

SALEM
BIBLE CHURCH
Shalom

Rev. Jasper Williams, Jr.
Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Joseph L. Williams
Senior Pastor

11:00 AM
Stonecrest Campus
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Stonecrest, GA 30058

11:00 AM
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Join The Fast!

2021 GOD FIRST FINANCIAL FAST DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 2

Salem Bible Church

Dr. Joseph L. Williams, Senior Pastor

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

Day Eight – Monday, October 18, 2021
The Salvation of Saving

SCRIPTURE

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty. Proverbs 21:5

DEVOTIONAL READING

Proverbs 10: 4-5, 13:11, 21: 20, 22:7, 28:20; Romans 13:8; 1 Cor. 16:2; Hebrew 13:5

MAIN POINT

"There is great reward in saving."

Arthur Georgia (A.G.) Gaston, an African American man born in a log cabin in Demopolis, Alabama in 1892, defied the social climate of that era to become a business leader, and later a behind-the-scenes political leader at a critical time in the civil rights movement. A.G. first business adventure was selling rides on a tree swing in his grandparent's backyard to his friends for buttons. As a young boy, A.G. moved with his mother to Birmingham. When he became a teenager, he was able to get a job at the local mining outfit. It was there that A.G. Gaston's entrepreneurial career began. He saw that the greatest need in the Black community was to have fine funerals. A.G. started his own burial society. From that humble beginning where members paid 25 cents a week, he built a multimillion-dollar enterprise. By the middle of the 20th century, A.G. Gaston ran an insurance company and his funeral home business—Smith and Gaston—had 13 branches in Alabama. He later opened his own saving and loan, a business college, and his own motel—the Gaston motel. He was as pioneering in fighting segregation as he was in building businesses; A.G. used his wealth to support the civil rights movement. After the arrest of Martin Luther King, Jr. for breaking

the injunction for marching, A.G. bailed him out for \$160,000. He would also go to the local bank and threaten to take out his millions of dollars if they did not remove segregated water fountains in the lobby. A. G. believed that negotiation could operate without confrontation. He also postulated that the black community could empower itself economically as a negotiation weapon to achieve equal rights. Since integration, A.G. Gaston's business legacy has all but disappeared; all of his businesses, other than his funeral home have closed. However, his rise from poverty to wealth as stated in Proverbs 21:5 was because of his planning and diligence to work and save for the future.¹

PLEDGE

"I will commit today to set aside a percentage of every paycheck for my savings."

REFLECT

In your journal, reflect on your saving plan. Are you saving a portion of what you earn? If not, why? Do you have a budget that includes saving a portion of what you earn? Are you living from paycheck to paycheck? This is the time to consider your financial habits and make a plan to put Proverbs 21:5 into action.

PRAY

Father God, I thank You for keeping me and supplying all of my needs! Help me to be a good steward to give You the first of my increase and to save a portion of what I earn so that I will be able to prosper and help others in their times of need. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen!

¹A. G. Gaston: From Log Cabin to Funeral Home Mogul.
<https://www.npr.org/2010/12/21/132089160/a-g-gaston-from-log-cabin-to-funeral-home-mogul>, accessed 9/3/2021

Day Nine – Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Diversification Delivers

SCRIPTURE

Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. Ecclesiastes 11:2

DEVOTIONAL READING

Proverbs 23:4-5, 21:5, 13:16

MAIN POINT

"Understand that when you invest, you put your money at risk."

The Great Recession of 2007-2009, under the presidency of George W. Bush, was the worst global economic crisis since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The recession resulted from a combination of tax cuts, spending increases, and the devastating effects of a banking crisis in the subprime mortgage market. The recession contributed to rising income inequity and prompted a debate about the role of the federal government in regulating private industry.² All of this technical terminology did not mean anything to Mary, a professor at a local university raising her granddaughter. All Mary saw was her retirement going down the drain. Each quarter her retirement plan showed a net loss. Not knowing what to do, she contacted her investment counselor who told her that she needed to diversify and put her money in less risky investments. The diversification would bring her lower yield on her money, but it was a safer move in the recession. Mary decided that she needed to learn more about how to invest her hard-earned money and what stocks and bonds would be a better investment.

