

Fil-Am Community Church

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Financial Fitness Part 4

"THE HABITS OF FINANCIAL HEALTH"

I know our men are excited about tonight. Including me. This is one of those times when I wish I was still living in New York. I could have gotten a ticket to tonight's game. But, of course, there is something more exciting going on here right now. Amen? Are you excited about Jesus? Are you excited that you're in the winning team with him? Amen!

You know, you may win the Super Bowl and get all fame and riches and all that jazz but we know these things are temporary. What's important is winning in the game of life. And that is, knowing Jesus as your Lord and Savior. And receiving eternal life. That is not temporary.

But, you know what, the reason the Broncos and the Seahawks are in the Super Bowl is that they developed helpful habits that ensured their longevity. They made it a point to rehearse and practice, sacrificing certain comforts in the process and applying sports principles to make sure they'll be physically fit.

In the same way, if you want to be financially fit, you have to develop helpful and healthy habits. You also have to sacrifice or give up certain comforts to reach your goal. So, if I want to develop healthy finances, if I want to be financially fit, there are certain financial habits I have to develop in my life.

In this series we've been on financial fitness for a few weeks, we've looked first at the fundamental laws of money that God talks about in the book of Proverbs and in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Today we're going to take a little turn and look at some practical things you can do. Next week we're going to take a break because it's our Valentine's Day celebration. Then, the following week we end the series by looking at the five ways to make money work for you.

BTW, you'll be happy to know there are only seven habits, not eight as you see in your outline. So, this message is shorter than it should be. So, this week we're going to look at the seven habits for getting out of the hole. Seven habits for getting financially free. And they're all in God's Word.

We're going to look at these verses from the book of Proverbs. Each of these habits is in order. In other words the first habit is the most important one. The second one is the second most important one. The third is the third most important. I have listed these in their order of how you do them.

1. The Bible teaches that the first thing I have to do if I'm going to get myself financially fit is this: Remember that God is my source.

That's the starting point. I remember that God is the source of all my supply. My source is not my salary. My source is not the economy. My source is not my savings. My source and my security is in God.

The reason why this is important is you must put your security in something that can never been taken from you. Your job, your salary, your savings, they can all be taken from you. You can all lose them. In an instant. So you can't put your security in them. You must put your security in something that cannot be taken from you. And that is your relationship to God. God is the source of my supply – not my salary, not my savings.

The Bible says this in Deuteronomy 8:18 *“Always remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”*

Every economy, including America, has wealth makers and it has wealth takers. It has wealth producers and it has wealth users. It has wealth contributors and has wealth consumers. The economy gets turned upside down when there are more consumers than there are contributors. When there are more people taking out of the economy than putting in it. And that's what's happening right now in America.

Fifty percent of Americans take more out of the economy than they are putting in it. We have more consumers than we have contributors. Yet God said, I designed you to create wealth, to produce wealth; I designed you to be a productive person. God wants you to be productive and his plan for your life, part of it includes wealth production, or wealth creation. Not wealth redistribution but wealth creation.

Let me explain the difference to you. Between communism, capitalism, and Christianity.

Capitalism says, what's mine is mine and I'm going to keep it. And if you don't make it, tough luck. Too bad for you. Communism says, what's yours is mine and I have a right to take it. I can take yours and give it to somebody else. That's called redistribution of wealth. That's communism. Christianity says, what's mine is really God's and I'm willing to share it.

See the difference? Capitalism – what's mine is mine. I'm going to keep it. Communism – what's yours is mine and I can take it. Christianity – what's mine is God's and I'm willing to share it.

When somebody taxes you to help the poor, you don't get any credit for it. But when you voluntarily are generous and you help the poor, that builds your character. It helps you grow. It helps you to become more like Christ, becoming more generous. And that is what God wants to do. To share our wealth with others. God wants to provide benefits, services, protection, help to other people. And in that it creates prosperity. There's nothing wrong with prosperity. There's nothing

wrong with prospering. There's nothing wrong with a profit. *If* you don't make it your number one goal and *if* you do it in the right way. And that leads us to the second habit.

2. The second habit if I want God's blessings on my finances is I must make money honestly.

I remember that God is my source, and then I make money honestly. Because God does not bless cheaters. God does not bless deceptive people, people who steal.

Let's look at some verses from the book of Proverbs on this. Proverbs 15:27 says this "*Dishonest money brings grief to the whole family.*" In other words, I can go out and make a bunch of money but if I make it dishonestly it's actually bringing grief, bringing like a curse, bringing a problem to my family – emotional problems and all kinds of other problems.

You say, that verse isn't for me because I'm not out robbing banks. No, you're not. But are you honest in every area? Let me give you a few ways that we may be dishonest.

