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April '22



A FRESH TOUCH
FROM GOD

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Contents + featured articles

- 4 **A FRESH TOUCH FROM GOD**
 - Andrew Roebert –
- 10 **WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD
 OPPOSES THE PROUD BUT GIVES
 GRACE TO THE HUMBLE?**
 - GotQuestions.org –
- 12 **GROWING THROUGH MARRIAGE
 PROBLEMS**
 - MarriageMissions.com –
- 16 **HOW TO USE CREDIT CARDS
 RESPONSIBLY (BOB LOTICH'S
 3 SIMPLE RULES)**
 - SeedTime.com –



A FRESH TOUCH FROM GOD

By: Andrew Roebert



As I was sitting and thinking about what we have faced in the last while, I became aware of the fact that, after all that we've been through, we need a fresh touch from the Lord. In the last two years, we as individuals and as Christians have faced 2 years of pandemic and lockdown, as well as sickness and in some cases death in our families or among our friends. We have also faced the possibility of war which could escalate.

We have also heard news of failings in one of the major global churches of our time. The effect of all these, and many other issues (economic, isolation and unemployment, etc.), is that we have entered a survival mode type of existence. People are fearful to re-engage and others now work 'remotely' and there are so many ways in which things have changed or are different, and we can end up feeling insecure. I believe that this is a perfect time to desire, expect and anticipate a fresh touch from God. In a sense we all need it to overcome a form of Post-Traumatic Stress that many people struggle with, even if it is unknowingly. A fresh touch from God would shift our perspective and help us to 'come alive' again. As I look at the world today, I think a new move of God, or a revival, or a fresh, personal experience with God and His great love and mercy towards us, would change the way we feel and the way we see things. I believe that God is always ready and willing to touch His children with a fresh outpouring of His love and anointing if we would humble ourselves and turn to Him and ask Him to do exactly this for us.

2 Chronicles 7:14 'If My people, who are called by My Name, humble themselves, and pray and seek (crave, require as a necessity) My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear [them] from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.'

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

In the New Testament we see how something of this nature took place. It gives us a picture of what could take place if we were to experience a fresh touch from God, or, to say it in more spiritual terms, a fresh visitation from God. In Acts Chapter 2 this event is recorded for us. (You are welcome to read this to give you the context.) The disciples of Jesus had been through a very difficult time. Jesus had been dramatically crucified, and their world had been rocked. He then rose from the dead and had ascended back to heaven, and here they were 'left behind' to pick up the pieces. They had enjoyed such a wonderful season with the Saviour and had seen many lives changed and many people healed and restored, but they had also seen the dramatic events of the death of Jesus, as well as His resurrection and ascension to heaven. They had been turbulent and confusing times. Confused and fearful they had gathered in a secure location. They did not know what to do next, except wait and see what would happen.

Acts 2:1 'When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.'

What happened next is that God intersected the situation and history.



Acts 2:2-4 'Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'

This was one of those critical moments when God intercepted human history.

What we know about this experience is as follows:

1. It happened against a backdrop of dramatic events that had taken place.
2. The disciples were fearful and in a form of self-imposed lockdown.
3. It happened suddenly and was unexpected.
4. What they experienced, they had never experienced or heard about before.
5. They battled to describe it. (They used terms like: 'sounded like' or 'what appeared to be'.)
6. They knew one thing: 'It came from heaven...' (See verse 2)
7. They experienced a touch from God that left them with a sense that they were 'filled'. Not empty, fearful and confused, but filled with the Holy Spirit!
8. They did things they had never done before and things that they were unfamiliar with.

Acts 2:4 'They began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'

9. They were changed! They went from fearful and confused to bold and determined. People were drawn to these disciples and the people could see the change in them.

