

Neighborly News

Brought to you by your friends at the Mt. Hebron Church of Christ.

Dealing with credit card debt

Americans are loaded with credit card debt. The average American household with at least one credit card has nearly \$9,200 in card debt, according to CardWeb.com. The average interest rate runs in the mid-to-high teens at any given time.

Some debt is good. Borrowing for a home or college usually makes sense. Just make sure you don't borrow more than you can pay back, and shop around for the best rates.

Some debt is bad. Don't use a credit card to pay for things you consume quickly, such as meals and vacations, if you can't afford to pay off the bill in full in a month or two. There's no faster way to fall into debt. Instead, put aside

avoid interest charges.

Get a handle on your spending. Most people spend thousands of dollars without much thought to what they are buying. Write down everything you spend for a month, cut back on things you don't need, and start saving the money left over, or use it to reduce your debt more quickly (cf. Ecclesiastes 4:8).

Pay off your highest-rate debts first. The key to getting out of debt efficiently is to first pay down the balances of loans or credit cards that charge the most interest, while paying at least the minimum due on all your other debt. Once the high-interest debt is paid down, tackle the next highest, and so on (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Don't fall into the minimum trap. If you just pay the minimum due on credit card bills, you'll barely cover the interest you owe, to say nothing of the principal. It will take years to pay off your balance, and potentially you'll end up spending thousands of dollars more than the original amount you charged (cf. Proverbs 6:6-8).

Watch where you borrow. It may be convenient to borrow against your home or your 401(k) to pay off debt, but it can be

dangerous. You could lose your home or fall short of your investing goals at retirement (cf. Nehemiah 5:4; Matthew 18:25).

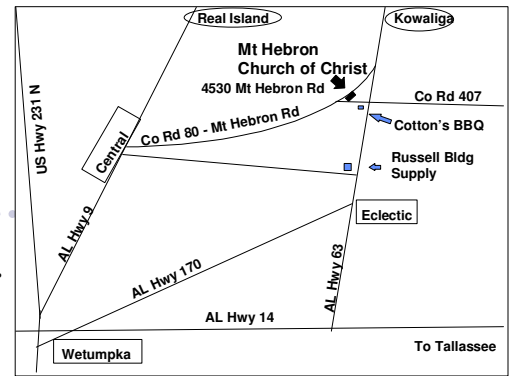
Expect the unexpected. Build a cash cushion worth about three to six months of living expenses in case of an emergency. Without an emergency fund, a broken furnace or damaged car can be a serious setback (cf. 2 Kings 4:1; Proverbs 11:18).

Don't be so quick to pay down your mortgage. Don't pour all your cash into paying off a mortgage if you have other debt. Mortgages tend to have lower interest rates than other debt, and you can deduct the interest you pay on the first \$1 million of a mortgage loan. (If your mortgage has a high interest rate and you want to lower your monthly payments, consider refinancing.)

Get help as soon as you need it. If you have more debt than you can manage, get help before your debt breaks your back. There are reputable debt counseling agencies that may be able to consolidate your debt and assist you in better managing your finances. But there are also a lot of disreputable agencies out there..

—Author Unknown

"The borrower is servant to the lender." —Proverbs 22:7



**Mt. Hebron Church
of Christ**

**P.O. Box 240159
4530 Mt. Hebron Rd.
Eclectic, Ala. 36024**

Come and visit us

**Sunday
Bible Classes 10:00 AM
Worship Services
11:00 AM & 6:00 PM**

**Wednesday
Bible Classes 7:00 PM**

A USEFUL VESSEL

It's not what we keep but what we share,
Not what we have but what we spare.
Not what we clasp but what we lose,
Not what we hide but what we use.
A vessel God will make of you,
If small or great, "twill surely do."
Great joy and peace will always fill
The one who's yielded to God's will.



some cash each month for items so you can pay in full. If there's something you really want but it's expensive, save for it over a period of time before charging it, so that you can pay the balance when it's due and

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."- Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Make all your days happy

You can make each day a happy one! Remind yourself each day that 'God loves you,' and then stir these seven ingredients into your recipe for daily living.

Begin your day by giving yourself good news. If you can hear, that's good news. If you can see, that's good news. Look at what you have, never what you've lost.

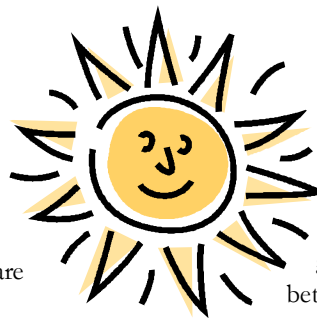
Help somebody get a lift through the day. Remember there are many people whose spirits are down. So visit or telephone someone who isn't feeling well or is lonely or down in the dumps. A simple smile or meaningful compliment can bring happiness to him or her.

Dream beautiful dreams. Having goals will help you stay happy and mentally

young each day of your life. When life begins to feel stale, it's because you don't have any challenges. Set new goals, and when those goals are fulfilled, set some more.

Make something beautiful each day. Life is meant to be creative. So make something beautiful. Knit or sew, place a pretty plant in the window for others to see, or write a poem or letter to someone special.

Help build somebody's self-esteem. Every human being, whether at the top or bottom of the ladder has problems with self-esteem. If you're a boss, compliment your staff. If you're a clerk, be courteous and caring to your customers. At home be sure your family knows that they're needed



or respected.

Count your blessings. Begin with the letter A. Then go through the entire alphabet – maybe start with friends whose names begin with A. This is a great game for the entire family to play.

Don't begin the next day's work before you go to bed. The end of the day should be ribbon-tying time for all you have accomplished as a gift to God. Spend some time in meditation at the end of each day. Then remember to read and meditate on God's Word for awhile before you go to sleep, and spend a little time in prayer. Life will be happier, and you will feel the closeness of God.

A note in the glove box

Recently I heard a story which really struck home. Apparently a woman was driving her husband's classic BMW for a special appointment downtown. That car had been his life and joy. He spent hours finding original replacement parts, tuning the engine, fixing minor dents, and waxing the car. He worked on it a little time every Saturday and many evenings, but the car was a beauty.

As she drove the car, she thought what a joy it was, but suddenly someone changed lanes and nearly pulled into her. To avoid crashing she swerved to the right just as a big truck drove up beside her. She demolished the bumper and dented the fender of her husband's car. What would he say? How could he ever forgive her? If she had only been a little more careful...

Shortly a policeman arrived to take an accident report. She

got out her driver's license and reached into the glove compartment to get the insurance papers and title. To her surprise there was another smaller envelope inside with her name on it. The writing was her husband's. A fearful sweat suddenly hit her. What would it say? He had often warned her about driving more carefully. She opened the letter and began to read it.

Dear Laurie,
If you are reading this, you have likely had an accident. Don't worry. I trust this means you are all right, and that is what really matters to me. Don't worry about the car, it's only metal and rubber and plastic. You are what really matters to me.
I love you. James



What a wise husband! He strengthened his wife's love and admiration for him and his marriage and his potential for happiness and his self-respect and his... well, you see that it was a wise investment.

Is there room for a note in your glove box?

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." — Ephesians 5:25, 28

Scary Grandmother

After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. At last she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard the three-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"