



Four Foundations.org

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Turtle or Rabbit?

I recently heard the old familiar story of the Tortoise and the Hare. Do you remember the story? The Hare challenged the Tortoise to a race. Knowing full well his speed was to his advantage, the Hare took a wide lead shortly after the start. The Tortoise, however, plodded along slowly as the Hare continued to pull away. With what seemed like an impossible distance to cover, the arrogant Hare paused to rest and fell asleep. As time passed the Tortoise caught up to and passed the Hare. The story climaxes with a dramatic finish as the Hare awakens and realizes the impossibility of the situation. Racing to close the remaining distance, the Tortoise crosses the finish line just ahead of the frantic Hare, squeaking out the win. In today's culture and environment, the management of personal finances could follow a similar path.

Too Good to be True

We often hear the old adage, "If it is too good to be true, it probably is." Looking back several years ago, there are still many investors who probably would have liked to have been reminded of this saying when considering the investment offerings of Bernie Madoff. If you can recall, Bernie Madoff offered what seemed like impossible 18-20% returns on investments. Seemingly too good to pass up, individuals, large investment firms and charities handed over an estimated 64 billion in what turned out to be an elaborate Ponzi scheme.

The Love Misconception

I have often heard misconceptions about wealth from some individuals; that wealth is evil; that to have an abundance of money is Greedy. Even in today's culture we hear banter about the outrageous profits

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of oil companies, investment bankers, CEOs and the list continues. Money by itself is amoral. It can be used for good or for bad behaviors. It can help build hospitals, fund missionaries and food banks or it can fund pornography or illegal drugs. Only the holder of the money can decide its purpose. Further, if we examine scripture closely we are reminded it is the “love” of money that is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6v1). If a person becomes independently wealthy, or a company has millions in revenue on its balance sheet this does not mean that they have stolen it or acquired it by dishonest means. We should not excuse individuals or corporations who engage in immoral practices or break the law. To that end, they should be held accountable. Time caught up to Bernie Madoff, who now sits in prison. Often times we need to fix our own perspective on wealth.

Thou Shalt Prosper

In the book, “Though Shalt Prosper” Rabi Daniel Lapin shares the perspective of how our friends in the Jewish community often view money and wealth. When we buy goods or services, we use our money as a means of exchange. Rabi Lapin shares money should be regarded as “certificates of appreciation.” We receive these for the work we provide our employer or from the customers we service and, in turn, share our appreciation as we buy and sell things. The better service or products you provide your employer or customer, the more “certificates” you receive. This is an interesting perspective and I encourage you to find this book to add your perspective on wealth accumulation.

The Tortoise and the Ant

Returning to the Tortoise and the Hare story, this is a perfect illustration of the different strategies to improve our financial situation. Today we are at odds with the “get rich quick” approach like the Hare or, like the Tortoise, a slow steady accumulation of wealth through



sound and time tested investment strategies.

We also receive advice with regards to our finances in Proverbs 6. In verses 6-8, we are reminded that the ant takes time to store up provisions in the summer and gathers food at times of harvest so it will be available during tough times. The ant finds “peace” through hard work and preparation.

Finding Financial Peace

The way of the tortoise and the ant are excellent reminders of how we should approach our personal finances. Strategies for managing our money, investments and getting out of debt can be achieved by following the teachings of one of our Ministry Partners. Financial Peace University is a 9 week class offered by Dave Ramsey. With his instruction and materials you can begin to “live like no one else, so someday you can live like no one else.” He has helped millions navigate the world of personal finance. If you need help, you can find him at www.daveramsey.com.

“FourFoundations.org was founded to guide individuals and households to make Christ-centered choices in life. Successful households are built on Four Foundations: Faith, Family, Finances and Fidelity.”