

SALEM
BIBLE CHURCH
Shalom

Rev. Jasper Williams, Jr.
Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Joseph L. Williams
Senior Pastor

11:00 AM
Stonecrest Campus
5460 Hillandale Dr.
Stonecrest, GA 30058

11:00 AM
Atlanta Campus
2283 Baker Rd. N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318

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Join The Fast!

2021 GOD FIRST FINANCIAL FAST DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 3

Salem Bible Church

Dr. Joseph L. Williams, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jasper W. Williams, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Day Fifteen – Monday, October 25, 2021

Greed Will Not Bring Grace

SCRIPTURE

Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Luke 12:15

DEVOTIONAL READING

Ecc. 5:10; Matt. 6:19-20; mark 8:36; 1 Tim. 6:7-9

MAIN POINT

"Greed blocks your path to prosperity."

After selling more than 750 million albums worldwide and making millions through commercial endorsements, as well as buying The Beatles' music rights, it's difficult to believe the King of Pop could ever be short of money. However, at the time of his death, it was reported by Forbes that Michael Jackson was in \$500 million worth of debt. With a Neverland Ranch to maintain, the singer spent \$35 million improving the property, which featured two railway lines, two helicopter pads, its own fire department, a zoo, and a plethora of amusement park-style rides. Seventy-five cars and lavish gifts, such as the \$637,000 necklace he bought for actress Elizabeth Taylor, also contributed to some of his outrageous expenses. He was also reported to have spent \$25,600 a month on "medical needs." The problem was that his appetite for spending exceeded the money he brought in — to the tune of \$20 million to \$30 million each year. When the Michael Jackson Estate filed its estate tax return, it reportedly claimed his assets were worth only \$7 million as of the day he died. The IRS had a slightly different view, estimating the total to be more than \$1 billion ... and as much as \$1.5 billion. It says that the estate under-reported his assets so significantly that the estate owes a tax bill of \$702 million. The estate disagrees and has sued the IRS. Jackson's estate worth is still being disputed to this day.¹

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Matthew 6: 19-20 tells us to “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” The most important treasures we can accumulate are those that we lay up in heaven for only those will last. For we brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing out.

PLEDGE

"I will take an inventory of what I own so that I can guard against wanting more. I will be on the lookout for things that pull me in the direction of greed."

REFLECT

Where is your focus when it comes to material possessions? Do you want enough to live comfortably and share with others in need, or do you always want more, more, more...? Do you feel that the more you have, the more you need? What is most important to you, your relationships with God, family and friends, or things? Journal about your feelings and pray for God’s guidance!

PRAY

Father, You are my source and all that I need comes from You! Abba, Father, guide me and let Your law direct me each and every day. Only what I do for You will last! In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!

<https://atlantablackstar.com/2014/06/20/5-black-celebrities-became-super-rich-died-debt/2/>

Day Sixteen – Tuesday, October 26, 2021
Outpouring of Grace

SCRIPTURE

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6

DEVOTIONAL READING

Luke 3:10-11; John 15:12; Acts 20:32; Romans 12:13; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 3: 7-8; 1 Peter 4:10

MAIN POINT

"You always reap more than you sow."

In 1984, Jesse Jackson became the second African American (after Shirley Chisholm to mount a nationwide campaign for President of the United States, running as a Democrat. In the primaries, Jackson, who had been written off by analysts as a fringe candidate with little chance at winning the nomination, surprised many when he took third place overall, behind Senator Gary Hart and former Vice President Walter Mondale, who eventually won the nomination. Jackson garnered 3,282,431 primary votes, or 18.2 percent of the total, in 1984.²

The 1988 Jesse Jackson presidential campaign was Jesse Jackson's second campaign for President of the United States. This time, his successes in the past made him a more credible candidate and he was both better financed and better organized. Although most people did not seem to believe he had a serious chance at winning, Jackson once again exceeded expectations as he more

²Jesse Jackson 1984 presidential campaign, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesse_Jackson_1984_presidential_campaign, accessed on 9/9/2021.

than doubled his previous results, prompting R.W. Apple, Jr. of *The New York Times* to call 1988 "the Year of Jackson".³ In both national campaigns what the papers did not publish was about a major financial supportive force behind Rev. Jackson, Pastor Jasper Williams, Jr. of Salem Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Pastor Williams, a longtime leader and financial supporter of the Civil Rights Movement, called his friend Jesse and told him "Jesse as long as you run and put your life on the line for our people, you do not have to worry about your family". True to his word, Rev. Jesse Jackson's family received regular checks from Salem Baptist Church, relieving this burden off Jackson's shoulders during both his 1984 and 1988 run for the presidency of the United States. Pastor Jasper Williams, Jr., unselfish act to provide behind-the-scene support of Rev. Jackson's run for the presidency is a living testimony of God's Word: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10, NIV). As a reward for his faithful service to others over the years, Pastor Jasper Williams, Jr. was named the longest tenure pastor of the same church in the Guinness World Record and continues to preach God's Word for over 71 years. You always reap, more than what you sow!