Not giving a full day's work. If you have an employer who's paying you for a full day's work and you come late, you leave early, you take an extra long lunch break, and you waste time at work, you are robbing your employer. Maybe you've never thought of that but it's deceptive. They are paying you for a certain amount of work and you are expected to give that certain amount of work. And it is dishonest to be paid for work that I'm not doing. That's called dishonest. And God's not going to bless dishonesty. Christians, of all people should be known for rock-ribbed integrity, that we get there on time or early or stay to the last bell or

late and that we are the hardest workers in society and that we have the most integrity and honesty.

Padding an expense account is dishonest income. Misusing resources at the office is dishonest. It's a waste. Fudging on your taxes is a dishonest way to make money. God says, I don't bless that kind of stuff.

Look at some of the other ways. Proverbs 16:11 *"The Lord demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard."* What does that mean? It means that when I'm dealing with you, making a negotiation, I don't lie to you.

I don't cheat you. I don't tell you that the car I'm selling you is better than it really is. Let me show you another area. This one might surprise you. Proverbs 28:8 the Bible says *"If you make money by charging high interest rates, you will lose it all to someone who cares for the poor."* Did you know that verse was in the Bible? If you make money by charging high interest rates you'll lose it all to somebody who cares for the poor.

God is not against making interest. How do I know that? Because Jesus tells parables in the New Testament where guys double their money by making a hundred percent profit. One guy got a hundred percent return on his money and God says, Well done good and faithful servant. If it's ok to make interest it's ok to pay interest. So I'm not saying interest is bad. He's talking about what the Bible calls here usury. Usury is the lending of money at an exorbitant rate of interest. Like 5/6 in the Philippines. It's what loan sharks do. It's when they prey on people who are down and out. So these people go and borrow from somebody at two and three and four times the interest rate. It's usury. It is excessive. It is cheating people.

So God says if you want my blessing on your finances, first you've got to remember that I'm your security and I'm your source. And number two, you've got to make your money honestly.

3. The third habit you have to develop is honor God first.

I honor God first with my money. Most of you know this principle, the principle of tithing. The bottom line is this: Whatever I want God to bless, I put him first in. If I want God to bless my marriage, I put him first in my marriage. If I want God to bless my time, I put him first in my time. I give him the first part of every day in a quiet time. If I want God to bless my business, I put him first in my business. If I want God to bless my money, I put him first in my money.

This is the principle of tithing. That right off the top I give the first ten percent back to God.

I don't have to explain this in detail. We've talked about this a lot. Just remember these four words: the promise, the purpose, the place and the day.

Here's the promise about tithing, Proverbs 3 *"Honor the Lord by giving him the ... leftovers of all your income... and he will fill your barns to overflow."* It doesn't say that, does it? It says *first part*. And the promise is abundant blessings.

What's the purpose of that? Why does God tell us to tithe? Deuteronomy 14 *"The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your life."* God doesn't need my money. God doesn't need your money. He wants what it represents. He wants me to make him #1 in my life.

Now, the place. Where do I tithe? Do I tithe to the United Way? Or do I tithe to my brother who's been out of work for three years? No. That's charity. Tithing is an act of worship. It goes to God. Not to my friend, not to charity. It goes to God. It's an act of worship.

Malachi 3:10 *"Bring to my storehouse a full tenth..."* And, by the way, what's a storehouse? It's the temple. The place where you worship God. Then, it goes on *"Test me in this, says the Lord. I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour out all the blessings you need."*

It says I dare you. Test me in this. And I'll bless you.

When do I do it? You do it on the day of your worship. 1 Corinthians 16 says this *“On the first day of every week [That’s the day we worship, Sunday] put aside some of what you’ve earned during the week, and use it for the offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn.”* Apparently, during those days, they were paid weekly. But most of us are paid biweekly, and so you bring your tithe every other week or every month, whenever you earn your income. As I said, if I make ten bucks I give a dollar to God. If I make a hundred dollars I give him ten dollars.

Note the phrase “put aside.” Because that means you’ve got to plan this. This is not an impulsive thing. You’ve got to plan it. If you don’t plan it, then you forget it. So, plan to give your tithe.

Now, the fourth habit, which is important too is

4. Save money wisely.

If I want God’s blessing on my finance, if I want to get out of debt, I must learn to save money wisely. You say, Pastor, are you telling me to save my money before I pay my bills? That’s exactly what I’m telling you to do because that’s what the Bible says. If you wait until all your bills are paid off to start saving you will never save anything. Most people are going to get to retirement flat broke because they spent all their money and never saved anything. The Bible clearly says you pay God first and you pay yourself second. Then you spend the rest on your bills, repayment, and things like that. If you don’t you will never save anything.