² The Great Recession. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/modern-us/us-after-2000/a/the-great-recession> , accessed September 4, 2021.

Because she diversified and made safer investments, her quarterly statements began to show a steady decrease in losses during the recession. As she went through this stressful time in her life, Ecclesiastes 11:2 had new meaning for Mary. She learned that it is wise to invest her saving in multiple ventures to minimize losses when unexpected financial disasters occur.

PLEDGE

"I will examine my investments to make sure I'm well diversified."

REFLECT

Are you investing for your future or retirement? Are your investments diversified to minimize your losses in times of an economic upheaval? Do you know about your investments? It is time to consider your financial status. In your journal, take the time to write brief answers to these questions.

PRAY

Father help me to diversify my investments to build generational wealth for my family. It is essential that I live a life of increase as I am building a future towards retirement and profitable investments.

Day Ten – Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Matrimonial Money

SCRIPTURE

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If they fall down, they can help each other up. But pity those who fall and have no one to help them up! Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

DEVOTIONAL READING

Gen. 2:24; Prov. 18:22, 19:14, 31:10; Matt. 6: 32-33, 19:2-9, 1 Cor. 7:7-8; Eph. 5: 22-27

MAIN POINT

"Together as one you can become better stewards of your money."

Betty and Jesse had been married for over 15 years. She always wanted to live in her own home. Although they lived in the segregated South, they both had good jobs. Betty handled the budget in the family. Jesse, who worked in a steel mill, brought his check home to Betty to pay the bills. He did not have the same drive as his wife to purchase a home because he was raised in a dysfunctional family. His father was a functioning alcoholic who made good money but never made it from one payday to the next without pawning his clothes for extra cash. He was raised in rental houses, moving frequently from one community to another. Jesse acquired a job at the steel mill as soon as he graduated from high school and shortly afterward married Betty. Fortunately, Jesse married a woman who complimented his shortcomings and they made a good team. After diligently saving and budgeting wisely, they were able to purchase a three-bedroom brick home in the suburbs.

Betty, wanting the home to be perfect, decorated each room with a theme and color scheme.

Jesse never would have known the satisfaction of being a homeowner or the joy of true marital partnership if he had not married Betty who loved him despite his flaws. In their marriage, the words of Ecclesiastes ring true—"Two are better than one..."

PLEDGE

"I will work with my spouse to develop a set of rules to govern how we handle our money together."

REFLECT

Journal today about how you and your spouse complement each other to make your home a place of contentment and joy. If you are not married and in the process of entering into a state of matrimony, reflect on whether you will complement each other and what you can do if you do not. If you are single for whatever reason, reflect on Matthew 6: 33-34. Journal what these verses mean to you in your state of singleness.

PRAY

Father, help me to be content in whatever state I am. You are my hope in times of joy and distress; I trust You to meet my needs. Help me to walk in peace and an inner contentment. In Jesus name, I pray! Amen!

Day Eleven – Thursday, October 21, 2021
The Impact of an Inheritance

SCRIPTURE

Good people leave an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. Proverbs 13:22

DEVOTIONAL READING

Proverbs 13:11, 17:2, 21:20; Deu. 6:6-7

MAIN POINT

"Leaving an inheritance to your family is a blessing to them from you."

*The **Bronner Bros. Enterprise** is one of the largest private African American hair and skincare producers in the United States. Founded in 1947 by brothers Dr. Nathaniel H. Bronner, Sr. and Arthur E. Bronner, Sr., Bronner Bros. has over 300 full-time and part-time staff members. The company headquarters is located in Atlanta, Georgia. With Nathaniel Bronner, Sr's death in 1993, Bernard Bronner took over the company as president and CEO. Bronner Bros. has not been quiet when it comes to the company's Christian beliefs. One of their most successful organizations is The Word of Faith Family Worship Cathedral in Austell, Georgia, founded by Bishop Dale C. Bronner the son of Nathaniel Bronner. The ministry has more than 19,000 members and over five branch ministries which it has birthed. The business was passed to Nathaniel Bonner's six sons upon his passing in 1993. Nathaniel's sons in order of age include:*