10. They broke free of the things that were holding them in isolation, fear and separation.

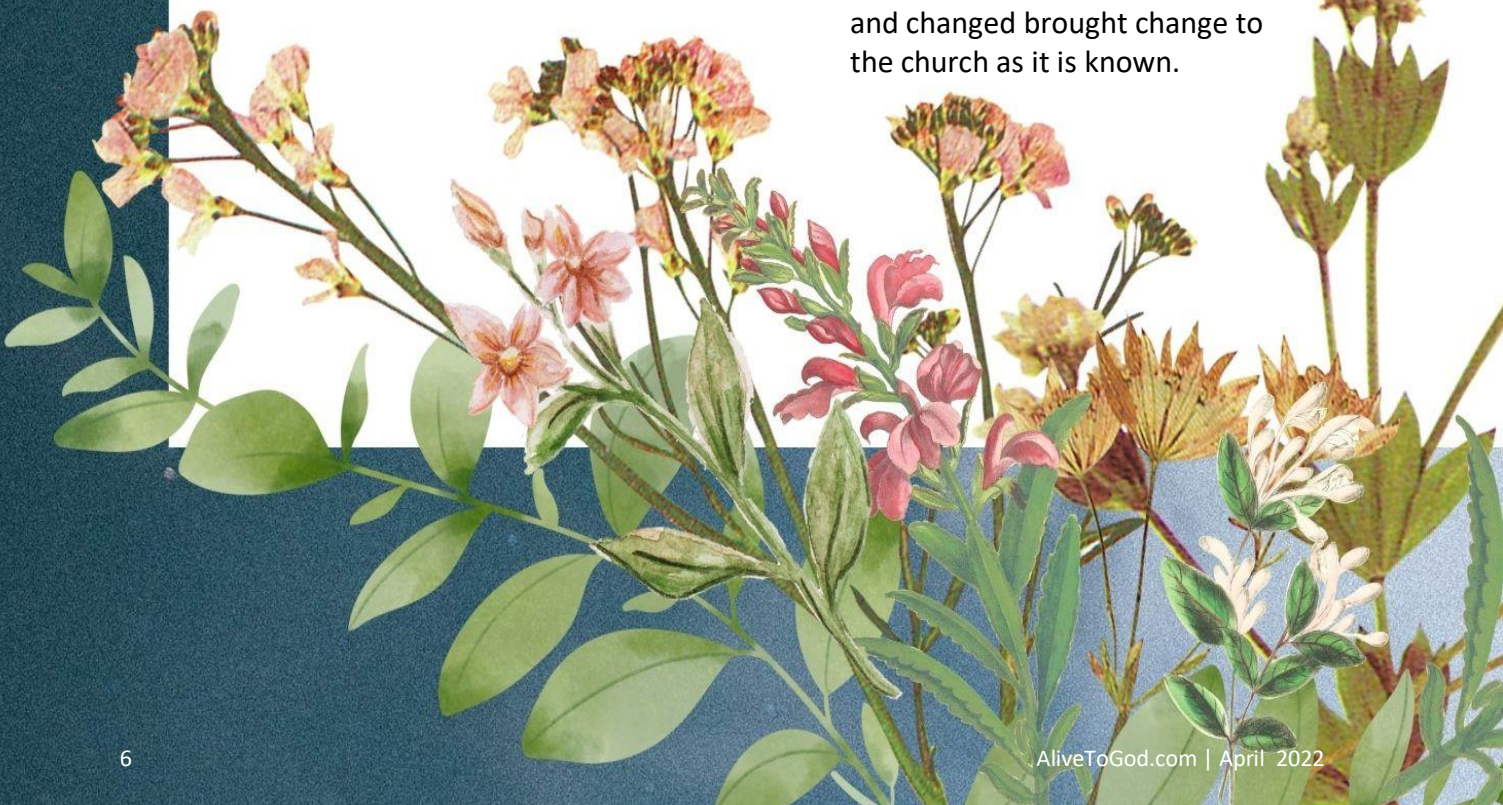
11. They stepped out into the world with a new perspective and determination.

