



Managing
GOD's Money

quarterly letter

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These seven practical points will help focus our attention on real issues:

- Learn about your spending habits;** for three months ...
 - Record all spending and the process followed before spending. You will notice that rarely you spend for a need. Rather, merchants' appeal attract you. Particularly the lie that you "save" when you spend.
 - Go on a spending fast. Spend on items morally, ethically, legally, and needed for life only. You will learn much about your habits.
 - Don't spend coins you get as change, place them in a piggy bank. At the end of the period, the savings will amaze you!
 - Identify vulnerable areas such as *Tim Hortons*, clothes shopping, and so on. Plug them! "Beware of little expenses — a small leak will sink a great ship." --- Benjamin Franklin.
- Money management means lifestyle management,** so don't look to financial techniques to change your circumstance, rather, examine your lifestyle. It's lifestyle choices that create expenses: where we live, transport we use, clothes we wear, type of meals, and so on. What adjustments do we apply? Over what period? God's PhD will show His way: patience, humility, dependence on Him!
- Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled the tithing law** (Hebrews 7). Today, tithing does not apply. When practiced, often it leads to a selfish lifestyle — we handle 90% our way. New Testament giving, I call "keeping," flows from a surrendered lifestyle. The early church didn't teach or practice tithing. In the 6th century AD, the Catholic church reintroduced it. This link <http://www.managinggodsmoney.com/essentialtools/financialhelp.php#4> explains. Remember, God owns 100%, so we must learn to handle 100% for His purposes. If

SEVEN TIPS TO RIDE OUT THE RECESSION

The **key** to getting through this recession is to surrender all to Jesus. In his book, *I Surrender*, Patrick M. Morley says, "The process of surrender is the lifelong, daily crucifying of the will—the will of the flesh—over and over and over again. It is surrender and re-surrender and re-surrender." This is my 2009 challenge: to re-surrender daily!

Experts will teach us effective coping techniques for these times. Many will work for a time. But only if first, we deal with our spiritual condition, will we be able to tackle core issues.

Will Christians follow the God of the Bible or the god of the world? Will we listen to wealthy financial evangelists who feed our greed or will we listen to Jesus? Will we seek first His Kingdom and righteousness and abandon unscriptural health and wealth, name-it-claim-it doctrines?

We must reject the selfish North American Christianity that caters to "me." That sees God as a *celestial slot machine* ready to give "me" stuff when I "sow" into a wealthy TV evangelist's ministry! We must study the Bible and ask God to show us truth.

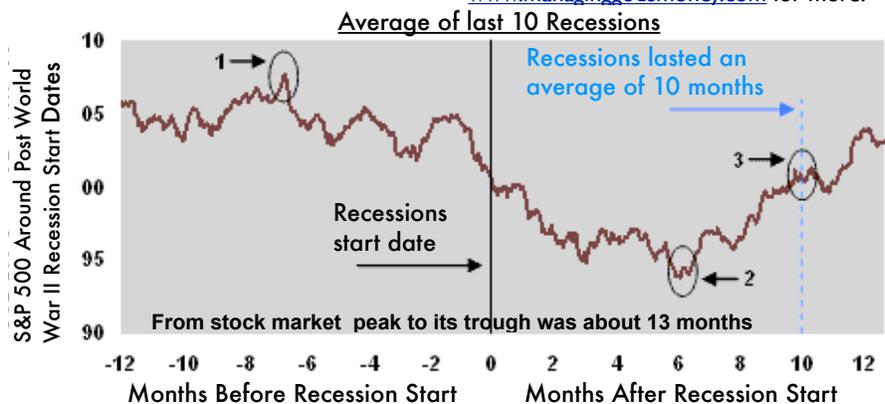
Facts will show the significant cause of the financial crisis is corporate and individual greed; greed that flows out of our sin nature. That's why we need to surrender to Jesus, every aspect of our lives. He will guide us through each day — His way. (Proverbs 3:5-6).

- you tithe; why? What are you doing with His 90%? Let's stop giving to get and become like the Macedonian churches whose "abundance of joy and depth of poverty ... overflowed in wealth of lavish generosity ..." (2 Corinthians 8:2). But, don't stop giving, rather, let God show you where and how much to give! In Matthew 6:1-4, Jesus says, "when you give" (not if you give), give with right motives! Similarly, in verses 5-8, He said when you pray, pray with right motives!
- God is in the midst** of our circumstances, ready to lead us through all crises. He is calling you and me, but we won't hear if we focus on "us" and our circumstances. Regularly, spend time listening and talking to Him!
- Take stock of your financial situation.** Prepare a "Material Worth" statement showing stuff you own and amounts you owe. Understand your financial position, and then get help to prepare a financial plan—see chapters 4 and

19 of *The New Managing God's Money-The Basics*.

- Use a GPS guide** to help navigate through daily challenges. Set **goals, plans and spending plans** for the next 12 months. Plans that show how to do goals, and spending plans showing the cost to do them. But note, because money management is lifestyle management, to build realistic spending plans, set realistic lifestyle goals. For example: Clothing to buy, eating out places and frequency, entertainment, housing upkeep, educational courses.
- Be patient, God is in control** and will never leave His children. This could be a great time to draw closer to Him! Trust Him; decide to live debt free (excluding an affordable mortgage) from today!

Meet often as a family to pray about and discuss household finances. Let each family member help to develop the household spending plan and be responsible for her part. May the peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. See www.managinggodsmoney.com for more.



- The S&P 500 index start to lose ground about 7 months before recessions start
- On average, the stock market has started to recover six months into the recession or four months before it ended.
- Recessions lasted an average of 10 months.

Source: Charles Schwab Market Commentary 31 Dec 2008

The textbook definition of recession is when the Gross Domestic Product declines for two or more quarters in a row. In the USA, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) decides what's a recession: "a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real GDP, real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales." According to NBER, the recession started in the USA on 31 December 2007. Our recession started last fall! We are in for a long ride, but God is in control!