- *Rev. Nathaniel Bronner, Jr.: Manufacturing Director for Bronner Bros., president of Century Systems Inc. and senior pastor at the Ark of Salvation Church. He and his wife Simone have four children.*

- *Bernard Bronner: President of Bronner Bros., publisher of Upscale, partner in Rainforest Films, and Show & Sales Director for Bronner Bros. He and his wife Sheila have five children.*
- *Darrow Bronner: Until his death in 2000, was the Show Director and Professional Sales Director for Bronner Bros. He had five children with his wife Jane.*
- *Bishop Dale Bronner: Founder and pastor of the Word of Faith Worship Center. He and his wife Jamie (Nina) Bronner have five children.*
- *Rev. Charles Bronner: Purchasing manager for Bronner Bros. and co-pastor at the Ark of Salvation Church. He and his wife Traci have four children.*
- *Rev. James Bronner: Trade Show Director, Director of technology for Bronner Bros, vice president of Century Systems, Inc., and youth pastor at the Ark of Salvation Church. He and his wife Stephanie have seven children and are co-authors of the marriage book Bedroom Talk.³*

Dr. Nathaniel H. Bonner truly believed that leaving an inheritance to your family is a blessing to them from you.

PLEDGE

"I will strive to leave my children and grandchildren an inheritance."

REFLECT

Regardless of your stage in life, consider whether you are being a good steward of your resources so that you can leave an inheritance to your children. Journal about what you can do to leave an inheritance to your children; it does not have to be at the level of the Bonner Bros. family.

³ Bronner Bros. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronner_Bros. accessed 9/5/2021

It can just be enough for them to plant a seed with some wise financial counseling from you. A seed with wise counsel can grow into a tree.

PRAY

Father, thank You for what You have blessed me to have to meet my daily needs. Help me to be a wise steward of Your financial blessing to me. As You have blessed, I will strive to leave my children and their children an inheritance according to Your Word. In Jesus name I pray! Amen!

Day Twelve – Friday, October 22, 2021
The Devil Is in the Debt

SCRIPTURE

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender. Proverbs 22:7

DEVOTIONAL READING

Deu 15: 6; Psalm 37:21; Prov. 3:27; Romans 13: 7 & 18; Luke 14:28

MAIN POINT

"Debt is dangerous."

Why can I never get out of debt, John bemoaned to his father? The more I make the more I find myself behind. John, a man in his 40s, since graduating from high school has always worked hard, but he could never get ahead. In his middle 20s, he enlisted in the army and served for more than 10 years. As the non-custodial parent of two children, he paid child support until one was 18 years old, but continues to pay child support for the other one because of a history of child support payments delinquency. His father looked at John and said, son consider your ways of handling your money. Do you have a budget? Are your priorities in order? You have bankrupted once; you have had one car repossessed; you have upgraded your current car so that the things on it and in it are worth more than the car itself. You have the top-of-the-line electronic gadgets in your apartment, but you are not answering telephone calls from your creditors because they are calling me. It is time you take a look at the way you handle your finances. You were raised in the church and you know the Word of God. Proverbs 22:7 simply states that the rich rule over the poor... Your creditors are your masters until you get your finances in order.

PLEDGE

“I will tally my total debt and make a plan to eliminate my debt.”

REFLECT

What about your finances? Are you able to pay your bills and save a portion of what you make? Are you living from payday-to-payday? Journal about the state of your finances. It is time to take a quick financial inventory and consider your financial status. Is God the first debt that you pay?

PRAY

Father, You said that the borrower is a slave to the lender. Help me to break free of all indebtedness and to become a good steward. I know that I can do all things through Christ because He is my strength! Amen!

Day Thirteen – Saturday, October 23, 2021
The Curse of Credit

SCRIPTURE

The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. Proverbs 22:3

DEVOTIONAL READING

Deu. 28: 44-45; Psa. 13:11, 37:21; Gal. 3: 13-14, 5:1; Heb. 13:5

MAIN POINT

"Credit is dangerous."