12. Thousands of lives were touched, and the world would never be the same again.

A HISTORICAL EXAMPLE - From my experience.

After the dramatic events of the first and second world wars, the world went into a recovery period. During this time the church played a vital role. The church became established again and helped many people to find that sure foundation again. Worship was primarily hymns accompanied by an organ. But by the end of the sixties things began to change again. In the midst of this there emerged a fresh visitation from the Lord. It came in a way that no one really anticipated and influenced a group of people that we would consider the most unlikely candidates - Hippies. A man, by the name of Lonnie Frisbee emerged, on whom the hand of God obviously rested. A revival broke out (The Jesus Movement) and thousands of people came to know Christ, and many were baptized in the ocean on the west coast of the USA. Much of this revival happened in a church called Calvary Chapel.

The influence of these people who had received a fresh touch from God and had been radically saved and changed brought change to the church as it is known.



The worship changed and for the first time, bands would be allowed in churches to lead worship. This was the start of something completely new. Many new church groups and movements came into being all around the world and these changes led to the modern style of worship that is enjoyed around the world today. It set the stage for the new generation and opened the doors to what we see happening in churches around the world today.

A BIT OF MY TESTIMONY:

I grew up in a traditional church with a wonderful biblical foundation. We had been in this church for several generations and my father was a Pastor in this denomination. My father was in ministry at the time when the things recounted above, took place. He was open to the Spirit of God and this saw many changes taking place in our church, much of which I was too young to fully grasp and understand. But in the height of this movement in America, this Pastor, Lonnie Frisbee came to our country and our church. He was a radical and unusual looking man. I attended two meetings, both of which left a profound mark on my life. I saw God working in the lives of people and I saw how they changed and became radical for the Lord. The next meeting that I attended was in a local school hall.

Again, Lonnie Frisbee spoke, and his radical and 'sold-out' pursuit of God was evident. He spoke about how the Lord wanted to come and touch us right there in that meeting and that is exactly what happened. I was prayed for and the only way I can explain it is that I experienced a fresh, new, and empowering touch from the Lord, as young as I was. For days after this meeting people would speak to me and tell me a very similar observation. They observed that there was a 'glow' about me. They could see something about me that was visibly different. Although I was not aware of it, I knew that something had shifted within me, and I would never be the same again. Had it not been for that fresh touch from God on that young boy, I doubt if I would even have been in the ministry today.

THE TOUCH OF GOD CHANGES US

In a very real sense, it is not possible to experience a touch from God and then stay the same. If you read the New Testament, every life that the Lord touched was changed.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 'But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit.'



A touch from the Master's hand brings change to our lives. God wants to come and change us. God wants to step into our lives and the result is change. As we look into the face of God and reflect His glory, something happens within us, and change takes place. We are changed from glory to glory! This change and this glory comes from God and not from ourselves. God wants to come and change us and transform us. He wants to transform us in our minds, in our hearts, and in our lives.

DON'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN A FRESH TOUCH FROM GOD

How often we settle for less than God's best for our lives. We make peace with fear, anxiety, and stress, as if it is the best that we can do under the circumstances. The disciples locked themselves in a room thinking that it was all over, when in fact it was only just about to begin. What they didn't realise was that they were moments away from a touch from God that would in effect give birth to the church and change the world. Don't write yourself off and think that nothing can change. With one touch from the hand of God on your life, everything can change. Just as the Holy Spirit came and invaded the room where the disciples were hiding and everything changed, so as we allow the Lord and His precious Holy Spirit to come and invade our lives, everything can change. Be determined that you want to have a fresh touch from the Lord and ask Him to do just that.

It may not come in the form or the preconceived idea you have as to how it should happen, but if we will just give Him right of way, He will do His perfect work in our lives.

Psalm 92:10 'I shall be anointed with fresh oil.'

