



Managing Your Gifts from Above

Fr. Michael Kontogiorgis

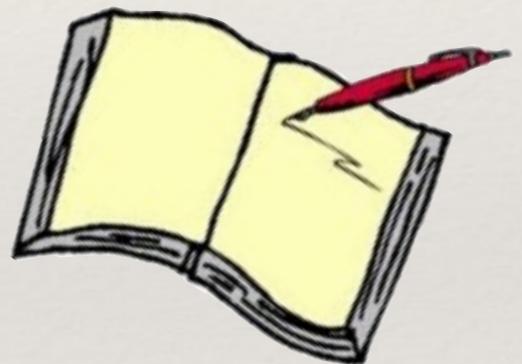
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

January 30, 2015

Fr. Michael



- ❖ Office of Internal Assessment & Evaluation
- ❖ Archdiocese Benefits Committee
- ❖ Registry Department Director
- ❖ Church World Service Board
- ❖ NYPD Clergy Liaison



Etiquette



Very Basic. Assume Little. Lay Foundation.

God Provides

Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 6:25-26



God's Wisdom

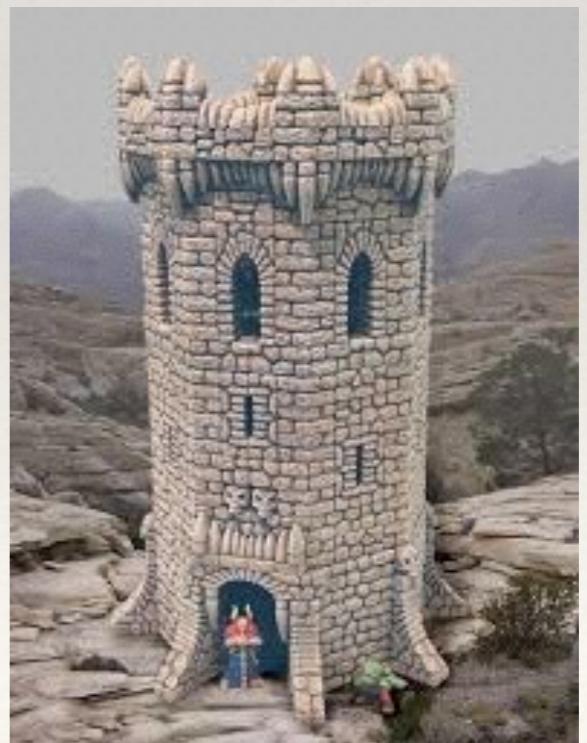
- ❖ *Precious treasure remains in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.* Proverbs 21:20
- ❖ *Go to the ant...consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer or ruler, she prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest.* Proverbs 6:6-8



God's Wisdom

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Luke 14:25-30



Keeping up with the Joneses

- ❖ *You shall not covet your neighbor's house...or anything that is your neighbors.* Exodus 20:17
- ❖ We desire to provide for our families, ourselves.
- ❖ We strive to be better, to have more, to make life easier.
- ❖ How can we serve others well, without the latest technological inventions?
- ❖ We need to be connected.



Life's Necessities

- ❖ A house/apartment, furniture
- ❖ A car or two (*and not an old jalopy*)
- ❖ Food, drink, dinners out, a movie, a ball game
- ❖ Clothing, vestments, crosses
- ❖ Vacations
- ❖ Children's education
- ❖ Retirement

more crosses



Where's the Money for It All?

- ❖ What's a person to do?
- ❖ So much to provide and have, *so much...*
- ❖ The USA to the rescue
- ❖ Just sign on the dotted line. Instant credit. Sign and drive. Swipe and dine. Scan and it's yours. No worries, no hassles.
- ❖ 0% Balance Transfers
for 12 months, then 24%



There's a Problem?

- ❖ Better than living paycheck to paycheck???
- ❖ Jar with fun-time money???
- ❖ Everyone does it. It's the American way.
- ❖ Have faith in God. Christ fed 5,000 men plus women & children with 5 loaves and 2 fish.
- ❖ What about the birds of the air?



The Reality

- ❖ American consumers as of December 2014 owe...
 - ❖ \$882.6 (*856.9-Jan*) billion in credit card debt
 - ❖ \$8.14 (*7.93-Jan*) trillion in mortgage debt
- ❖ Electronic payments are everywhere. *Apple Pay*
- ❖ The cashless society is fast approaching. Along with instant credit line increases.
- ❖ Go green with E-Bills. Save the planet.



Vicious Cycle

- ❖ Free issue or two of magazine. Just cancel.
- ❖ Say your name at the counter and off you go. Your smart phone has done all the work.
- ❖ Gas stations going totally robotic. Pull up, swipe and watch your tank being filled.
- ❖ Siri, Find Friends; Okay Google, Google Now
- ❖ Amazon to start shipping items to you before they are ordered.

