

SESSION 4 RESOURCES

APPENDIX D

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4 STEPS FOR SAVING \$1,000

Learn how to start an emergency savings account and how to save money responsibly. —By Chuck Bentley

Recent surveys indicate that almost two-thirds of all Americans are living paycheck to paycheck.

Far too often, the only safety net for these individuals is one of several bad options: increasing the remaining balance on their credit cards, turning to predatory lenders like payday loans or borrowing from retirement accounts, which runs the risk of severe penalties.

There is a better way.

Creating an Emergency Savings Account

If you have ever felt as if you were going to have more month than money, or you have resorted to any of the options listed above, it is time to start an emergency savings account (ESA).

That begins with the goal of saving \$1,000. Yes, this small step for mankind can feel like a giant leap for man, but it is the wisest step you can take toward liberation from financial stress, worry, and living on the edge of disaster.

In earlier articles, we covered learning to live on a budget and sticking to your plan, plus the importance of beginning to give generously. Now it's time to practice the discipline of spending less than we earn and acting wise like the ant God refers to in Proverbs 6:6.

1. Establish a place to put your \$1,000.

The location is important since it needs to be kept where you are not going to be tempted to spend it. Out-of-sight, out-of-mind is a great way to think about this nest egg.

If you have a checking account at your bank or credit union, ask if you can open a separate account where money can be automatically transferred into this account. If not, use a shoebox, a thick envelope or even a small fireproof safe that you keep at home.

The most important aspect of the location is that you can get to it easily, but it is not accessible for quick spending like the funds in your checking account.

2. Look for ways to make an initial deposit into this ESA.

Take a serious inventory of where you may have access to funds for your first deposit, no matter how small.

Can you sell something online or have a garage sale? Can you give up a habit for a month to save on your spending?

Look under the cushions of your sofa, in your junk drawers or in a piggy bank to find the first \$100 to get you started.

3. Make automatic deposits from your paycheck or other income sources.

Establish an amount that will go into your ESA, every time you receive any funds, even if it is just five dollars. The important part of this step is the discipline to take a portion of all of your income to start growing the account.

One of Crown's great testimonies came from a 72-year-old widow who started saving \$50 a month and eventually saved not only her first \$1,000, but paid off \$50,000 in consumer debt, too!

Faithfulness in the small things is always the key.

4. Seek to increase your income as needed to accomplish this goal.

It is so vital that you have an ESA that I recommend working extra hours, taking on a part-time job and using all available means to reach this goal as quickly as possible.

Put all surplus funds, even birthday gifts or tax refunds, into the account until you have reached this goal.

How to Use Your \$1,000

There is a wonderful old black and white movie called *I Remember Mama* based upon the book, *Mama's Bank Account*. It is the story of a close knit, loving family struggling through the Great Depression with very little income. The central character of the movie is the dear mother who says she has a bank account that she can always access in the event of an emergency.

This gives the family hope that they have resources to fall back on in a crisis, but she says they must never use it frivolously. Time and time again in the story, they must figure out a way to live within their means to avoid going into Mama's bank account.

It was only after the crisis of the Great Depression had passed that they learned that no such account existed.

Their Mama had only pretended to have this money to calm the fears of her children—and it worked.

The story illustrates a great point. Once you have reached your goal of having \$1,000 in your ESA, you should make it a very rare occasion when you spend any money from this account.

In fact, the next goal is to grow and increase the amount in your account to ensure you will always be able to avoid turning to your credit cards for emergency expenses.

Start Small and Don't Quit

Proverbs 21:5 says, “The plans of the diligent certainly lead to profit, but everyone who is reckless certainly becomes poor.”

The opposite of wisdom is to always be “reckless” or spontaneous. The wisdom of God is to have a plan and be diligent over a long period of time to live by that plan. This is an attitude of our heart that God can give us.

Ask Him to help you be diligent. Ask Him to help you reach your savings goal. Ask Him to make you like the ant.

He will be faithful to help you.

