AGAPÉ
APOSTOLIC
CHURCH
O.O.L.J.C.M.

Small Group Member Lesson
God's Plan for Your Financial Wealth – From the Bottom
Session 4: Build Your First Emergency Fund

Purpose of This Lesson

This lesson will help me understand why I need an emergency fund, even if my income is small. An emergency fund is money set aside for real emergencies so that one crisis does not push me into debt, panic, begging, or financial confusion.

Saving emergency money is not a lack of faith. It is wisdom.

Main Thought

An emergency fund is the first wall around my financial house. It protects me from having to borrow every time something unexpected happens.

Key Scriptures

Proverbs 21:20
("There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.")

Proverbs 22:3
("A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.")

Genesis 41:34-36
("Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh... And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine...")

Proverbs 6:6-8
("Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.")

Opening Reflection

I will begin by asking myself honestly:

What usually happens when an unexpected expense comes?

Do I panic?

Do I borrow?

Do I ask someone for help?

Do I take money from rent, food, school, or transportation?

Do I use money that was supposed to pay a debt?

Do I feel ashamed or trapped?

Do I blame God, family, government, employer, or church?

Unexpected expenses are part of life. A child may get sick. A taxi fare may suddenly increase. A phone may break. A school item may be needed. A funeral contribution may come up. A job may be lost. A pipe may burst. A light bill may be higher than expected.

The issue is not whether emergencies will come. The issue is whether I am preparing wisely before they come.

1. Godly Wisdom Prepares Before Trouble Comes

Proverbs 22:3 says:
("A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.")

A prudent person thinks ahead. A simple person acts as though tomorrow will never come.

This does not mean I live in fear. It means I live with wisdom.

Faith does not mean I ignore danger. Faith means I trust God while obeying wisdom.

A wise person does not say:

“Nothing bad will ever happen.”

A wise person says:

“Life has risks, so I must prepare as God gives me strength.”

An emergency fund is one practical way to “foresee the evil” and “hide” myself. It gives me a small shelter before trouble arrives.

2. Saving Is Biblical

Some people think saving means they are not trusting God. That is not true.

Proverbs 21:20 says:
("There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.")

The wise person has “treasure” and “oil” stored. The foolish person spends everything.

This verse does not say the wise person is rich. It says the wise person does not spend up everything.

That means even if I am poor, I must begin learning the discipline of not spending everything I receive.

The emergency fund begins with a simple decision:

I will not spend everything.

Even if I can only save a little, I will begin.

3. Joseph’s Wisdom: Store in Good Times for Hard Times

Genesis 41 tells us about Joseph in Egypt. God gave Pharaoh a dream that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of famine. Joseph interpreted the dream and gave wise counsel.

Genesis 41:34-36 says:
("Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years, that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh... And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine...")

Joseph’s wisdom was simple:

Save during plenty so you can survive during famine.

Most of us may not have “seven years of plenty,” but we do have moments when something comes in. A salary. A small job. A gift. A partner draw. A bonus. A side hustle payment. A refund. A little extra.

The mistake is spending every “extra” as soon as it comes.

A wise person asks:

What portion of this should be stored?

What future trouble can I prepare for?

What debt can I avoid later by saving now?

4. The Ant Teaches Preparation

Proverbs 6:6-8 says:
("Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.")

The ant prepares without being forced.

The ant does not wait for a crisis to begin gathering. The ant gathers in harvest because winter will come.

This is a powerful lesson.

I should not need someone to beg me, pressure me, or supervise me before I save. I must develop internal discipline.

I must say:

No one has to force me to prepare.

No one has to remind me every time.

No one has to rescue me every crisis.

With God’s help, I will gather something while I can.

5. An Emergency Fund Is Not the Same as Regular Savings

Regular savings may be for planned goals.

Examples:

School fees.

Christmas expenses.

Clothing.

House deposit.

Business equipment.

Training.

Travel.

A new appliance.

An emergency fund is different.

It is for unexpected and necessary expenses.

Examples of real emergencies:

Sudden illness.

Urgent medication.

Unexpected transportation crisis.

Loss of income.

Urgent school need.

Small home repair that cannot wait.

A serious family crisis.

Rent shortfall caused by a genuine disruption.

Necessary replacement of something essential for work.

An emergency fund is not for things I simply want.

It is not for:

Hair and nails.

