



SABBATH 19—MAY 11, 2024

## Taking Care of Finances

**Proverbs 22:26—“Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, one of those who is surety for debts.”**

**C**ontentment is not necessarily getting stuff we want, but the realization of how blessed we are for what we have. In other words, we feel content not because we have everything we'd like, but because we are grateful for God's blessings.

Some might think, *I was happy with my car until I saw that brand-new model at the dealership. Or, I was satisfied with my clothes and shoes until I went window-shopping in the mall.* This shows that there are people who are never satisfied, no matter how much they have.

Sometimes we think that if we had “just a little more”, everything would be much better. However, our happiness cannot be tied to material possessions. This is not to say that you need to let go of your dreams and goals, but that you must be content with your standard of living in order not to incur debt.

Here are some tips for finding financial satisfaction:

**Step 1:** Where does my money go? Write down all your monthly expenses and classify them into three categories: (1) fixed expenses, which cannot be changed (tithe, rent or mortgage, taxes); (2) variable expenses (food, water, electricity, medical attention, gas); and (3) nonessential expenses (trips, electronics, recreational activities). By recording your expenses, you will be aware of how you are spending your money.

**Step 2:** What are my goals? Do you need to pay off debts? Want to save money for future expenses like buying a car, educating your kids, or retiring? Set a goal. For example, you may want to save \$300 each month for retirement. If that's the case, then include that amount in your monthly budget.

**Step 3:** Compare your income with your expenses. Is your income greater than your expenses? If so, you're doing well. Now, are your expenses greater than your income? In that case, go back to Step 1 and consider what can be changed. You might be spending too much on superfluous, unnecessary things.

**Appeal:** By following these rules you will see where the money is going, which will put you in a good position to define the goal to be achieved. Also, you will be able to have a spending plan and take control of your finances. The rest is up to you. Now that you have the knowledge you need, ask God to help you make wise choices.