Just like David, who wrote this Psalm, you can be confident and expectant that God wants to touch you afresh. Ask Him to do it and be ready to declare this scripture: 'I shall be anointed with fresh oil.' Lord, I pray for each person who is trusting You for a fresh touch. We realise how desperately we need Your touch in our lives and therefore we ask You to come, by Your Holy Spirit, and blow the very wind of heaven over our lives, our souls, our hearts, and our minds. May Your life-giving breath bring life back into our tired and weary souls. May we be FILLED with Your Holy Spirit and may we be changed according to Your plan and purpose for our lives. Amen.



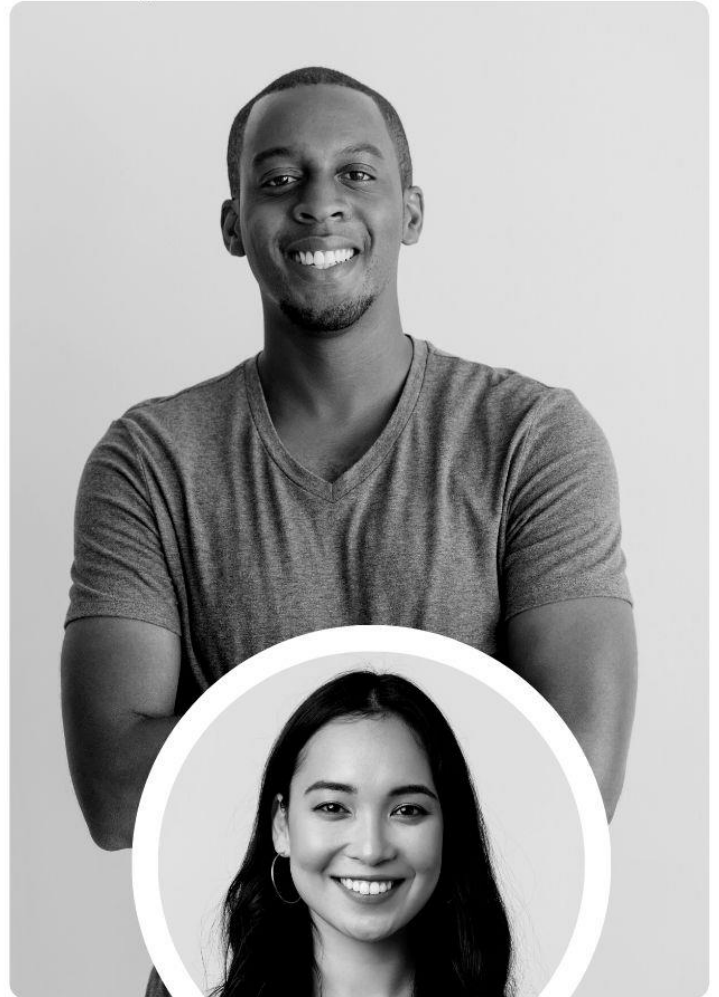


What does it mean That God **OPPOSES THE PROUD** But gives grace **TO THE HUMBLE?**

Pride is celebrated in our world. People proudly flaunt their accomplishments, possessions, or qualities they deem admirable in expectation of praise. Yet, selfish pride is a hindrance to salvation and to a fruitful relationship with God and others. James warns us about this self-focused pride when he writes, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, NLT).

In warning against pride and promoting humility, James quotes the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 3:34. Of course, James is not referring to "pride" as in the satisfaction of a job well done (Galatians 6:4) or to the kind of pride one expresses over the accomplishment of loved ones (2 Corinthians 7:4). He is referring to the kind of pride that stems from self-righteousness or conceit. God opposes the proud because pride is sinful and a hindrance to seeking Him. Those who

By: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG



insist on elevating themselves and refusing to trust God as sovereign, good, and trustworthy will find their way opposed by God. Psalm 10:4 explains that the proud are so consumed with themselves that they make no room for God. The ESV words it like this: "In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'" The supremacy of God and the fact that we can do nothing to inherit eternal life apart from Christ is a stumbling block for prideful people.