Article courtesy of *HomeLife* magazine. (lifeway.com/Article/four-step-approach-for-saving-one-thousand-dollars)

FOUR PRIORITIES IN GIVING AND SPENDING

From Contagious Generosity: Creating a Culture of Giving in Your Church–Leadership Network/Willard & Sheppard

1. By celebrating the cause of Christ, we place our priorities with His kingdom rather than with our personal gain.
2. By celebrating integrity in finances, we keep ourselves from abusing resources.
3. By celebrating generosity, the church comes together to see what giving does for the kingdom, enjoying the privilege of obedience together.
4. Finally, by celebrating frugality, we set aside as many resources as we can for God's work, storing up our treasure in God's work rather than in personal gain.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR PERSONAL FINANCE IMPROVEMENT

seedtime.com

Sample of topics covered:

- How to Send Money Anonymously (5 Easy Ways)
- 10 Free Household Budget Spreadsheets
- How to save \$1000 (in 1-3 months)
- How To Find Unclaimed Money

moneywise.com

MoneyWise is here to help you make sense of personal finance.

Sample of topics covered:

- Shop mortgage rates, loans, insurance quotes, and investing products in your area.
- Compare lenders and use our helpful calculators to see how much you can afford.
- Receive guidance and timely news updates from our team of personal finance experts.

PLUS: the MoneyWise app for personal budgeting

generousgiving.org

Explore a life with Jesus-like generosity. Culture has taught us that money can buy joy and that giving is a mere obligation for being considered a good person. In our haphazard pursuit of having more, we've lost touch with what it means to have a generous life.

We host conversations about God and money in an environment that never asks you for donations or anything in return.

Great video stories on this site—to inspire all to generosity. A couple of favorites:

- Graham and April Young / New York City
- Alan Barnhart / Memphis

gospelpatrons.org

Our mission is to inspire and empower a generation of Gospel Patrons who will build the church, bless the world, and finish the Great Commission.

Stories of people funding major projects for the Kingdom—like the YouVersion Bible app

PLUS: the powerful teaching of founder John Rinehart.

11 FREE TECHNOLOGY TOOLS TO HELP YOU CONQUER YOUR FINANCES

To go along with Session 4, the link below will take you to this helpful article from The Pastor's Wallet. As the name suggests, it is directed to pastors; but the information is helpful for anyone.

pastorswallet.com/11-free-technology-tools-to-help-you-conquer-your-finances-in-2019/

3 (FREE) WAYS TO HAVE AN AFFORDABLE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

By Amy | April 11, 2022

As parents, almost all of us want our kids to go to college. However, only about half of us can find room in our budgets to save towards college. Everyone seems to be stressing out, asking, “How am I going to pay for college?” We forget that that’s only half of the equation.

It’s not just how to pay, but what to pay as well. Instead of just trying to figure out how to cover the bill, we should seek out ways to reduce the bill itself, so we will have less to worry about paying. Below are three ways you can prepare your kids (or yourself) for an affordable college experience.

Start With Why

When it comes to college, you have to start out by looking at the big picture. As Simon Sinek* says, you need to start with “why.” Why is your son or daughter even going to college in the first place? Is it career preparation? A coming-of-age experience? To broaden their horizons and expand their minds? To find a spouse? Everyone may have a slightly different answer, and your “why” will have profound effects on the college you choose and how much you spend on it.

Once you figure out your goal, you can assess the best and most affordable means to achieving that goal. Community colleges can be a great way to earn credits cheaply if you don’t mind missing out on “dorm life.” Local state universities provide just as good preparation for many careers as do US News’ highest ranked schools.

A lot of the benefits of college, such as gaining independence, meeting different kinds of people and even certain careers, don’t even require college. Things like moving out of a parents’ house, going on a missions trip or learning a trade may be more appropriate ways of reaching your goal than a college education. Don’t waste your money on a degree you don’t even need!

Match Your “Whys”

One key, though, is to make sure you and your kids are on the same page. The younger you start instilling in them the purposes of going to college, the easier it will be. If you don’t, you could find yourself with an 18-year-old ready to borrow \$100,000+ in order to go to a private school with an undeclared major, just because that’s where her best friend (or boyfriend) is going.

