

THE STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS TO HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER STEWARD

January/February 2024 • Volume 1 • Issue 1

Don't Spend it All

By Rudy Salazar

Many in North America live from paycheck to paycheck; they have no savings whatsoever. Essentially, they spend everything they earn, so at the end of the month, they have no savings. Statistics show that one out of every four adults don't have emergency savings. The younger you are, the less likely you have savings. One in three Gen-Zers (age 18-26) don't have an emergency fund. Having a savings account gives you the peace of mind to know that if unexpected expenses arise, you can cover them without having to borrow money from someone. The rule of thumb is to have at least three months' worth of your salary to keep in savings to cover emergencies. Some call these readily available funds a "Rainy Day Fund."



PHOTO BY PIGTBANK ON UNSPLASH

STEWARDSHIP IS REVOLUTIONARY GENEROSITY. IT INVOLVES THE 7 T'S:
TIME, TEMPLE, TALENT, TREASURE, TRUST IN GOD, THEOLOGY, AND TESTIMONY.

The wise Solomon tells us, “Take a lesson from the ants, you lazy fellow. Learn from their ways and be wise! For though they have no king to make them work, yet they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter” (Proverbs 6:6-8, TLB).

The ant is wise because it works hard storing food for the time when it won't be able to get any—the typically three-month-long period of winter. Bible wisdom tells us to have reserves for three months. And that is exactly what the financial experts tell us about how much to have in reserve in our savings. Could you cover unplanned expenses like when your car needs repair or new tires, your house needs a roof repair, or you need to replace a household appliance like a refrigerator, washer, or dryer? You may ask, why so much? Three months' worth of salary seems too



much. But if you happen to lose your job or have a medical emergency that will require a long recuperation, will you survive the experience financially without accumulating a huge debt? If statistics are correct, about half of you reading this newsletter don't have three months' worth of savings. If a crisis happens in your life, you will either draw cash from the bank or need to use a credit card

to buy basic necessities like food and if it goes on a credit card it will take you years to pay it back at high interest rates.

SAVER VS. SPENDER

Why is it that 50% of adults don't have at least three months' worth of salary?

Many of us have not developed the habit of saving. Once we have it in our pocket, we think we need to spend it. It's like giving a bag of candy to a child and telling them that they need to make it last until the end of the month. More than likely the child will eat all the candy in few days. The next bag they get next month will again be consumed within few days. Many people behave like that. The money arrives in the bank and after

they pay all their bills it's time to find ways to spend the rest. They don't have the habit of saving some for the "rainy day."

Also, many people don't have a budget. In order to have three months' worth of salary you need to build it into your budget. Saving generally doesn't happen because it isn't part of your plan to save a certain amount every month.

It takes planning and self-discipline. The budget needs to differentiate the "needs" from the "wants." Many people confuse something they would like to have as something they really need. For example, the latest model cell phone with nice camera and lots of storage is a want. Having a basic older model cell phone is generally enough for your day-to-day needs. Buying a basic car is all you need to get you to work and the store; a luxury brand vehicle with all the bells and whistles is a want.

If you find yourself with nothing left at the end of the month and nothing saved, you are a spender. The Bible encourages us to be a saver. "A prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences" (Proverbs 22:3, TLB).

The budget needs to differentiate the "needs" from the "wants."

BUILD WEALTH, NOT DEBT

In order to build up your rainy-day fund you need to find ways to cut your spending. By the time we pay for our food, our housing, our transportation and healthcare, we don't

have much left for nonessential items. But there are things that you can do to build up your savings.

1. Cook at home instead of eating out. Many people don't realize how much eating out eats up your budget. Eating out is much more expensive than cooking at home. Is not only cheaper to stay at home, but more healthy.

2. You can choose a simpler cable TV package and get slower internet. For many Americans, having cable TV is like



PHOTO BY BOBBI MON LINPLASH

PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BRACE GUYER/GETTY



paying their electric bill. It is part of living. Entertainment is not an essential item. Having internet for most people is imperative, but it doesn't have to be the fastest internet. Many people "need" it so they can play video games. Again, that is entertainment, not a necessity.

3. Search for free activities. There are many community events that are free; search for free or low-cost entertainment.

4. Wait before you buy. You can wait to make a purchase. Many times, once you have a chance to really think whether this is a need or a want, you realize most of the time the item is something you can do without.

5. Give to God what belongs to God. The prophet Malachi



says, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so that there will be food enough in my Temple; if you do, I will open up the windows of heaven for you and pour out a blessing so great you won't have room enough to take it in!" (TLB). As impossible as this seems to be, the last thing you can do is to return your tithes and offerings. Having less will help you have more; that

is a promise that God makes. When you help in providing for His work, He will provide for you. He will bless you and give you wisdom in how to do all of the above.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elder Rudy Salazar is the Associate Director for Stewardship Ministries of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

PRODUCED AND
DISTRIBUTED BY:

STEWARDSHIP
MINISTRIES OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN
DIVISION