial life? How are you investing for the future? What steps might you need to take to improve the way you invest? Whose life do you need to invest in? What steps will you take to invest in them?

Let's Pray!

Father I pray today that Your Spirit would speak to us. This pushes a lot of us. Work in a way that only You can do.

I pray for wisdom in financial management and God I pray for Your supernatural tangible blessings to be real. I ask for financial blessings for those who are faithful, that You would honor their act of worship according to Your Word and that when they see Your faithfulness it would build their faith even more.

God, I pray for financial blessings that they would be able to go well beyond the tithe, but offerings and be able to use money to help people in need. Lord, bless them so that they could leverage what You give them to make a difference all over this world for Your glory.

Resource: “Strapped” (A Godly Perspective On Money, Act Your Wage, The Buck Starts Here, Putting God First) series by Craig Groeschel