Parties.

New phone.

New clothes for fashion.

Fast food.

Entertainment.

Birthday spending.

Impressing friends.

Helping someone who refuses responsibility.

Buying something because it is on sale.

If I use emergency money for non-emergencies, I am tearing down my own wall.

6. Start Small, But Start

The first emergency fund does not have to be big.

If I am living at or below minimum wage, my first goal may feel small, but small is still important.

Suggested emergency fund goals:

First goal: $5,000.

Second goal: $10,000.

Third goal: one month of basic expenses.

Fourth goal: three months of basic expenses.

I must not despise the first $500 or $1,000 saved.

Zechariah 4:10 says:
("For who hath despised the day of small things?...")

A small beginning is still a beginning.

The habit matters before the amount grows.

If I save $300 every week, that is $1,200 in a month.

If I save $500 every week, that is about $2,000 in a month.

If I save $1,000 every week, that is about $4,000 in a month.

The exact amount may differ, but the principle is the same:

I must build the habit of keeping something.

7. Save Before You Spend Everything

Many people say, "I will save whatever is left."

But usually, nothing is left.

A better practice is to save first, even if the amount is small.

When I receive income, I should decide immediately:

What belongs to God?

What belongs to necessities?

What belongs to debt repayment?

What belongs to emergency savings?

What belongs to daily spending?

If I do not assign money early, emotions and pressure will assign it for me.

Proverbs 27:23 says:
("Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.")

In today's terms, I must know the state of my money.

I must know what is coming in, what must go out, and what must be protected.

8. Protect the Emergency Fund from Myself

Sometimes the biggest threat to my emergency fund is not another person. It is my own appetite, emotions, and impatience.

I may say:

"I deserve a treat."

"I will put it back next week."

"This sale is too good to miss."

"My friend needs help, so I must use it."

"It is just a small amount."

"I am stressed, so I need to spend."

But if I keep taking from emergency money for non-emergencies, I will never build protection.

I must create rules before temptation comes.

Possible rules:

I will not keep emergency money in my regular spending pocket.

I will keep it in a separate account, envelope, partner plan, credit union, or trusted savings system.

I will not touch it unless it is a real emergency.

If I use it, I will rebuild it.

I will not tell everyone how much emergency money I have.

I will not use it to impress people.

I will not lend it carelessly.

I will ask for wise counsel before using it for someone else's emergency.

9. An Emergency Fund Helps Break the Debt Cycle

Proverbs 22:7 says:
("The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.")

Many people borrow not because they are reckless, but because they have no cushion. One unexpected cost forces them into debt.

Then the next payday comes, and they must repay debt. Because they repay debt, they have too little for regular needs. Because they have too little for regular needs, they borrow again.

This becomes a cycle.

The emergency fund helps break the cycle.

Instead of borrowing for every crisis, I can use what I already prepared.

This does not mean I will never need help. But it means I am taking responsibility where I can.

Every dollar saved for emergencies is a small act of freedom.

10. Saving Requires Contentment and Self-Control

1 Timothy 6:6 says:
("But godliness with contentment is great gain.")

Contentment does not mean I have no desire to improve. Contentment means I am not controlled by comparison, greed, or pressure.

Many people cannot save because they are trying to look like people who earn more than they do.

They spend because of:

Comparison.

Embarrassment.

Loneliness.

Stress.

Pride.

Pressure from children.

Pressure from friends.

Pressure from relationships.

Fear of being judged.

The believer must learn self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23 says:
("But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance...")

Temperance means self-control.

Saving is not only a financial habit. It is also a spiritual discipline. It teaches me to tell my desires, “Not now.”

11. Emergency Money Must Be Rebuilt After Use

If I use emergency money for a real emergency, I should not feel guilty. That is what it is for.

But after I use it, I must rebuild it.

The emergency fund is like a wall. If a storm damages part of the wall, I repair the wall.

If I spend $3,000 from my emergency fund, I should make a plan to restore that $3,000.

My next goal becomes:

Rebuild before relaxing.

This helps me remain protected for the next unexpected event.

12. Do Not Confuse Faith with Carelessness

Some people may say:

“I do not need to save. God will provide.”

God does provide. But God also gives wisdom.

God provided for Egypt through Joseph’s planning.

God teaches the ant to gather.

God calls the prudent person wise for preparing.