Reality Check

- ❖ More marriages end because of financial issues.
- ❖ Money is the #1 thing couples argue about.
- ❖ Needs vs. Wants
- ❖ *SmartMoney Magazine* — Couples argue about...
 - ❖ Merging their money - Dealing with Debt - Budgeting
 - ❖ Investing - Money Secrets - Planning for Emergencies

Planning for the Future

- ❖ **Parable of the Talents** — *You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.* **Matthew 25:27**
- ❖ **Parable of the Ten Virgins** — *For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with their lamps; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.* **Matthew 25:3**
- ❖ **Fasting** — No to small things leads to **NO** for greater
- ❖ Called to be a good steward with the gifts from Above

Your Plan of Action

- ❖ **Financial planning** — meeting your life goals through the proper management of your finances.
- ❖ **Set Goals and have a Plan**
 - ❖ Why at HCHC?
 - ❖ Graduation Date Planned
 - ❖ Know what needs to be done to fulfill goal.
 - ❖ Your Plan — quantified, measurable. You are accountable.
 - ❖ If target missed, ways to get back on the path.



Time to Make a Plan



Your Plan of Action

- ❖ Having a Budget makes you accountable.
- ❖ Know where you are and where you are going.
- ❖ Allow for an occasional splurge.
- ❖ Use cash if credit cards, electronic payments can't be managed.
- ❖ Don't spend more than you earn.
- ❖ Stay balanced and focused.



Time to Make a Plan



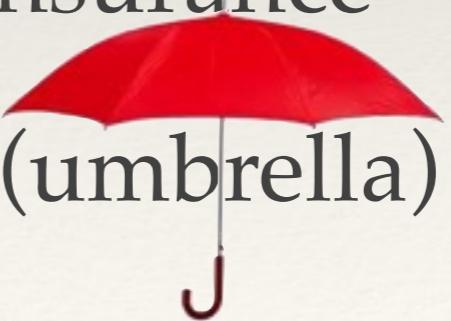
Your Plan of Action

- ❖ Borrow money for essentials — Home, Car
- ❖ Tithe yourself.
- ❖ Have a 3 to 6 month cash reserve.
 - ❖ To be used in an emergency
- ❖ College Education for Children
- ❖ Retirement Planning
 - ❖ Social Security - GOA Pension - Personal Investments



Your Plan of Action

- ❖ IRA's (*Roth*)
- ❖ Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds, Treasuries
- ❖ **Rule of 72**
 - ❖ $72 / \text{rate of return} = \text{years to double}$
- ❖ 401k, 403b
- ❖ Protect your assets with adequate insurance
 - ❖ Health - life - property - liability (umbrella)

