

Ask the Budget Guy

Submitted by Allen Gunter

EAT YOUR SPINACH!

Dear Budget Guy:

My Momma always told me to save something for a rainy day, just like she always told me to eat my spinach. But how can I save when there's never anything left at the end of the month to save??
– Cents-less in Austin

Dear Cents-less,

You know, saving is a lot like going on a diet. Most people want to lose a lot of weight right away, and if they don't, they're disappointed and give up. But saving is a game of inches that compounds into miles. So start small using some of these tricks to get going. Once you've saved up even just a little bit, I think you'll find it feels so good that you'll never go back to not saving again!

The Savings Jar

This is an oldie but a goodie, and the key to many other savings tricks. At the end of each day, drop all of the change in your pockets or purse into a "Savings Jar." Never carry change with you unless you've gotten it along the way, and even then don't use it to buy something. Your Savings Jar will get real full, real fast, and you'll never miss the change!

The Super-Saver Savings Jar

When you head out each day, don't carry anything smaller than a \$5 bill. When you get change, don't spend the singles. At the end of the day, any dollar bills go into your Savings Jar. (Credit goes to Neal Boortz, nationally syndicated radio talk show host.)

The Clean-up Cleanup

Put a Savings Jar in the laundry room and drop in a quarter or two every time you throw a load in the washer or dryer.

The Movie Move

Do you rent movies? When you return them on time, pay yourself the late fee and put it in the Savings Jar.

The Tip Tip

Unless you're getting fast food, you leave a tip when you eat out. So when you get home, set aside an amount equal to the tip in your Savings Jar. And if it's fast food and no tip, put a dollar or two in the jar anyway. (Credit for this one goes to The Dollar Stretcher, www.stretcher.com.)

Save the Savings

Many stores and shopping clubs print the amount you saved at the bottom of your receipt. Unless you are a fanatical comparison shopper, you'll never know whether you really saved that much or not. But if you put that amount into your Savings Jar, you will soon have a great nest egg.

Diet for Dollars

If you're on a diet, try this: Every time you go without dessert or some other goody, put the cost of that item into your Savings Jar. Watching the jar fill up could also help you stick with your diet! (Credit goes to Dana Dratch at www.Bankrate.com.)

Pay Phone

Put a Savings Jar by each phone and drop a quarter in every time you make a call. If you have teenagers, make them put a quarter in every 15 minutes they are on the phone. For an extra bonus, find a better deal for your phone service (like a 3¢-a-minute calling card) and put what you save into the Savings Jar.

The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.

- Proverbs 21:5

Want some help getting out of debt? Setting up and using a budget? The Financial Ministry at SHPC can help. You can get personal help from the Budget Guy, Allen Gunter: Call the church (892-3580, ext. 122) or send an email to BudgetGuy@SHPC.org. Not ready for that? Try one of the Crown Financial Ministries Small Study Groups. Call Ron Miller at 892-1862 for more information on these classes.