



Gaining Financial Freedom God's Way

with quotes from Saints, Popes
and the Word of God

Bogged down by financial worries? God wants you to be free of all anxieties! Learn how to handle money with the wisdom of God, and put an end to your worries. Consider what "financial freedom" really means.

Financial Freedom Means Putting Money into the Right Perspective:

Who is your Master: God or money? Which do you spend more of your time dwelling on: God or money? Studies have shown that we spend about 80% of our waking time earning money, spending money and thinking about money. What would our lives be like if we spent that much time focused on our relationship with God? What would our finances be like?

Financial Freedom Means Letting God Satisfy Our Desires:

Pleasure, power, or possessions may temporarily quiet the pangs of some hungers. They cannot satisfy us on the deepest levels of our personhood. Only God can do that. "You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." (St. Augustine)

"In this world we must not become attached to anything — not even things most innocent, for they fail us at the moment when we are least expecting it. The eternal alone can satisfy us." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

If we lack God, it matters little what else we have. Estranged from God, we are estranged from our own destiny and fulfillment. Human life absorbed in itself is diminished and lacking in purpose. The Eucharist is a special means given to us by Jesus for overcoming our estrangement from God. (*The Eucharist and the Hungers of the Human Family*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Nov. 20, 1975.)

Financial Freedom Means Being Content with Less to Receive More:

"It is when I possess least that I have the fewest worries...I am more afflicted when there is excess of anything than when there is lack of it; I am not sure if that is the Lord's doing, but I have noticed that He provides for us immediately." (St. Teresa of Avila)

Financial Freedom Means Not Being Enslaved by Your Possessions:

"What blessings are to be found in holy poverty....Poverty is good and contains within itself all the good things in the world. It is a great domain — I mean that he who cares nothing for the good things of the world has dominion over them all." (St. Teresa of Avila)

Pope Paul IV pointed out in his encyclical *Paths of the Church* that a spirit of poverty is proclaimed in the Gospel as part of the plan of the Kingdom of God and yet, "it is so much in danger because of things that store the modern mind sets of possessions. He adds that a spirit of poverty, though difficult, "is so necessary to help us to understand so many of our weaknesses and failures in the past and to show us what our way of life should be and what is the best way to announce the Religion of Christ to souls."

We must rely, he says, "more upon the help of God and the goods of the Spirit than upon temporal means." We must remember and teach "that spiritual goods take precedence over economic goods, and that we should limit and subordinate the possession and use of the latter insofar as they are useful for the right exercise of our Apostolic Mission."

Economic goods must "not be the source of conflicts, of selfishness and of pride among men, but they (must) be used in justice and equity for the common good and, accordingly, distributed with greater foresight," he says.

Financial Freedom Means Letting Go of Whatever Keeps Us From God:

"One inordinate appetite (for earthly goods) alone... suffices to make a soul so captive, dirty, and unsightly that until the appetite is purified the soul is incapable of conformity with God in union. This is true even though there may be no matter for mortal sin in the appetite. What then will be the ugliness of a soul entirely disordered in its passions and surrendered to its appetites? How far it will be from God and His purity!" (St. John of the Cross)

"There is one only means of constraining the good God not to judge us at all; it is to appear before Him with our hands empty." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

"It makes little difference whether a bird is tied by a thin thread or by a cord. For even if tied by thread, the bird will be prevented from taking off just as surely as if it were tied by cord — that is, it will be impeded from flight as long as it does not break the thread....This is the lot of a man who is attached to something; no matter how much virtue he has, he will not reach the freedom of divine union." (St. John of the Cross)

Financial Freedom Means Being Generous:

We can easily close our eyes to the needs of those around us — and still more easily overlook the needs of those far away. But we should try to use individual resources wisely and justly, and common resources fairly. (*Twelve Tough Issues: What the Church Teaches*, by Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988.)

Christian stewardship is the practical realization that everything we have is a gift from God. Stewardship expresses itself as an integral force in Christian life by motivating us to share our goods with others. We are not the owners of anything; rather, we are stewards of all we receive and must use such resources responsibly in our lifelong work of building up the Kingdom of God. (*Principles and Guidelines for Fund Raising*, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Nov. 16, 1977.)

Pope Paul IV says in *Paths of the Church*: "Is not charity the focal point of the religious economy of the Old Testament and the New? Is it not to charity that the progress of spiritual experience in the Church leads?" Charity is "the first and the highest, in the scale of religious and moral values."

"If you want to receive, give. If you ask for yourself what you deny to others, your asking is a mockery....Do not lose by saving, but gather in by scattering. Give to the poor, and you give to yourself. You will not be allowed to keep what you have refused to give to others." (St. Peter Chrysologus)

"When the son of Man comes in his glory...He will say to those on his left: 'Out of my sight, you condemned....As often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it to me.'" (Matthew 25:31,41,45)

Financial Freedom Means Giving Because of Love for God:

"For the sake of directing his joy in moral goods to God, the Christian should keep in mind that the value of his...alms, penances, etc., is not based upon their quantity and quality so much as upon the love of God practiced in them, and that consequently they are deeper in quality the purer and more entire the love of God is by which they are performed, and the less self-interest there is concerning ... joy, pleasure and praise." (St. John of the Cross)

Rate Your Wisdom on Financial Freedom:

\$ Is my salary all for me, or is it meant to be shared?

\$ What kind of a consumer am I? Do I buy, use up and throw away everything which media advertising says I should buy, use up and throw away?

\$ Do I accept the prejudices of my society: "People are poor because they don't want to work"; "I am prosperous only because of my own efforts"; "Only the wealthy have the right to the good life; etc.

\$ How will my economic decisions to buy, sell, give, invest, save, or fire serve human dignity and the common good?

In what career can I best exercise my talents and use them to fill the world with the Spirit of Christ?

\$ How do my economic choices contribute to the strength of my family and community, to the values of my children, and to a sensitivity to those in need?

\$ In this consumer society, how can I develop a healthy detachment from things and avoid the temptation to assess who I am by what I have?

\$ How do I strike a balance between labor and leisure that enlarges my capacity for friendships, for family life, for community?

Financial Freedom Means Knowing What To Do With God's Generosity:

Some (Catholics) have the talents and opportunities to engage in economic or political activity on a wider, more public scale. (Church) teaching invites them to see these possibilities as a call to serve humanity in a special way. Being in business or politics offers an opportunity to work for the dignity of humankind in a way that few others enjoy. (*Twelve Tough Issues: What the Church Teaches*, by Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988.)

**What will you do
with your financial freedom?**