God will oppose those attempting to be the god of their own lives. Pride refuses to bend the knee to God or repent of sin, and that keeps many people from salvation.

In contrast to God's opposition to the proud is God's grace to the humble. Those who humble themselves find God's favor: "Though the LORD is great, he cares for the humble" (Psalm 138:6, NLT). God shows His favor to those with a right view—a humble view—of themselves, and He promises them restoration: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15; cf. James 4:10).

Note that humility in this passage is related to contrition, or repentance. Pride can also hinder our relationship with God and others even after we are saved. In his letter, James addresses an issue among the believers, namely, their quarrels and strife with one another. The source of the issue was selfish pride. Pride negatively affects our relationships because it inflates our view of self and deflates our view of God and others. In the midst of addressing this issue, James quotes Proverbs 3:34: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (ESV).

Exalting ourselves pushes God out of His rightful place in our lives, and He will humble us "because the Lord disciplines the one he loves" (Hebrews 12:6). As we humble ourselves, He "gives grace generously" (James 4:6, NLT). God gives us grace that is sufficient to meet every need we have and every sin we face, if we are humble enough to receive it. As we decide whether we will elevate ourselves or turn to God, we must remember that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. God calls us to repent of self-righteousness, selfish demands, and proud exaltation and instead "submit [ourselves], then, to God" (James 4:7).

In a world that champions pride, Jesus commands believers to be different. Each believer is called to "look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, ESV). As we humble ourselves, we will experience God's grace and the rewards He promises: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). Since God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, may we live humble lives in the fear of the Lord (Micah 6:8).



GROWING THROUGH Marriage Problems

What couple doesn't encounter marriage problems as we try to fit our lives together to "cleave" as God tells us to do? Cleaving isn't just referring to sexual intimacy. It also refers to being partners heading together down the same path of life. We are to cleave together despite our marriage problems. It doesn't always mean we will always think alike; but we can work to THINK TOGETHER.

But what do we do when we hit a snag in the road? What do we do when our differences bring us to the point of clashing with each other? How do we get past that type of situation?



How can we work to improve our marriages so that our problems don't overtake us?

Marriage Problems That Divide

"Certainly God wouldn't want us to stay in a marriage where our problems are consuming our relationship with each other!" ... "He wouldn't want us to stay in a marriage where we're unhappy with each other!"

We've heard that said over and over again. And we understand the pain behind those statements. But the question we'd like to pose to you is, "Are your marriage problems bigger than your God? Is your God so small that He can't help you to get beyond them?"

By: MarriageMissions.com

Certainly it takes two people who are cooperating with each other, to make a marriage one that is loving, strong, and healthy. But is there more we can gain from marriage? Please prayerfully consider something Gary Thomas said in his book, *Sacred Marriage*. Gary wrote:

“There’s a deeper question that needs to be addressed beyond how we can ‘improve’ our marriage: what if God didn’t design marriage to be ‘easier’? What if God had an end in mind that went beyond our happiness, our comfort, and our desire to be infatuated and happy as if the world were a perfect place? What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?”

Avoiding Marriage Problems

Most of us back away from “problems.” We see them as something to avoid. But what if we saw them as opportunities to know our God better? What if we asked God to help us to LEARN something positive about ourselves, each other, and His Kingdom work? Here’s something else to prayerfully consider that Gary Thomas wrote:

“Ask yourself, what if marriage is supposed to be difficult on occasion so that we are forced to learn to rely on God’s Holy Spirit and become a different kind of person? What if God is more concerned about our ‘practical atheism’—saying we believe in Him but rarely relying on Him—than He is about how easy our marriage might be at any given moment? What if half of our frustration in marriage results from the fact that we want it to be easier but God wants us to become more mature?”

