



August 2020

## Financial Reserves and Self-Reliance

### The Church and Self-Reliance

While it is good to care about others and to help those in need, it is even better to empower people to help themselves. Self-reliance engenders a sense of dignity, self-worth, and purpose. It creates hope and offers choice and further possibility. It enables people to reach out and help others in return. These are all things that lift people and help them to improve their lives. In the end, isn't that what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is about?

In today's world, money and self-reliance often go hand in hand. These principles affect us in spiritual ways. They are not just temporal. This is why the Church has created the self-reliance initiative. This initiative is a lot more than how to pay off debt and make a budget! My favorite part of any of the courses offered is the foundation part that helps you understand things from a spiritual point of view. It is a good idea to be familiar with this initiative and know what is available (see 2019 guide for August – part 1). In order to take advantage of what the Church has to offer you can talk to your self-reliance specialist or bishop. There are a lot more options for you than just asking the Elders Quorum to help you find a job. There are also two articles in the August 2020 Ensign about self-reliance. The one on page 8 talks about one woman's experience with the self-reliance program. The article on page 32 talks about the use of time. It has a story and the principles for time use taught in the self-reliance program.

Managing money and preparing for the future are important at all times, not just in a crisis. In fact, the failure to do so can be the cause of a crisis in personal life or in a family. It can cause stress and strain on many aspects of life. Most of us are so blessed where we live that we can develop a false sense of security and invincibility. Sometimes in an effort to give our children a wonderful life we unintentionally foster expectations about money that make life difficult later on.

### The 2019 Preparedness Guide

The basics of financial preparedness are covered in the 2019 preparedness guide on [ProvidentPapers.com](http://ProvidentPapers.com). Even though I wrote the guide, I found it helpful to go back and read this a year later. I could evaluate my own situation and see some things to work on, especially after I have watched the events of 2020 unfold. In order to avoid redundancy, this paper will be focus more on goals you might set in this area. While reading them, you may get an idea of one that suits you at the present time. Here are some ideas.

#### Level 1 Ideas

1. Evaluate and make sure that you are paying a full tithing. Being careful to do this not only brings blessings, but it also promotes a respect for money and more careful accounting of it. \*Teach children to be conscious about tithing. Make sure they have a proper place to keep their tithing no matter how small the amount they have may be. In a world that is so focused on personal wants and desires, this is a good lesson.
2. Evaluate your family situation regarding finance. Is there enough money coming in that you can live debt-free and without stressful worry? If the answer is no, you may want to look into the self-reliance courses that can help you in this area.
3. If you do not have one, start a "rainy-day fund." Put aside some money each week as Devin Durrant counseled in the October 2015 General Conference. He says that the amount is not as significant as the habit. Besides building a healthier mindset about money and finance, it is a good thing to be

able to delay pleasures and not spend all the money you happen to attain. \*If you have to dip into your fund for unexpected things, be sure to build it back up as soon as you can. There are many unexpected things that can happen. I personally like to have a little bit set aside for wants as well as a separate amount for emergencies.

### Level 2 Ideas

1. Evaluate how you or your family use money. Are you keeping track of where it goes? Are there some holes or loose ends you could tie up to prevent leaks. It is a good idea to review your bank statements monthly or at least quarterly and make changes where money is not being wisely used. Money can be like a flock of sheep that wander and are lost when they are not looked after. There is also a self-reliance course for family finance. \*Some couples may need to be careful with this by not pointing fingers, but by counseling together.
2. Keep a savings plan that you feed regularly with the idea that you have it in case something happens regarding the main provider's ability to earn. Depending on the amount you are able to save, some may be in money that is readily accessible and some may be in investments that must be liquidated. You should have at least a three-month supply of available money that you can live on in the event of a family crisis.
3. Stash some cash! While it is not a good or safe idea to have a great deal of cash lying around, you should probably have some cash safely stored. If you need to evacuate for any reason, automatic tellers and banks may not be available. If power should be out for any length of time you may also be without the ability to withdraw money.
4. Work to teach children to value and use money wisely. Avoid the habit of giving them the things they want all the time. Help them earn things and take care of them. Sometimes taking care of the things we are blessed with is as important to being a good steward as making money is to being a good provider. It is a good idea to learn that we don't need everything we want or to prioritize what we spend for.

### Level 3 Ideas

1. Look ahead to the future. What expenses might your family have? Things like education, missions, building talents, weddings, purchasing a home, children learning to drive, retirement, home repairs and remodels, medical emergencies.... How are you planning, or can you plan for these things so that they do not cause debt or financial difficulty? Make some provisions now.
2. Learn about investments (there are all kinds) and life insurance. Find out what needs to be done in regards to things like wills and trusts. Take action to protect your assets and your family. Know your options in regards to wisely providing for the future and put them to use.
3. Work with your spouse so that both of you know what is involved with family finance in case one of you is taken unexpectedly. Make sure you are both aware of how to manage any family accounts and assets.

### Notes from Red Hen

Dear Journal,

*Chickens don't buy things, at least not like people do. I believe a store keeper would have a hard time dealing with a chicken that walked into the store to get, say, a needle and thread. For one thing, we can't talk like people. However, I have found it very useful in my lifetime to keep a sharp eye out for useful items I can trade for the help or things I need. It never hurts to find resources. We can't all be experts at everything, so if each of us uses our talents and knowledge, we can find other creatures who will share what they have. In a moneyless society the more skills and useful items you have to trade and share, the better you get along. It doesn't hurt to keep a small stash of things to barter with.*

