

# ONWORD

A weekly publication of the Enterprise Church of Christ

## Surviving Financial Stress

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### Join us:

#### Sundays

Bible class, 9 am

Morning worship, 10 am

Evening worship, 5:30 pm

#### Wednesdays

Midweek Bible study, 7 pm

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## Surviving Financial Stress: Rock Bottom

*By Jay Tidwell*

We don't need money to be Christians. There's no fee to pay to become a member, and no annual dues. Scripture teaches that godly people may be wealthy or poor (Ruth 2:1; Kings 4:1-7; Luke 16:20-22; Acts 3:6; Rom. 15:26). In a material sense, Jesus described Himself as poor (Matt. 8:20).

A person can find himself in poverty for a number of reasons, such as: (a) By choice, preferring a minimal lifestyle for God (Matt. 19:21-22; Heb. 10:34); (b) by chance, such as misfortune (Gen. 45:11; 47:20-21; Job 1:13-21; Prov. 13:23; James 5:4); or (c) by childishness, immature or, worse, irresponsible or immoral living.

### The Poor Prodigal

In **Luke 15:11-32**, Jesus described a disgruntled young man who demanded all his future inheritance and moved away from home. In his new location, he spent freely and without thought.

If we collect all the details and hints throughout the story, we can discern where his money went. Jesus said the son "*wasted his substance with riotous living*" (Luke 15:13). The original word that is

## Extra Credit: Where'd It All Go?

It's been said that "When your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall." Living as a faithful Christian helps keep too much from going where it shouldn't. Money "disappears" due to:

Promiscuity: *"For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life"* (Prov. 6:26).

Recklessness: *"Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored."* (Prov. 13:18).

Laziness: *"Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread"* (Prov. 20:13).

Addictions: *"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags"* (Prov. 23:21).

Aimless friends: *"He that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough"* (Prov. 28:19).

translated "riotous" is asōtōs, meaning dissolutely or loosely (Mounce Expos. Dict.) The ESV translates that phrase: "squandered his property in reckless living." The Message construes it: "undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had." Jesus said the older brother accused him to their father of having "devoured thy living with harlots" (Luke 15:30).

He's called the "prodigal" son, from the Latin *prodigus*, meaning lavishly spending money or resources freely and recklessly; wasteful; improvident; imprudent (Dictionary.com). He blew it all and hit rock bottom - a famine came (who could've predicted that?); then despair; and no one was interested in helping him (Luke 15:14-16). Finally, "he came to himself" and that's where his story changes (Luke 15:17).

### Financial Triage

When there has been a traumatic event and someone has physical injuries, the basic principles of providing first aid is first to ascertain whether there is any severe bleeding. Experiencing financial stress is also a traumatic event, and one way to aid in recovery is to begin with treatment by "stopping the bleeding." The Lord calls us to take action to resolve issues we face (Ex. 23:9-11; Lev. 19:10; II Thess. 3:10).

### Waste Not, Want Not

Surviving financial stress begins with honestly assessing our circumstances, cutting out waste, and doing what we should do with our money whether it's easy or not. *"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not forever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?"* (Prov. 27:23-24).