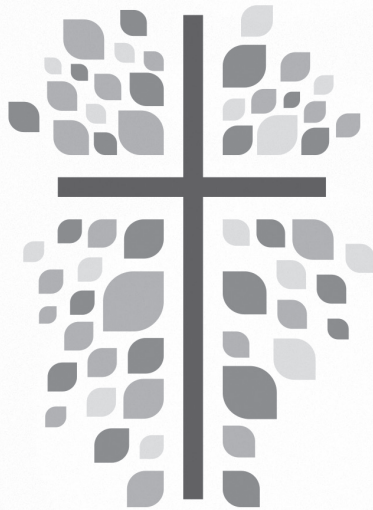


FINANCIAL HOPE

Find Freedom in Your Finances
Through God's Word



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A Hope for Tomorrow

PROVERBS 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

In 1813, 25-year-old Adoniram Judson and his new wife left their families in America to become missionaries in Burma. Burma was a place of incredible hostility with no missionary presence. Judson and his wife spent six years living and working in Burma before they saw their first convert to Christ. Afterwards, Judson's wife wrote to her father, "Papa, after nearly six years in Burma we have a convert—and that makes it all worthwhile!"⁵ Six years of sacrifice for one soul and she was ecstatic—what a great testimony of diligence and patience.

⁵ Irene Howat, *Adoniram Judson, Danger on the Streets of Gold*, (Scotland, Christian Focus Publishing, 2008), page 35.

For 38 years, Judson diligently sowed seeds of the Gospel without seeing major results. Today, however, there are over 3,700 congregations of Baptists and 1.9 million Christians in Burma that can trace their origins directly to Judson. Judson understood that the only way to grow the church in Burma was to diligently and patiently empty his life into the people. He didn't live to see the conversion of those millions of people, but he trusted God's purpose for his life.

Judson approached his calling with a long-term perspective. He understood that his primary role was to scatter seed diligently every day and then trust that God would produce an abundance in due time. Judson's life demonstrated that his hope was in eternity and the reward he sought was not to be found in this life. Because of his perspective, Judson jealously guarded his plans and always made sure that he left margin in his life so that he could easily respond to God's direction and leading. Without a plan and room for God to direct, he would not have lasted as long as he did in Burma. These same principles apply to us in our financial lives. If we don't diligently plan and provide room (i.e. margin) in our finances for God to work, we end up thrashing around frustrated by a sense that we are being controlled by our money rather than knowing that our financial life is being directed by God.

Financial margin rarely occurs unintentionally. It must be diligently planned for and protected. Without margin, our plans don't get realized and our hopes get dulled. We end up financially, emotionally, and mentally impoverished as living paycheck to paycheck taxes our ability to see beyond tomorrow.

When we get to this point, putting our hope in eternity becomes challenging since today's troubles loom so large. We will usually end up frustrated until that margin is found. Understood this way, margin serves as a barometer of our ability to focus our hope in eternity. If we want to experience the abundance that God has for us both now and in eternity, we must be diligent and patient as we jealously guard our margin. If we have no margin now, then we must change our habits to create it. Until we do this, our hearts will struggle to turn toward the hope of tomorrow.

EXPLORING PROVERBS 21:5

What do you think the writer of this verse means by the word abundance (i.e. abundance of what)?

What are some ways you have acted diligently in your finances and what are some ways you have acted hastily?

“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance”

Read ROMANS 12:2. How does God’s will differ from the pattern of the world?

Read PROVERBS 4:20-27. What benefits are there for those who listen closely to godly instruction?



On whose plans do you think the person described in these verses is focused—his own or God's?

According to EPHESIANS 2:10, when were your good works established by God?

What does this tell us about whose plans we should be diligently pursuing?

“Everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty”

Read HEBREWS 5:12-14. What do these verses say about people who do not move from living on milk to living on solid food?



Why do you think maturing requires practice instead of being instantaneous?

According to ISAIAH 43:18-19, how should you view your prior financial mistakes?

If God can make a river in the desert, what can He help you do in your financial life?

The only way to move toward the plans God has for you is to maintain margin in your budget and in your life. According to PHILIPPIANS 3:14, what should motivate you in pursuing margin in your financial life?



What is God calling you to do today?

APPLYING PROVERBS 21:5

What plans do you need to make and apply diligently to be able to pursue the upward call of God in Christ Jesus?

What things can you change in your life today that will demonstrate to someone watching you that your hope is in eternity?

