

Twelve Lessons

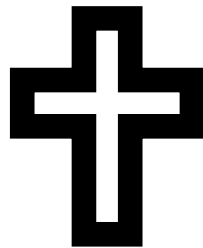
on

Biblical Finances

Compiled and Written

by

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\$6.00

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NORMAL OR WEIRD? – LESSON 1 – Used from the book, *Priceless*, by Dave Ramsey.

Lesson Goals:

1. To study the relative terms of “normal” and “weird.”
2. To test our saving and spending skills.
3. To score our saving and spending skills.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Covetousness – An intense desire to possess something (or someone) that belongs to another person. The Ten Commandments prohibit this attitude (Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21). Covetousness springs from a greedy self-centeredness and an arrogant disregard of God’s law. The Bible repeatedly warns against this sin (Josh 7:21; Rom 7:7; 2 Peter 2:10). (Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Debt – Borrowed money or property which a person is bound by law to pay back to another. In all periods of history, people have always had to borrow money. In Bible times many were willing to lend the desired money, but at a price. Excessive interest rates of 50 percent or higher per year were often charged. (Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
3. Wealth – An abundance of possessions or resources. During the times of the PATRIARCHS, wealth was measured largely in livestock-sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, and camels. This was true of Abraham (Gen 13:2), Isaac (Gen 26:12-14), and Jacob (Gen 30:43; 32:5). People of the ancient world also measured wealth in terms of land, houses, servants, slaves, and precious metals. The prime example is King Solomon, whose great wealth is described in 1 Kings 10:14-29. (Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

Introduction: 1 Tim 6:10 – *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

1. All of us at one time or another have fallen prey to the seduction of debt.
2. Dave Ramsey divides all of American into “normal” and “weird.” His goal is to make all America “weird.”

I. THE DEFINITION OF “NORMAL.” Dave Ramsey says in his book, *“Priceless,”* That:

A. Normal is a Comparative Term.

1. You’re “normal,” if you probably owe on a credit card, gas card, and department store card.
2. You’re “normal,” if you have a car payment, or even a monthly payment on furniture or stereo equipment.
3. You’re “normal,” if you have a mortgage, and maybe even a second mortgage.
4. You’re “normal,” if you think as long as you can afford the monthly payment, what the big deal about paying a little extra in interest, right?

B. Normal also has some physical symptoms:

1. Headaches, shortness of breath; tightening of or pain in the chest; edginess; disorganization.
2. Some of these same symptoms could be associated with a heart attack.

II. THE DEFINITION OF “WEIRD.” Dave Ramsey says:

A. Weird means no monthly bills on anything except utilities and maybe your mortgage.

B. Weird means vacations are bought using money, appliances are bought with money, clothes are bought with money – the old-fashioned kind, the kind of money that is green and has pictures of presidents.

C. Weird means you have money in the bank.

D. Weird means you have saved one thousand dollars and have a goal of saving three to six months’ living expenses.

E. Weird means you have started with your smallest debt and after two or three years, you are completely out of debt, except for maybe a home mortgage.

F. Weird means after getting out of debt, in 15 years, you have accumulated enough wealth for retirement.

III. BELOW IS A WEIRD TEST by Dave Ramsey.

On average, I pay _____ bills each month, not including mortgage and utilities.

- A. Three, but I count my home entertainment system, new car stereo, computer, cell phone, and cappuccino/express machine as utilities.
- B. Zero, because I ignore bills. Ignore them, they’ll go away.

- C. Zero, because I rent an apartment and can get out of admitting the number of bills I have on the technicality of the question. Hah!
- D. I really don't want to tell you. Let's just say that I am convinced my bills multiply like bunnies.
- E. Five. I just paid off my doctor's bill and am currently working on my department store bill. After that, it's the gas card, credit card, and second mortgage, in that order.

The Sofa Farm is having its big, year-end clearance sale! No payment until 2020! You've thought about a new sofa because the old one has a stain on one cushion and you're tired of the color. What do you do?

