

## ***Introduction***

I watched out our living room window as our old Dodge station wagon was being repossessed. My wife and three children were all there in the house with me, but I don't think they felt the embarrassment and pain which I was trying to hide. Things were bad. There were groceries in the kitchen, but only because my wife had obtained government-supplied food stamps. We hadn't been able to make a payment on our house in several months. And the worst thing was that I had been trying to serve God to the best of my ability.

Something was wrong and I did not know what it was. That was a turning point in my life. I decided to find reasons for the financial lack with which I had lived for most of my life.

Several years later, after we were beginning to make progress in the financial area, I was able to go on a missionary trip to a third-world country. Toward the end of our trip I had another shaking experience. My eyes were fixed on a hillside where some 30,000 people were living in abject poverty. Their homes were pieced together with scraps of wood, cardboard, plastic, and garbage. Children

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were playing in the mud. There was no sewage system, no adequate water supply, and for all but a very few, no jobs. It was hard to take it in.

As we drove through the masses of people, a Christian brother with me made the following well-intentioned statement: “All they need is Jesus.” Trying to seem like a good Christian, I nodded my head, but inwardly I knew they needed more.

Of course, having Jesus is the number one thing every person needs, and in view of eternity, His provision for salvation makes every other need fade into insignificance. However, when looking at thousands of people—hungry, lost, and with no hope for the future—I cannot say that all they need is Jesus. They need clean water. They need opportunities to provide for their children. They need a change of circumstances. They need jobs. They need freedom from their present troubles. The fact is that hundreds of those suffering people already know Jesus and love Him with all of their hearts. Yet they remain in poverty with the others. They need something more.

I made another acknowledgment that day. I admitted to myself that I needed to have money to help people.

It’s not just the needy living in tragic poverty about whom I’m concerned. It’s people I see everywhere I go. Today in my ministry, which is my work, I travel and speak at Christian conferences around the world. Everywhere I go I see people struggling with financial needs: a single mother trying to care for her three children; a

family that never seems to have enough at the end of each month; a frustrated father who has given up hope of getting ahead; a minister desiring to serve God, but not having the finances to advance.

We need solutions that will help us overcome. We need them for our own lives. All of us have desires and goals—things we want to accomplish. But more important, we need money to do what we believe and know that God is leading us to do in this life.

I have discovered some keys that have helped me in these areas, and I want to share these keys with you. I pray they will set you free and open doors of financial blessings for you and your loved ones.

Though we will be focusing upon the establishment of a prosperous lifestyle, we do not want to promote greed or obsession with acquiring wealth. The Bible warns us,

*But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

(I Tim. 6:9)

God has given us many such warnings to which we must pay careful attention.

Our goal in this book is not to become sidetracked from the paths of God and pursue money. Never. We simply want to talk about attitudes and actions which help us succeed in life and receive

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the blessings God has for us. This is not a book justifying greed. It is a guide to freedom. It identifies attitudes about money and life which put people into financial prisons. It helps them think and act differently so that the blessings of God can flow into their lives.