Start With Work

Setting the right expectations is paramount, but it’s not the only tool in your arsenal. You also have something as old as the Garden of Eden at your fingertips: Work.

Don’t let your kids try to tell you that working and studying are mutually exclusive. In Georgetown University’s study *Learning While Earning*,* they found that about 40%

of undergraduate and 76% of graduate students work at least 30 hours a week. Of those who work, 25% do so full-time while also studying full-time. Back when I was studying at CSU San Marcos I worked 30-40 hours a week and even took 18 credits one semester. Granted, I didn't have a very exciting social life, but I never had any debt either.

Work Has Many Benefits

Work benefits students far beyond just helping pay the bills. A strong work ethic will help your student do better in school (and not have to pay to repeat courses!). The Georgetown study also found that working students are upwardly mobile and more likely to move into managerial positions after graduating. Some jobs even provide educational benefits or scholarship opportunities. As a teenager, I earned a scholarship through my union while working at a grocery store.

Work Is a Life Skill

Work ethic is best taught at a young age, and you will do your children a favor if you make them work. You don't want them to enter the workforce having never worked a day in their lives.

I saw a great example of this firsthand when I had a co-worker in his very first job—as a lawyer. He came from a well-off family and was never required to work. Instead, he was involved in sports and made it through high school, college, and law school before ever having a real job at the ripe old age of 26.

It was terrible. He didn't know how to work at all. He was a nice guy, but he was a burden on his co-workers and it affected his relationships with them and his career. His parents cheated him out of the opportunity to learn to work when he was young and the poor guy will live with the consequences for the rest of his life. Please, don't do the same to your kids.

Start Early

Work isn't the only thing that's good to start early. Kids these days can even start earning college credits early. Yes, you can earn college credits while still in high school and it is usually a lot cheaper.

Advanced Placement Exams

When I was in high school I took three **Advanced Placement (AP) classes*** and passed the exams, which gave me a full semester's worth of college credit. Based on the **average costs for the 2021-2022 school year,*** those three high school classes would be worth \$5,370 at an in-state public school and \$19,035 at a private school. You can check with your local high school to see what AP courses they offer.

Dual Enrollment

Some states and many individual colleges also allow eligible students to take college courses for free while they are still in high school. In the state of Washington, where I live, the program is called **Running Start**.* I know of people who have completed the first two years of college while still in high school, with the state paying for it. That is worth \$21,480 at an in-state public school and \$76,140 at a private school. Imagine getting half of a degree for free, much less being two years ahead!

For individual schools offering dual enrollment, check out the lists on [this website](#).* Another great option is the **Arizona State University Universal Learner*** program where anyone (regardless of age) can try out college courses for \$25 each. If it goes well and you like your grade, you can then pay \$400 for the college credit. If your child wasn't ready and it didn't work out, you're only out \$25 and there is nothing on their permanent record.

Credit-By-Exam

But what if your local high school doesn't offer AP classes and dual enrollment isn't a good fit? If you and your child are willing to take it upon yourselves, you can still earn college credit while in high school through credit-by-exam (CBE). With CBEs, the student studies independently then takes an exam for college credit. The main exam providers are the **College Board's College Level Examination Program (CLEP)*** and **DSST**,* and the exams usually cost around \$100. They aren't free, but they are a lot cheaper than traditional college courses and there is no minimum age requirement. With some extra effort, you can augment what your child is already learning in class and they can earn college credit for it.

With a little bit of thought, time, and effort, you can prepare your kids for a future without debilitating student loan debt. If you take the time to discover why you want your kids to go to college, teach them to work hard, and have them begin earning college credits early, they will have both a more purposeful and more affordable experience. You may not have room in your budget to save for college, but there is a lot you can do on the front end to limit the cost of college for your family!

From The Pastor's Wallet—3 (Free) Ways To Have An Affordable College Experience—The Pastor's Wallet (pastorswallet.com)