“Consider what your marriage may be calling you to today that you don’t feel capable of doing on your own. Instead of saying, ‘This is just too hard,’ or ‘This just isn’t my gifting or calling,’ or ‘That’s not why I got married,’ invite God to transform you into a different kind of person. Be bold; hold God to His word:

‘Lord, You promise to give the weary strength. I am bone weary. You promise to give power to one who lacks it. I feel powerless. You promise to give the ignorant wisdom. I am clueless about what to do.’ Instead of running from the difficulties of marriage, let’s allow them to teach us the glory of spiritual dependence on God.” (From the article, “What We Need Most From Marriage”)

Furthermore:

Author Leslie Vernick talked about this issue in her book, *How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong*. She wrote:

“Often in difficult times we pray for relief instead of asking God to help us practice the very qualities He seeks to develop in us. God told the prophet Ezekiel: ‘My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words. But they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion. But their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well. For they hear your words but do not put them into practice.’ (Ezekiel 33:31-32)





“We must ask ourselves, are we looking for a God who just sings love songs to our heart? When he asks us to put his harder truths into practice, do we conveniently ignore him?”

Living Out Our Faith

“Jesus, too, taught the importance of practicing what he teaches us. He said: ‘Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.

‘When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words, and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.’ (Luke 6:46-49)

“Jesus both warned and encouraged us that if we make it our practice to faithfully apply ourselves to the things he teaches us, then we will have a foundation when difficulties come. If not, we will be swept away.”

We hope that your marriage does not get “swept away” because you fail to apply God’s Word. It’s important to apply His teachings to your life in how you live within your marital relationship.

Abusive Marriages

Now, we realise that some of you are in abusive situations. We want you to know that our hearts cry for you. They truly do! And we can only imagine how much this grieves God’s heart. God did not create us to be abused. That’s also not why God created marriage.

If you are in that situation, PLEASE find ways to protect yourself from abuse. We have articles posted on our web site that might help with that. You can read many of them in the Abuse in Marriage topic.

God can be a “very present help in a time of need.” Don’t stop reaching out to Him. Be open to receive the help He can give and show you. But also recognise that it can come to you in ways that are not at first apparent. Keep praying and looking.

Looking for the Good Despite Marriage Problems

We encourage you to look beyond your immediate problems. Ask God, “What good can come out of this? What can I learn from this that will help in Your Kingdom work? What can I do, that will BEST help my spouse and my marriage so this ‘problem’ doesn’t sweep us away? Help me to look at this through YOUR eyes. Teach us, train us, and mold us. And yes, even break us, if that is what it takes, for us to become all You created us to be.”

We encourage you to pray as the Psalmist.

“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). “Search me O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-23)

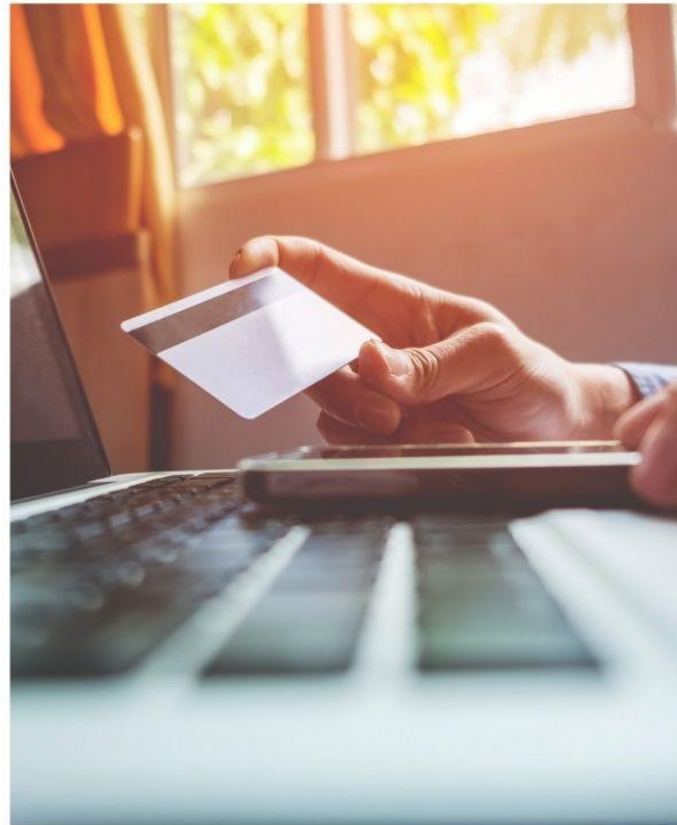
We pray that God will help you to make your marriage the best it can be. May it be a reflection of God’s heart! And may it be a witness to everyone in your life that the God is working in your life in miraculous ways. We pray that as God sees how you interact with your spouse, they will be drawn toward our God. And as a result, they will want to know Him better as a result.