PLEDGE

"I will give generously and experience the grace of God."

REFLECT

As you reflect, have there been times when you have given to others or a cause without expecting anything in return? How did you feel? Did you thank God for His grace and favor that allowed

³ Jesse Jackson 1984 presidential campaign, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesse_Jackson_1988_presidential_campaign, accessed on 9/9/2021

you to have enough to share? Have you found in your life that the more you give, the more God gives to you?

PRAY

Father, You are Jehovah Jireh, my provider! I trust You with my life and every situation. May I continue to sow into the lives of those who are in need and experience Your grace in my life. In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!

Day Seventeen – Wednesday, October 27, 2021
Perpetual Peace

SCRITURE

Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Job 22:21

DEVOTIONAL READING

Job 22:21 – 29; Prov. 3:5-6

MAIN POINT

"Trust that God will bring financial peace into your life."
After her divorce, Beverly found herself raising four children without the financial support of their father. She worked a regular 40 hours a week job as a registered nurse in a county hospital and on her days off worked as a contract nurse. The extra contract nursing jobs would often mean traveling to small towns or rural hospitals over two hours away from home. Beverly worried about her children when she was away and depended on her family and neighbor to check in on them because the oldest child was only 14 years old. She stressed about having enough money to pay her bills and to provide for her children. Beverly not only wanted to provide her children's basic needs but also wanted to give them some of the extra things that all children wanted. The more she stressed about her financial situation, the more she smoked. Time after time, Beverly tried to stop smoking without success. Although Beverly was raised in the church, she had little time to attend church services with her work schedule. It was not until after she had put two of her children through college, retired and battled cancer as a result of those many years of smoking that Beverly told her friend, I know now that it was not me, but God that sustained me over those years.

There was no way that I could have made it without Him! I should have trusted Him more! “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act” (Psalm 37:4-5).

PLEDGE

"I will identify at least one aspect of my finances and decide today to stop stressing about it. I will pray that God brings me peace in that area."

REFLECT

Are you worrying about how you manage your finances? Are you doing your part and trusting God to guide you and give you peace? Journal about what is causing you stress in managing your finances and what is preventing you from trusting God?

PRAY

Lord, we live in such stressful times, but You said that You will never leave or forsake us! I will trust You, and I will do my part in managing my finances! I know that all I have come from You! Thank You for giving me financial peace! In Jesus name, I pray!
Amen!

Day Eighteen – Thursday, October 28, 2021
Wealth is Blessing

SCRIPTURE

*The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it.
Proverbs 10:22*

DEVOTIONAL READING

Deu. 8: 18; 16:17; Prov. 3:9-10, 21:20; Luke 6: 38; 2 Cor. 9:8

MAIN POINT

"It's okay to embrace your wealth."

Denzel Hayes Washington Jr. (born December 28, 1954) is an American actor, director, and producer. He is known for his performances on the screen and stage, he has been described as an actor who reconfigured "the concept of classic movie stardom", associating with characters defined by their grace, dignity, humanity, and inner strength. On June 25, 1983, Washington married Pauletta Pearson, whom he met on the set of his first screen work, the television film Wilma. They have four children: John David (born July 28, 1984), also an actor and a former football player, Katia (born November 27, 1986) who graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in 2010, and twins Olivia and Malcolm (born April 10, 1991). Malcolm graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in film studies, and Olivia played a role in Lee Daniels's film The Butler. In 1995, Washington and his wife renewed their wedding vows in South Africa with the late Desmond Tutu officiating. Washington is a devout Christian and has considered becoming a preacher. He stated in 1999, "A part of me still says, 'Maybe, Denzel, you're supposed to preach. Maybe you're still compromising.' I've had an opportunity to play great men and, through their words, to preach. I take what talent I've been given seriously, and I want to use it for

good." In 1995, he donated \$2.5 million to help build the new West Angeles Church of God in Christ facility in Los Angeles. Washington says he reads the Bible daily.⁴ Denzel's network is estimated at around \$250 million. He is a living testimony of believing God's Word, The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it (Proverbs 10:22).

PLEDGE

"I will stop worrying about not having enough money because God has so richly blessed me."

REFLECT

Have you learned to trust God to supply all of your needs? Journal about a time in your life when nobody but God brought you through a financial valley. Take the time now to give Him all of the praise!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, today, I trust You with my life and every situation. I believe that nothing is impossible with You, and You will work all things together for my good. I will not worry about what I do not have because I know that in due season You will supply all of my needs! In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!

⁴ Denzel Washington,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denzel_Washington#Personal_life

Day Nineteen –Friday, October 29, 2021
Stewardship Responsibility

SCRIPTURE

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? Luke 16:10-11

DEVOTIONAL READING

1 Chr. 29:12; Psa. 24:1; Prov. 21:20; Matt. 25:21; 2 Cor. 9: 6-7; Col. 3: 23-24; 1 Peter 4:10

MAIN POINT

"The better I handle the money I have, the more I may receive."