How many times has Carol paid off her credit cards and declared that she would not use them again? Each time she put the credit cards away, she could not bring herself to destroy them. Carol told herself that she would not use them except in an emergency. Time after time, Carol would experience what she called emergencies that required her to slowly use one of the credit cards for those "emergencies." She once told her best friend, Mary, that it is like a curse; I just cannot resist buying what I do not need with money that I do not have or loaning family members money by getting cash advances off a credit card. Before I know it, I am back where I started, in credit card debt worse than before. At the age of 70, she cannot retire as others in her circle because of credit card debt. Carol has two choices: pay off high-interest credits by continuing to work until she is 75 or file bankruptcy. Although she is a woman of faith, Carol did not heed the Word of God about owing no man or that the borrower is ruled by the lender. However, she does believe that her poor financial choices do not justify her not doing what is right, payoff her debts. She continues to work and use her social security income to pay off her indebtedness instead of saving it for the time when she will have to live on a fixed income. Carol did not see the danger of living above

her means; she did not resist the temptation to spend money that she did not have. Now at the time of retirement with over \$30,000 in credit card debt, Carol must continue to work because of poor financial choices. She is paying the penalty of her poor choices and not living according to God's Word!

PLEDGE

"I will review my credit/debit card statements going back at least three months and examine my spending on my credit/debit cards."

REFLECT

It may be hard to take an honest assessment of your spending habits. Take the time today to look at how you are using your credit/debit card. Are you living above your means? Journal about your three-month review and how you can become a better steward to use credit wisely.

PRAY

Father, thank You for giving me the resources to meet my daily needs! You said that the debtor is a slave to the lender. Help me to be not just a hearer of Your Word, but also a doer. Today, I trust You with my life and every situation. I believe that nothing is impossible as long as I keep You first and I can become debt free! In Jesus name I pray! Amen!

Day Fourteen – Sunday, October 24, 2021
The Risk of Surety

SCRIPTURE

One who has no sense shakes hands in pledge and puts up security for a neighbor. Proverbs 17:18

DEVOTIONAL READING

Prov. 6:1-5, 11:15, 17:18, 22:26-27; Job 22:6, Neh. 5: 3-13

MAIN POINT

"It is not wise to co-sign."

Matthew is the non-custodial parent of a young adult daughter. Divorced from her mother at an early age, he did not have a good relationship with his daughter as she grew into adulthood. Matthew, feeling guilty about their relationship, used money and other gifts to show that he loved her. When she graduated from high school and enrolled in a community college, he helped her with her tuition and other expenses. When she became pregnant and dropped out of college to get a job, Matthew wanted her to know that he was supportive and would be there for her. Therefore, when his daughter wanted to move out of her mother's house and get an apartment Matthew supported her decision even though he had doubts about her ability to take care of herself and his grandson. He gave her one of his cars that she failed to care for until it stopped working. As any millennial young adult, she wanted a new car but needed a co-signer. Against his better judgment, Matthew co-signed for his daughter's new car. Within a few months, he received calls from the lender about delinquent payments. As with his past behavior, Matthew paid the three months of delinquent payments to keep the lender from repossessing the car. Another few months past and he again began to receive calls from the lender about missed payments. However,

this time Matthew decided that he was not helping his daughter to become a responsible adult or parent by being her safety net. When he read Proverbs 17:8, he realized that it made no sense to continue to bail out his daughter. Matthew made the sacrifice to receive the negative points on his credit report for making the poor decision to put up his name as surety for his daughter's car. He realized that she would never learn to budget her money if he remained her safety net or go to the bank.

PLEDGE

"I will not co-sign with anyone other than my spouse. But if I decide to co-sign for someone, I will make sure I can afford to pay the debt in full should the person default on the loan."

REFLECT

Journal about a time when you have been asked to co-sign for a family member or friend. How did you handle it? Was it hard to make your decision? Have you ever asked someone to be a surety for a loan? What was the results of this action?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for meeting my needs! Help me to live by Your Word that I should not be a lender or borrower. If I let Your Word guide me, I will live an abundant life. In Jesus Name I pray! Amen!