HOW TO USE CREDIT CARDS RESPONSIBLY

By: SeedTime.com

(BOB LOTICH'S 3 SIMPLE RULES)



When I was in my early 20's I had no idea how to properly use a credit card – and I definitely didn't know how to use it responsibly.

And as a result my financial life was a mess. Sure, I could blame Visa and Mastercard, but the truth was that it was my fault.

They provided me access to a tool, but I didn't use the tool properly and got harmed by it.

Out of that mess, Linda and I created 3 rules for credit card use that have helped us be

responsible with our credit cards and have served us well.

These 3 simple rules ensured that we would use our credit cards wisely and as a result never be hurt by credit cards again, all while using the tool to our advantage in a big way.

Since we created our 3 credit card rules we:

- haven't paid a dime of interest to the credit card companies.
- never blow our budget with a credit card.
- haven't had money fights over our credit card spending.
- have gotten many thousands of dollars worth of rewards.

Our 3 simple rules to use credit cards responsibly

I tend to think of a Credit Card like a chainsaw.

A chainsaw is a relatively dangerous power tool that hurts a fair number of people each year. But when I have had to chop up a big tree, I used it responsibly and it provides a lot of benefit. Like most tools, we can use them for our benefit or harm if we aren't careful. The same should be said about credit cards. And by following the 3 rules I've used, you will be better prepared to use it responsibly, should you choose to use one.



Rule 1: Don't use credit cards for discretionary expenses

Odds are good that when compared to using cash, you will spend more with a credit card. The trick to prevent this is by creating systems to ensure that you don't. With rare exceptions, we don't use our credit cards for discretionary categories in our budgets – only expenses that don't lead to any temptation to spend more.

For example: we don't buy groceries or use it for personal spending. The reason? Because there is a temptation to spend more at the grocery store or on those new pair of Nikes that I want.

But what we do instead is use them on the cell phone bill, insurance bills, or giving to our church. The reason? There isn't much temptation to overspend on each of these. And that is the key.

If I can eliminate the temptation to spend more on my credit card, it makes it sooooo much easier to use it wisely and responsibly.

Rule 2: Don't ever carry a balance

There is a rule among the self-defense crowd that the best way to win a fight is to avoid it at all costs.