Pastor Emeritus Jasper Williams, Jr., began over 30 years ago to save 20% off the top of the church's income. "Before any bills were paid, we honored God with Salem's first fruit." Pastor Williams also stated, "As I look back over those years, I can only tell you, but God is how we made it through some economic downturns". He stood fast to his belief that the church would be able to do more with 80% if she honored God with the first fruit of her income. "Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10). Pastor Williams is the paragon of the responsible steward. You only have to look at where Salem has come from Martin Street to Baker Road; now one church in two locations, Salem West, and Salem East, to know that he is a good steward. Under the pastorate of Reverend Jasper Williams, Jr., Salem acquired 162 acres of land in DeKalb County, the location of Salem East.

Now under the leadership of Dr. Joseph L. Williams, as the senior pastor, Salem continues to fulfill the dichotomous mission of the Black church, meeting the spiritual and social needs of the people. Dr. Williams in partnership with his father continues to honor God with Salem's first fruit; despite a global pandemic, the ministries of Salem are exponentially expanding to meet the needs of the people! Both men of God are shining examples of responsible stewards.

PLEDGE

"I acknowledge that everything I have belongs to God."

REFLECT

How do you handle the money that you have? Are you saving a portion of what you make each payday? Are you using credit cards to make it to the next payday? How can you become a better steward of your money? Take this time to reflect on your stewardship in your journal.

PRAY

Father, all that I have come from You! I will honor You with the first fruit of my increase. Help me to be a responsible steward of what You have blessed me to have! In Jesus Name, I pray. Amen!

Day Twenty – Saturday, October 30, 2021
Relationships Rescued

SCRIPTURE

But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Mark 4:19

DEVOTIONAL READING

Prov. 17:17, 18:24; 1 Thess. 5:11; Eph. 4: 2-3, 29; John 13: 34-35, 15:13; 1 John 4:7-8, 18

MAIN POINT

"Taking a break from the consumption can help you focus on the most important relationships in your life."

Mary can still remember the weekend that she traveled to her best friend's home, discouraged, emotionally and physically exhausted. After working six days as well as going to school to obtain a graduate degree, Mary needed a break from the stresses in her life. It was her birthday, but she did not need a gift, just peace. Traveling over two hours to her best friend's house, Mary instantly felt the peace that seem to come forth from the little yellow house. It was not a fancy house, but it was a house filled with love. Her friend took one look at her and instantly knew what she needed, sleep. After taking a relaxing bath, Mary crawled into her friend's queen side bed and fell instantly asleep. She slept for almost eight hours, awaking fresh with a new look at life. After 30 years, Mary remembers that birthday as the best that she ever had. Her friend gave her not a material gift, but her friendship! When she remembers her friend, she recalls not the gifts that they exchanged, but their fruitful friendship, sharing the joys and trials of life for over 40 years.

PLEDGE

"I will call a close relative or friend with whom I have exchanged gifts in the past and make an agreement that on the next birthday, anniversary, or holiday, we will not spend money on each other but spend time with each other instead."

REFLECT

Journal about a time when spending time with a friend or relative meant more than any material gift you received from them. What was special about that time in your life?

PRAY

Father, I thank you for the relationships that You have brought into my life! Let me live in love and not for material gain! For your Word says that we should love one another for love is of You and that love is born of You and know You! In Jesus Name, Amen!

Day Twenty-One – Sunday, October 31, 2021
Pay on Time

SCRIPTURE

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.
Romans 13:8

DEVOTIONAL READING

Exo. 22:25; Deu. 15:7, 28:12; Psal. 37:21; Prov. 22:7, 26-27; Phil. 4:19; 1 Tim. 5:8

MAIN POINT

“Eliminating debt in a timely fashion will ultimately result in you owing nothing but love to others.”

Alice received a call of desperation from her favorite nephew. She could tell from the tone in his voice that something was wrong. He started the conversation off with Auntie I am in a bad situation. My car has been repossessed and I do not have a way to get to work. If I do not work, I cannot take care of my family. Alice with a sigh, knowing what was coming, asked what did he want her to do? Her nephew began to tell her that he could get his car back if he paid \$1,000 by 5:00 pm. He assured her that he could repay the loan in a few weeks. Out of love, Alice loans him the money to get his car. Months past and the loan was not repaid or even mentioned. After a year, Alice realized that she could either let this outstanding debt change her relationship with someone that she loved or forgive the debt. She talked to her nephew and told him to consider the loan as a gift, but he needed to consider his ways of managing his finances. She opened the Bible and read Romans 13:8 to him: Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another...”

PLEDGE

“I will make it my goal to pay all my outstanding debt on time and thereby become free to demonstrate love without restriction.”

REFLECT

Has an outstanding debt changed your relationship with a family member or friend? Do you strive to be debt-free? You have now concluded the third week of the Financial Fast. What has changed in your life? Has it been difficult to save according to the plan? Journal about the changes in your life that you notice during this Financial Fast.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word that guides and directs me in all that I do! Help me to be a good steward of my resources. Let the only debt that I owe freely demonstrate my love for others! In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!