John D. Rockefeller was the Bill Gates of his day. He was the first mega millionaire in America. They asked him one time, “How do you get to be a mega

millionaire?” He said, the ten-ten-eighty principle. I tithe the first ten percent. I save the second ten percent. And I live on eighty percent. The ten-ten-eighty principle.

Did you know that the average Japanese saves twenty-five percent of their income? The average European saves fifteen percent of their income? Last year the average American spent one percent more than they made. We’re not saving anything. We’re being irresponsible. As a result you’re going to get to retirement and there’s going to be nothing there.

Let me give you a little question that will help you start saving. Simply ask this: Do I really need this item? If you’ll just stop before you buy anything, just stop and ask yourself, do I really need this? Because you could be taking that money and instead of spending it on this trinket, you put it in savings. When you’re saving money, your money is working for you instead of you working for your money. Most people never get out of debt because they spend their entire life working for money. When you start saving it your money works for you. Because even while you’re sleeping it’s making interest. And your money is making money for you. When you save you make money work for you.

Here’s one problem most people do. They get a raise and when you get a raise you know what you ought to do? Keep living at the same level and put that money away in the bank, or in some investment. Don’t raise your standard of living. Because it raises your cost of living too. What most people do as soon as they get a raise, they go out and buy a new car. So, now they’re going to spend more money to pay for the monthly payments than what they got in the raise. Easy come, easy go. Splurging is the last thing you need to do! Here’s what the Bible says, “*The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.*” (Prov. 21:20)

I'm serious about this. If you will take the money that you're spending on *things*, instead of going and buying that big plasma screen that maybe you can't afford, what you need to do is take that money and put it in the bank and let it sit there a few years. And watch it. You need to get as much pleasure out of saving as you do in spending. A lot of people when they get depressed they want to go shopping. And there is a rush in spending money. But you should get that attitude and change it into saving money. I had a great day! I put fifty dollars more in the bank!

Ecclesiastes 11:2 is another advice about investing and saving. *"Invest what you have in several different places, because you don't know what disasters might happen."* This is the principle of diversification. You need to diversify.

You don't put all your savings in one place. You've heard the old expression: Don't put all your eggs in one basket. You know where that phrase came from? This verse right here in the Bible. The Bible says you don't put all your eggs in one basket. You put a little bit of your savings here, a little here, a little here – you spread it out. Any money manager will tell you this is a balanced portfolio to minimize risk. You don't want to have all your eggs in one basket. You don't want all your investments in one place. You want to spread it out to minimize the risk factor in your investing. That's what the Bible says – you need to diversify.

Proverbs 13:11 *"Money that comes easily disappears quickly... [You might write to the side of that verse "lotto." Money that comes easily disappears quickly.] but money that is gathered little by little will grow."*

This is the little by little principle of adding a little bit every day. You need to start saving *yesterday*. You say "I'm in debt." You still need to start putting money into savings. "I don't have much to save!" I don't care how much it is, you start the habit, just like the habit of tithing. You start the habit of saving and you do it every single week. It's not the amount that matters.

You need to start saving a little bit every time. Pay God first, pay yourself second. That's the way God blesses. You do that over time and financially it will show up. It's not the amount, it's the consistency.

That brings us to habit number five.

5. I must plan my spending.

This is one of the seven habits you must do to get out of debt and get financially free. I must start planning my spending.

Most of you do not plan your spending. You don't have a plan for spending. You just spend whatever you want to spend, whenever you want to spend it, however you want to spend it. And you do it impulsively.

What is planned spending? A plan for spending is a *budget*. That's all a budget is. A budget is planned spending. Everybody needs a budget. It's a plan for how I want to spend it. A budget is telling your money where you want it to go rather than wondering where it went.

How do you spell relief? BUDGET. That's how you spell it – budget. If you want to get out of debt you've got to nip it in the budget. Nip it, nip it, nip it! Nip it in the budget.

Proverbs 21:20 says this “*Stupid people [that's none of you] spend their money as fast as they get it.*” This is called impulse buying. Now, this is what happens if you don't have a plan... you go into a grocery store, if I don't know what I'm going to get in that grocery store I'm going to come out with eight things I didn't plan to get. Especially if you're hungry. Then there's one word that makes impulse buying impossible to resist. It is the word “sale.” Some of you think that because it says 50% off, you're saving 50%. If you bought it but you actually didn't need it, you just wasted money. Money you could have saved. Some have a

PhD in impulse buying. You know that. Your research study consists of poring on every magazine and flyer to look for sales and discounts. You see, everything in our society is designed to get you to do impulse buying. The Bible says plan your spending. That's having a budget. Proverbs 21:5 *"Plan carefully and you'll have plenty. If you act too quickly you'll never have enough."*

6. The sixth habit I have to develop is set up a repayment plan.

If you're in debt you're not going to get out of debt automatically. You're not going to get out of debt by accident.