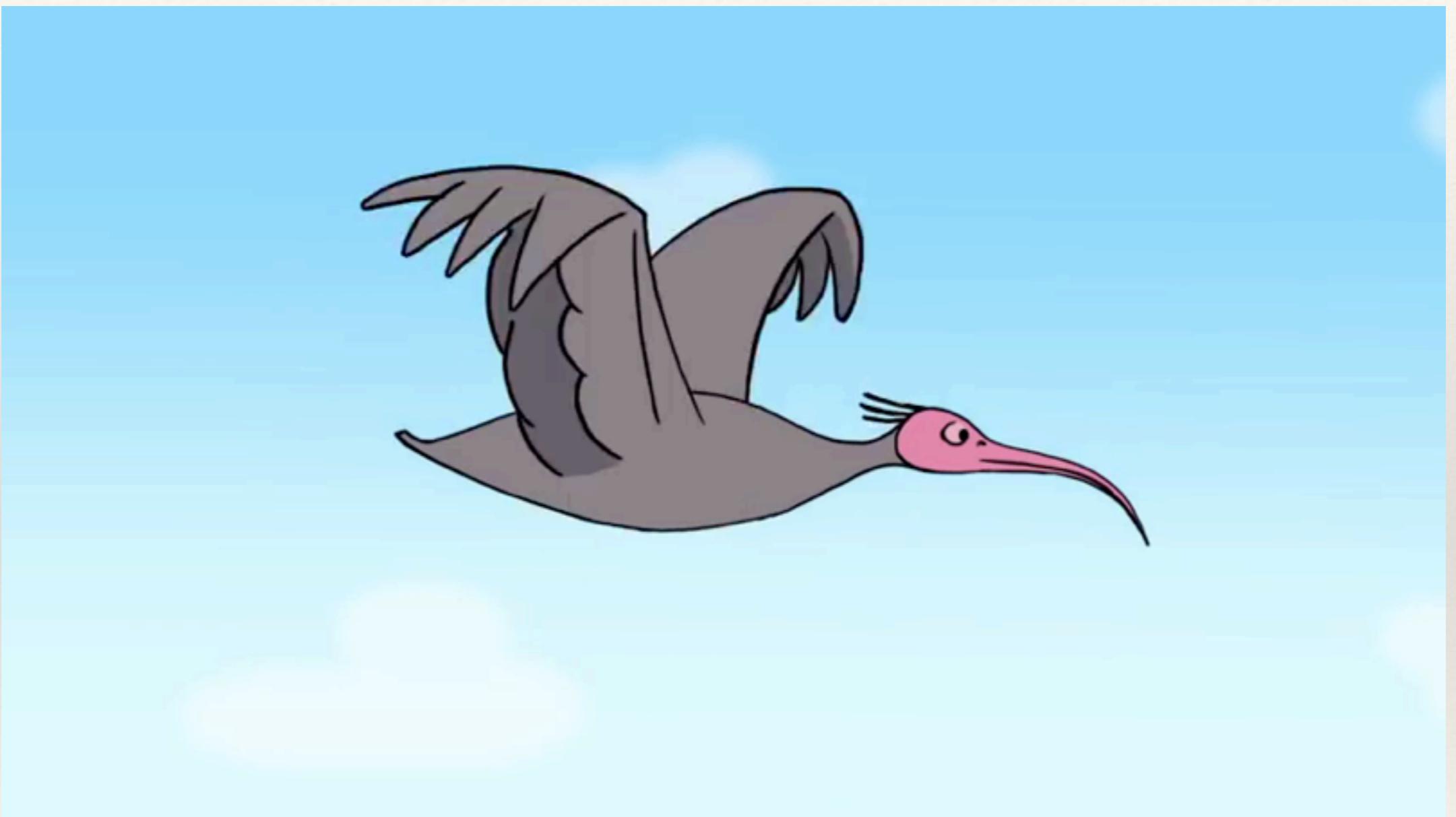


Signs of Concern

- ❖ When upset, do you go shopping?
- ❖ Pay only the minimum on credit card bills?
- ❖ Caught up in the throw-away, disposable society?
- ❖ Ignore prices on menus?
- ❖ Always picking up the tab?
- ❖ Believe you get what you pay for?



Dealing with Signs of Concern



Dealing with Signs of Concern

- ❖ Birds fly in a V-formation and support each other.
- ❖ If married, discuss and share calmly. Plan a time to discuss financial matters on a *regular* basis.
- ❖ Have a trusted friend, relative that you can go to.
- ❖ Self-study, reflection, prayer
 - ❖ Why did I do that today? What happened?



Dealing with Signs of Concern

- ❖ Picture in your mind how you would deal with a situation in the future or how you dealt with one.
- ❖ May indicate personal issues that should be discussed with your Father Confessor or qualified counselor.
- ❖ Stress, self-worth issues, addictions (*drugs, gambling, shopping*)
- ❖ Small steps on the proper road lead to destination.

Smell the Roses

- ❖ Enjoy the gifts of God all around you.
- ❖ Smell the roses.
- ❖ Be amazed at the birds of the air.
- ❖ Watch the snow flakes fall in all their grandeur.
- ❖ Gaze at the clouds as they float across the sky.
- ❖ Marvel at God's creations.



Smell the Roses

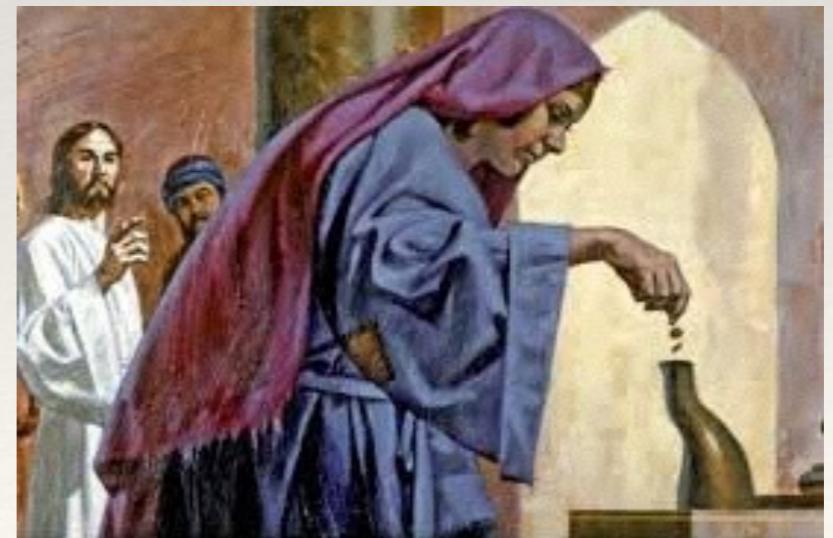
- ❖ Stop overthinking
- ❖ Be kind to yourself
- ❖ Keep a sense of humor
- ❖ Have some fun every day
- ❖ You can learn great things from your mistakes,
 - ❖ When you aren't busy denying them.



