**Steps to Financial Success**

Tip #2: SPEND LESS THAN YOU EARN

*Determine to live within your means*

“There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man [or woman] spendeth it up” (Proverbs 21: 20, KJV).

Last time we discussed how your expenses need to not exceed your income, and that if they do, you need to find a way to cut back somewhere. That’s easier said than done. How do you find places to cut without leaving yourself hurting? Some people may be in such a dire situation that there’s nothing left to cut unless they go without something essential like food, but most of us have enough to live on comfortably if we make wise choices about how we use our money.

**Key thought: Live within your income!**

If you asked Chat GPT other ways to say: **"live within your income"** it would give you these options:

1. **Stay within your budget**
2. **Live within your means**
3. **Spend only what you earn**
4. **Keep expenses in check**
5. **Manage your finances wisely**
6. **Don’t spend beyond your earnings**
7. **Make ends meet responsibly**

We are listing only 3 ways that you make this a reality in your life:

**Rethink Your Grocery Basket**

*Have you seen kids going down the aisle grabbing popular cereals and tossing them in the cart?*

If this sounds like your family, start putting things back on the shelves when your little helpers get a little too helpful. Whether you have kids or not, it also helps to make a shopping list ahead of time and stick to it. There may be an opportunity to stock up on a staple product at a discounted price. Being aware of and taking advantage of grocery store sales is a good way to save a bit of money here and there, but sticking to your grocery list is important to your food budget.

**Rethink Your Shopping for Clothes**

*How many times do you go shopping when you don’t need more clothes? Buy only the necessary things.*

Many people use shopping as a form of entertainment. If they feel depressed, they go to the mall. If they are happy, they go to the mall. Some go shopping for clothes that they truly need, like a winter jacket or a pair of shoes, but they end up buying other items they didn’t need. Sticking to your budget for clothes is very important. If you have problems in this area, one solution is to pay with cash instead of credit. It is proven that people who pay with cash spend less than people that use credit cards. Again, be very careful how you use your credit cards.

**Rethink Going Out to Eat**

*How many times do you go out to eat a month? Go to a restaurant only for special occasions.*

We all like to go out to eat. You don’t have to cook and you don’t have to wash dishes and clean the kitchen, but it is a lot more expensive than eating at home. To stay within your budget, this is an easy way to cut expenses. Instead, experiment with cooking as a hobby by learning to prepare sushi, enchiladas, or another favorite international dish.

God will give you wisdom on how to "live within your income."

James 1:5, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”