- A. Figure out that I would get a better deal with the sofa, love seat, chair, and ottoman – and since I have several years to worry about paying for it, I'll look at the bedroom suites, too.
- B. How much is the monthly payment?
- C. Well, maybe just this once. Financing a sofa isn't the same as charging a meal on a credit card.
- D. Go to Wal-Mart and look at slipcovers.
- E. Flip the stained cushion over and put back twenty dollars a month; when I've saved about two hundred dollars, I'll start scouring the classifieds for sofas. In the meantime, I'll spend more time jogging in the park so I don't have to look at my ugly sofa.

Earl from the Sav-a-Mart gave you a red-hot stock tip he overheard from one of his regular customers. Earl is usually right about stuff: rain, movie star divorces, and the price of potted meat. He's an honest man. You'd trust him to water your lawn; should you trust his stockmarket savvy?

- A. Yes! Does Wall Street take plastic?
- B. Yes! How do I call in a stock purchase?
- C. Yes! I was going to use the money to pay Ned back (he'd paid part of my cable bill last month), but this might enable me to pay Ned back and pocket a bit of profit, too.
- D. Well, I suppose I could...but I think I'll take this little bit of extra money and put it into my entertainment fund this month.
- E. Actually, I'm working on saving three to six months' living expenses. Think I'll just stick the money into my regular savings account. It's boring, but at least it will stay there.

Complete this sentence: If I lost my job tomorrow, I...

- A. Would be charging groceries the following day.
- B. Would put my house on the market before the next mortgage payment is due and have a heart attack.
- C. Would call an attorney. They can't do that to me, can they? Gotta be a loophole somewhere.
- D. Would be okay for about a month, but I might have to count on raiding my parents' pantry.
- E. Better be fired for a good reason. But I'd be okay until I found something else.

Finish this thought: My children will inherit...

- A. A lot of really neat stuff that they will have to pay for.
- B. A funeral bill that should be covered by my life insurance, plus a stack of unpaid bills. Wait a minute, do I have life insurance?
- C. Court fees, 'cause probate ain't cheap and I don't have a will, despite my penchant for loopholes and legalities.
- D. A mortgage that's only a few years from being paid off. The better news is that I do have a couple of mutual funds, plus my company pension.
- E. My entire estate, including money to pay for their education and /or start-up costs for their adult lives. Since I involved them in the process of straightening out my own finances, my prayer would be that they learned from my mistakes instead of inheriting them.

SCORING

Very simple. Give yourself one point for every A answer, two points for B, three for C, four for D, and five for E.

5-8 You are as normal as they come. And that's not a compliment. You are in need of a reality check, because this kind of living cannot go on forever – but your bills can. Whether you outlive your debt or not, someone will have to pay, and if it's your children or grandchildren, don't expect to be remembered fondly. There's not a bit of weirdness in you.

9-12 You're fairly normal, but your weirdness has entered your system via fear. You know you're one payment away from the streets, but you don't know what to do. For starters, unlearn your favorite question: How much is the monthly payment? Just strike it from your noggin. Take a deep breath and know that tomorrow will come; you can get through this, but anxiety attacks are not the answer.

13-16 You want to be weird, but you want someone else to pay for it. Now I love a good bargain as much as the next person, and my wife is an expert on negotiating. You, however, want to put the blame on someone and have him pay for your mistakes, including any get-rich-quick scheme you buy into. Your worst obstacle on the path to weirdness is yourself.

17-20 You're semi-weird. This means, you're trying, but you fudge every now and then. You can still be fooled into thinking that certain types of financing are acceptable, even though you won't admit it to me. The good news is, you are making the right decisions three out of four times, but you still have to pay a bit on past mistakes.

21-25 Congratulations! You are 98% full-blooded weird! You've messed up, acknowledged it, and are doing something about it. It's taking a while to get you there, isn't it? But you are going to get there, and if you play your cards right, no one else in your family will have to make the same journey.