



FINANCIAL PLAN CHECKLIST

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

When facing a crisis, nothing is more important than knowing who God is. We are encouraged to view life's challenges through the lens of God's love, faithfulness and control. "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him."
Nahum 1:7 (NIV)

This Stewardship checklist highlights some practical actions you can take to assist you and your family during times of crisis that align with God's principles for your finances. Prayerfully, you will be encouraged as you look to Him to direct your path during life's challenges. Please note: The information provided in this list is by no means exhaustive and is only intended to provide some key actions for consideration.

1. Honor the Lord First

God is our Provider. He promises to provide for our needs and He is our source for everything. Matthew 6:33 (NIV) "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you."

Remember to Honor God with your first fruits and trust Him to do the rest.

2. Budget & Prioritize Spending

If you don't have a budget, now is the time to create a plan. Be sure you know where you are financially or where your money is going each month. Take the time to eliminate non-essential expenses by reviewing financial statements. **Proverbs 27:23 (NLT)** "Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds."

Make a plan to take care of the highest priorities (your four walls) first which are the following:

1. Food
2. Shelter
3. Utilities
4. Transportation

DURING A CRISIS: Pause debt repayment. Stockpile any extra money to weather the current storm of uncertainty. Your immediate concern is that your family has the essentials for survival.

3. Play Defense with An Emergency Fund!

If you have income coming in, be defensive! Handle the emergency in front of you, and save for an Emergency Fund with any extra money when you can. The best time to start an Emergency Fund is before an emergency. The next best time is as soon as you have enough income to start saving money. **Proverbs 2:12 (WEB)** "A prudent man sees danger and take refuge; but the simple keep going

AFTER A CRISIS: Start an Emergency Fund. After the immediate threat ends, you need to plan to be prepared for life's next emergency.

What: An Emergency Fund is cash for a rainy day. It's a separate account that is easy to access and is not invested.

Why: Life is unpredictable. Having cash gives you a cushion and buffer against life's unknowns. It can buy you time, give you options, keep your family out of debt, and decrease your stress.

Amount: Ideally 3-6 months of living expenses. A great starting goal is \$1,000 then build up from there. You never know when another emergency is coming.

4. Be Proactive and Communicate with Creditors

The COVID-19 crisis, is affecting many communities at this time. If you are unable to make payments, communicate with your creditors and let them know your plans to make payments on your bills i.e. rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance, debts or loans.

If you have some debts you can't afford to pay AFTER taking care of the essential expenses (listed in #2), those just won't get paid right now. Once your cashflow increases, you can catch back up in the future. Temporarily stop paying extra toward debts beyond the minimum payment. Hang onto that extra money.

Psalms 37: 21 (CEV) "An evil person borrows and never pay back; a good person is generous and never stops giving."

5. Buy Low & Sell High

The problem with selling after the market drops is that you may "lock in a loss" on your investments. You are "selling low", when you should "buy low" and "sell high".

If however, a) your time horizon is short, b) a financial need arises that can't be satisfied with other funds, or c) the loss seriously disrupts your emotions over time, then selling might be the best decision for you. If you do sell, consider parking the money in a money market fund. A withdrawal from a retirement account could trigger taxes and a penalty. If considering a 401k loan or other withdrawals, please consult with your Financial or Tax professional for guidance before taking action.

Proverbs 11:14 (CSB) "Without guidance, a people will fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance."

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6. Small Business Owners

If you are a small business owner, there are several resources available to assist you. The Small Business Administration (SBA) - assists small businesses with accessing federal resources and navigating their own preparedness plans as described by the CDC's Guidance for Businesses and Employers. The SBA will work directly with state Governors to provide targeted, low-interest loans to small businesses and non-profits that have been severely impacted by the Coronavirus Disease(COVID-19).

Luke 14:28 (NASB) "For which of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? "

Please reference the following websites for more information:

SBA Loan Resource Site: <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

Dallas Metropolitan SBDC: <http://dallasmetropolitansbdc.com/>

7. Watch out for Scams!

Make sure that you trust and verify sources that send you emails or call you directly. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warns individuals to remain vigilant for scams related to Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

1 Peter 5: 8 (NIV) "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Cyber actors may send emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites to trick victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities or causes. Exercise caution in handling any email with a COVID-19-related subject line, attachment, or hyperlink, and be wary of social media pleas, texts, or calls related to COVID-19.

Please reference the following website for more information under the caption "Scams and Fraud: www.usa.gov/coronavirus

8. Unemployment Resources

If you are experiencing a suspended status or you have been laid off and/or fired during this time. Please be encouraged that there are resources available to you during this time. If you are unemployed, you can file for unemployment benefits.

Please reference the following website for more information:

Unemployment Benefits & State: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/>

Federal (under federal workforce): <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

Federal jobs: www.usa.gov/unemployment#item-35882

Work In Texas: <https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>

9. Government Resources

The US Government is making some decisions that may be impacting you and your family. Please review the websites below for changes and additional information but be mindful that there may be updates as time continues.

Tax Extension: The US Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced that payments for all federal income taxes (including self-employment tax) that was due on April 15, 2020 has been extended to July 15th, 2020.

Student Loan: All loans owned by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) will have interest waived. That includes Direct Loans, as well as Federal Perkins Loans and Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans held by ED. Please note that some FFEL Program loans are owned by commercial lenders, and some Perkins Loans are held by the institution you attended. These loans are not eligible for this benefit at this time.

Eviction Notice: The Texas supreme court is not allowing evictions in the state of Texas from March 19th 2020 to April 19th, 2020 at this time.

Please reference the following website for more information:

Tax Extension: home.treasury.gov/news/press

Student Loan: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>

Eviction Notice: <https://www.cbs7.com/content/news/Texas-Supreme-Court-halts-evictions-amid-COVID-19-crisis-568988531.html>

US Department of Housing and Development (HUD): https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_042

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/>

10. Be Generous with your Time, Talent, and Resources

Use your God given resources to help others that are in your community by giving to your local church, food pantry, or other non-profit organizations that support God's work. Remember, we represent the Kingdom and Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 (NIV) "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

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