God calls the foolish person foolish for spending everything.

Faith and planning are not enemies.

Planning says:

“Lord, I trust You enough to obey wisdom.”

Saving says:

“Lord, I will steward what You have already placed in my hand.”

Emergency money is not my god. It is simply a tool of stewardship.

My trust remains in Jesus.

Practical Teaching: How to Build the First Emergency Fund

Step 1: Choose a first goal

My first goal should be realistic.

For example:

$5,000.

$10,000.

One week of basic expenses.

One month of basic expenses.

I should not choose a goal so big that I become discouraged before starting.

Step 2: Choose a weekly or payday amount

I will decide what I can save every time I receive income.

Examples:

$200.

$300.

$500.

$1,000.

Any amount is better than no habit.

Step 3: Separate the money immediately

I will not leave emergency money mixed with spending money.

I can use:

A separate bank account.

A credit union account.

A sealed envelope.

A labelled container.

A trusted savings arrangement.

A mobile wallet or sub-account where possible.

The goal is to make it harder to spend casually.

Step 4: Define what counts as an emergency

Before pressure comes, I will define emergencies.

For me, a true emergency is:

A non-emergency is:

Step 5: Rebuild after using it

If I use emergency money, I will rebuild it before moving to the next financial goal.

Personal Worksheet

My current emergency savings amount is:

My first emergency fund goal is:

The amount I will save each payday is:

Where I will keep my emergency fund:

Three things that count as true emergencies for me are:

1.
2.
3.

Three things that are not emergencies for me are:

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

One habit that causes me to spend money I should save is:

____

One change I will make this week is:

____

One person who can help hold me accountable is:

____

Common Mistakes I Must Avoid

Mistake 1: "I do not earn enough to save."

Correction: I may not be able to save much, but I can begin the habit. Even a small amount teaches discipline.

Mistake 2: "I will save what is left."

Correction: If I wait until the end, usually nothing remains. I must save intentionally.

Mistake 3: "Emergency money can be used for anything important to me."

Correction: Emergency money is for unexpected and necessary expenses, not desires or pressure.

Mistake 4: "If I use the fund once, I failed."

Correction: If I use it for a real emergency, it did its job. I must simply rebuild it.

Mistake 5: "Saving means I do not trust God."

Correction: Saving is not replacing God. Saving is obeying wisdom with what God has provided.

Mistake 6: "I should tell everyone I have savings."

Correction: I must be wise. Not everyone needs to know what I have set aside.

Mistake 7: "I can lend out my emergency fund and get it back later."

Correction: Lending emergency money can leave my own household exposed. I must use wisdom and counsel.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do many people struggle to save emergency money?
2. What is the difference between faith and carelessness?
3. Why is an emergency fund important for breaking the debt cycle?
4. What are examples of real emergencies?
5. What are examples of things people call emergencies that are really desires?
6. How can a person save even when income is small?
7. Why must emergency money be kept separate from spending money?
8. What does the ant teach us about preparation?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 21:20
("There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.")

Key Takeaways

An emergency fund is the first wall around my financial house.

Saving is biblical wisdom, not lack of faith.

A wise person prepares before trouble comes.

Small savings still matter.

Emergency money is for real emergencies, not pressure or desires.

Keeping emergency money separate helps protect it.

An emergency fund helps break the debt cycle.

When emergency money is used, it should be rebuilt.

God remains my source, but I must steward what He provides.

Personal Commitment

With God’s help, I will not spend everything that comes into my hand. I will begin building my first emergency fund, even if I must start small. I will prepare wisely, resist unnecessary spending, and protect what I set aside. I will not allow every crisis to push me back into borrowing. I will trust God and obey wisdom.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me to be wise with what You have placed in my hand. Deliver me from careless spending, panic, pressure, and financial disorder. Help me to save faithfully, even if I must begin small. Give me self-control to protect my emergency fund and wisdom to know what is truly an emergency. Help me to prepare before trouble comes, break the debt cycle, and steward my household with faithfulness. Let my trust remain in You, and let my habits reflect wisdom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Pastor: Leonard A. Smith. MACM
Affiliate member of the Jamaican Psychological Society
32 Mimosa Ave. Kingston 11. (876) 997-5603 Website: agapeapostolic.info Email: agapemissionalchristianchurch@gmail.com