God Sees

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”

Luke 21:1-4



The Gifts of God

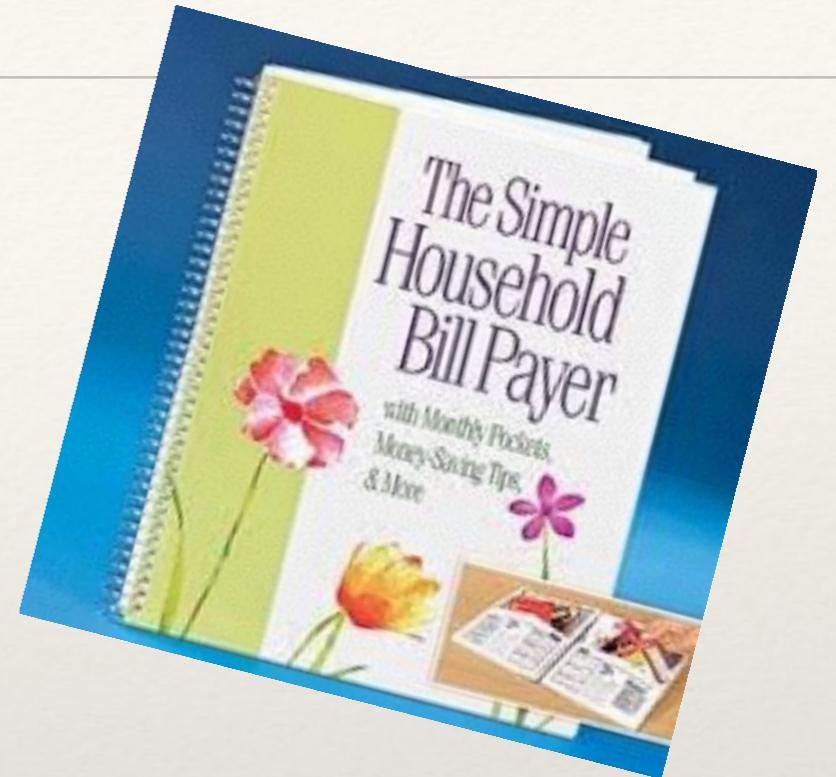
- ❖ Do not begrudge the gifts of God you have received.
- ❖ Be a good steward of the Lord's blessings.
- ❖ Avoid comparing your gifts to those around you.
- ❖ Do not believe you can know what lies ahead with God.
- ❖ Exercise personal responsibility.
- ❖ Planning, having goals, budgeting, being accountable

The Gifts of God

- ❖ Seek first the Kingdom of God, the rest will follow.
- ❖ Be content with what God has blessed you with.
- ❖ Plan before you spend.
- ❖ Save little by little.
- ❖ Avoid squandering your money.
- ❖ Beware of debts and loans.

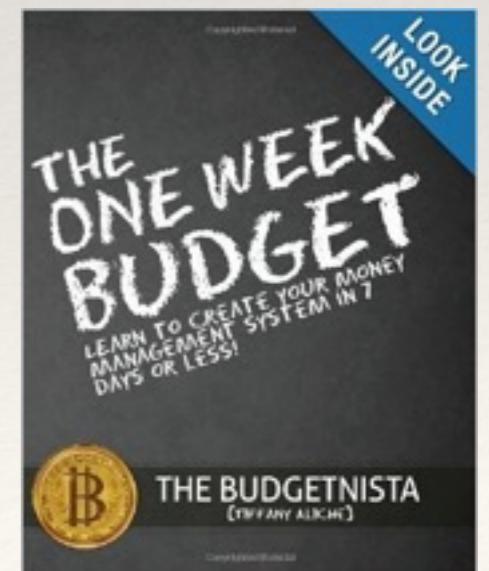
Resources

- ❖ www.BetterMoneyHabits.com
- ❖ Search for Budget Spreadsheets / Templates
- ❖ Search for Monthly Bill Organizers



Resources

- ❖ Financial Software
 - ❖ Quicken
 - ❖ iBank
- ❖ *The One Week Budget* - Tiffany Aliche (*The Budgetnista*)
- ❖ Common Sense
- ❖ Prayer



Questions



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