How our family uses credit and debit cards

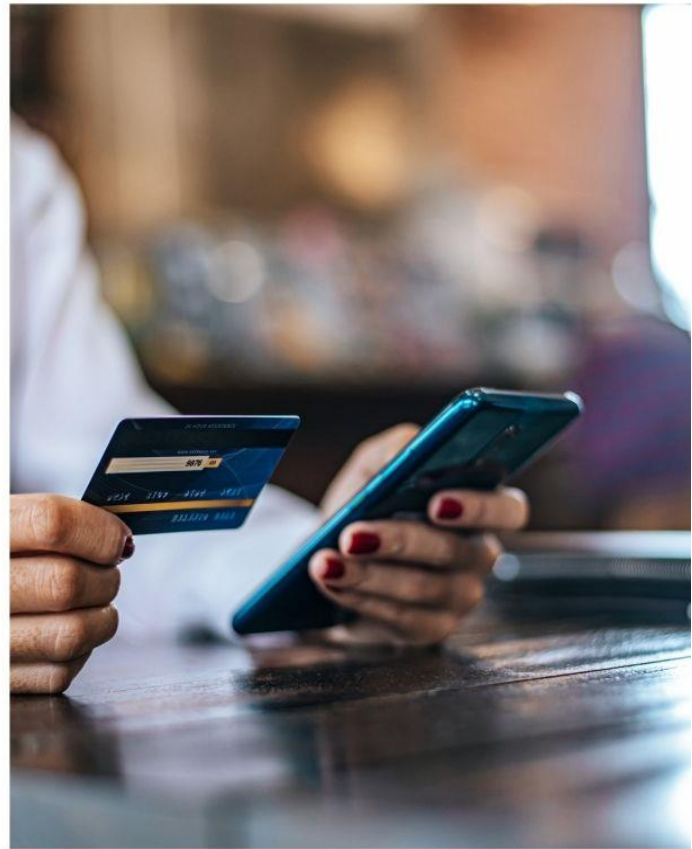
Because we use the Real Money Method as our alternative to traditional budgeting, we use a debit card for most of our day-to-day expenses. But we also responsibly use a credit card each month as well.

We are 100% debt free (including having paid off our mortgage) at this point in our lives and I never want to pay a dime of interest for the rest of my life.

As such, here are the 3 rules I've developed over the years to help us use them responsibly, not overspend on them, while also getting some of the benefits they offer.



So if using a credit card without carrying a balance is a struggle, then just run and avoid the fight altogether. Use a debit card. Take the credit card out of your wallet and freeze it in a block of ice. If it still is a temptation, drop it in the shredder!



When Linda and I first got married this was us. We couldn't control our spending. So we closed them down and lived successfully without one for probably 7 years. Once we were in a much more solid financial footing (and had matured a bit) we opened up a great rewards card.

We made a pact that if we ever couldn't pay the balance in full, even one time, we would close it down.

Rule 3: Make sure you're using a good credit card

Most people don't understand how much of a gaping divide there is between an average "rewards" credit card rewards program and a good one. It's not like 2x better, it's more like 10-50x better.

It is the difference of using your card all year and getting \$50 in rewards vs \$1,600 in travel rewards.

So, please, if you are going to use one, don't just use it because someone gave you a t-shirt to sign up.

Do your homework and find a good credit card.



When I look for a credit card, here are some points I consider:

Annual fee: All things being equal I would prefer \$0, but some provide such great rewards that a \$99 annual fee might be worth it.

Balance transfer fee: This is how much you have to pay to transfer the balance from one card to another. Let's say you have a card with a \$5,000 balance that is charging you 24% APR. You find another card that has a promotional offer of 0% on balance transfers for 12 months, it might make sense to pay a 3% balance transfer fee ($\$5k \times 3\% = \150) to have a 0% interest rate for 12 months.

APR: This is your interest rate. In general lower is better, but if you follow our never-carry-a-balance rule, it will never matter because you won't be carrying a balance. Additionally, some cards offer a lower intro APR (i.e. 0% for 12 months) for new purchases and occasionally for balance transfers as well.

Earning Rate: This is the rate at which you earn rewards. One point per \$1 spent is pretty common. The value of points varies quite a bit, but, in general, more is better.

Signup Bonus: Many cards offer signup bonuses (typically 20k-50k points). They typically have spending requirements (i.e. spend \$4,000 on the card within 3 months) in order to get the bonus. We had an entire 10-day hotel stay covered by a single bonus, so there is a lot of potential here.

Timeless Christian Resources



RoebertMinistries.co.za



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