You're going to have to plan to get out of debt. The only way you're going to get out of debt is by setting up a scheduled repayment plan.

The Bible says in Proverbs 3:27 *"Don't withhold repayment of your debts."* In other words, if you're in debt you need to be paying on it, paying it down. Then the Bible says in Romans 13:8 *"Let no debt remain outstanding."*

Do you know what an outstanding debt is? It's when you're paying interest payments only. If you have an amount on your credit card and you're not paying that credit card off every month but you're just paying the minimum, you have an outstanding debt. And God says, no good! Because you're paying interest on interest on interest, which is dumb. And the thing you bought you're paying for two, three, four, five times over because you're paying interest on your interest on your interest. So an outstanding debt is when you're not paying down the principal. Or you're behind in your payments. And things like that. You've got to set up a repayment plan.

Now, let me recommend this book to you if you're really committed to getting out of debt. Many of you recognize this and, in fact, you have a copy of this book. I think it was three years ago when we did a series on "Total Money Makeover"

and we even did it in our home groups. Dave Ramsey talks about taking “Baby Steps” toward becoming debt-free. Then, he explained the principle of Debt Snowball. Everything is in this book. Those who read this, I hope you applied the principles in this book on how to get out of debt. And I hope you’re already debt-free. If not, you can restart. It’s not too late. Remember there’s a second chance. God gives you a second chance and a third chance and so forth. But don’t lose that chance. If you’re interested in getting this book, please talk to Kuya Rey. He’ll give you a 50% discount. It’s on sale. And this is not impulse-buying. You need it. But wait, if you order it in the next 10 minutes, you get another copy for the price of one. Seriously, you pay only \$7. Just talk to Kuya Rey.

7. The seventh habit, and this is the book end, is commit it all to God.

In other words, I give my all to an all-giving God! That’s our theme for this year.

I must commit it all to God. Remember the first habit is I must realize it all comes from God. And the seventh habit is, I must commit it all back to God. I say God, my life, my time, my relationships, my money, my future, my job, it’s all yours. And I’ll do it your way from now on. Not my way. I’m going to do it your way. “Have thine own way, Lord” as we sang last week.

Proverbs 16:3 is a promise. *“Commit your work to the Lord, and then your plans will succeed.”* I want you to succeed in life. I don’t want you to be a failure in life. I want you to succeed spiritually, emotionally, relationally. And I want you to succeed financially. Commit your work to the Lord and then your plans will succeed.

Your biggest problem is not debt. Debt is a symptom of a deeper problem. It is a symptom of dissatisfaction and a lack of contentment. I have to have more to be

more happy. I have to have more to be more secure. I have to have more to be more liked. I have to have more to be more valuable.

None of that is true. *None of that is true!* The older I get the more I realize how little it takes to make you happy. It doesn't take a lot. When I was young I used to think it takes this and this and this and this in order for me to be happy. If I can get all that then I'll be happy.

No. You're as happy as you choose to be. Happiness is a choice. If you're not happy now you're not going to be happy in ten years. You're not going to be happy in fifteen years. Happiness is a choice. I can show you people in places like the Philippines who have nothing at all and are happy. Happiness is a choice.

So you don't need it all. I would suggest you go home and make a list of all the things that make you happy that cost nothing. Like watching the sunrise. And enjoy those things. Playing with your children or grandchildren or whatever.

The problem is not debt. The problem is unmanaged finances and unmanaged finances are symptoms of an unmanaged life. Your life is out of control.

Your life lacks discipline. As a result you're drifting and you're being driven by forces, including economic forces, instead of being directed and purpose driven and knowing where you're going.

One of the major problems we have today is people go out and buy things they don't need with money they don't have. Then they spend all their time hustling to make the payments on stuff they didn't need with money they didn't have. They spend so much time trying to pay their debts off, they don't enjoy what they've got. They don't enjoy it at all.

Look at what this verse says... The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 5 that God created it all for our enjoyment, *"If God gives us wealth and property and he lets us enjoy them, we should be grateful and enjoy what we have worked for. It is the gift from God."*

Seven Habits of Financial Health

(1 minute of Quiet)

As we close today I want us to do one thing. I'm going to put up the seven habits on this screen and I want you to just sit quietly. I don't want you to leave. I don't want you to get up. I don't want you to talk. This is probably the only one minute you can think about your life the rest of the week. Think about these seven habits and then say, which one do I need to work on? And if I need to work on it, commit and say, this is the day I'm going to work on these habits. I'm going to go on all seven cylinders. If you've written all this down, put it on your refrigerator door, so that you can be reminded about these seven habits.

And you can start working on them. So, you have one minute to reflect on those things on the screen. One minute to reflect on God's message this morning.