LEARNING. GROWING. BECOMING.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR FOUNDATION

Building Financial Stability for the Woman You're Becoming

THE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION WORKBOOK

A practical guide to understanding your relationship with money, creating a plan that works for you, and building financial freedom with purpose.

I'm so glad you're here! Through two separate debt payoff journeys, I paid off approximately $42,000 in debt. What I learned along the way is that financial change starts with awareness, a workable plan, and the determination to keep going.

This workbook will help you examine your relationship with money, understand where you stand financially, and begin building a stronger foundation. You don't need an expensive app; a notebook and pencil can be enough.

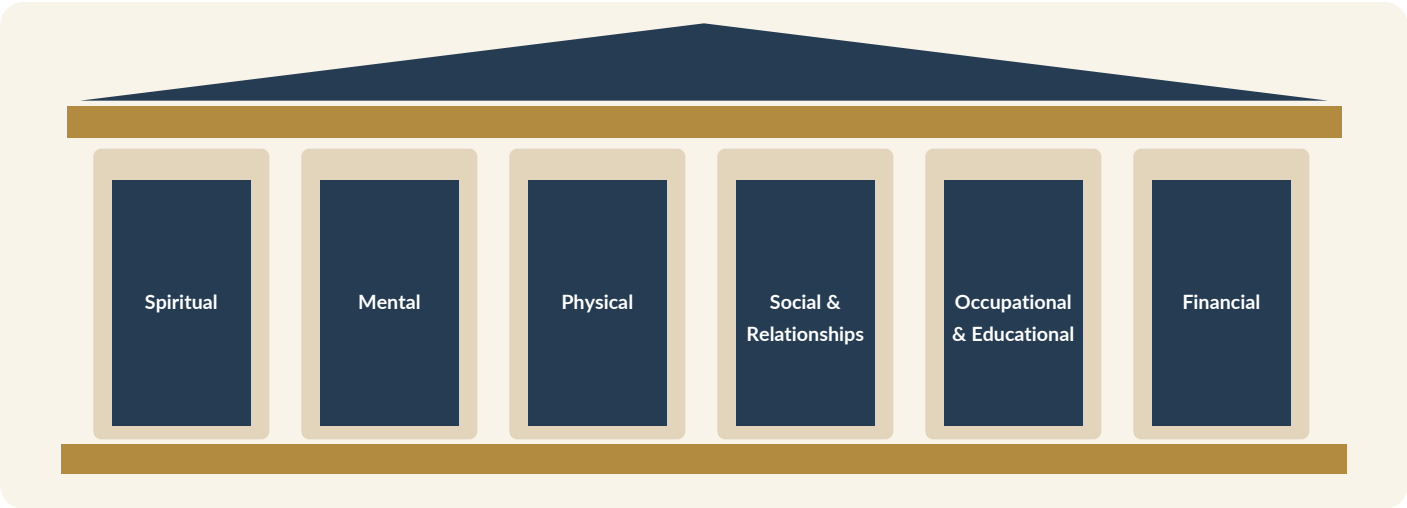
Start where you are, with what you have. Take care of your foundation, and your foundation will take care of you.

Be blessed,
Cynthia Philpot aka CyPhi (sounds like Sci-Fi)

The Six Pillars of Your Foundation

Building a life of balance and purpose

Imagine your life as a building: a strong foundation supports every pillar. When one area is strained, the others may feel the pressure too. Financial instability, for example, can affect our stress, relationships, health, and opportunities.



Spiritual — Matthew 6:33 Seek purpose and direction through faith.

Mental — Romans 12:2 Nurture your thoughts, emotions, and learning.

Physical — 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 Care for your body and well-being.

Social & Relationships — Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 Build meaningful connections and support.

Occupational & Educational — Colossians 3:23 Grow through work, service, and learning.

Financial — Matthew 25:14–30 Steward resources with intention and wisdom.

Our three takeaways: Know Your Foundation · Find Your Tools · Strengthen Your Foundation

Reflect: Which pillar needs the most attention in this season? What is one step you could take?

Inspired by Dr. Bill Hettler's Six Dimensions of Wellness and Dr. Peggy Swarbrick's Eight Dimensions of Wellness; adapted here with a faith-centered perspective.

Know Your Foundation

Takeaway 1: Understand your relationship with money

Our money habits are shaped by our upbringing, experiences, and beliefs. Understanding that history can help us make different choices going forward.

A Little of My Story

My father grew up in a structured household. I remember watching him sit at his desk and write checks, and I learned from him about hard work and responsibility. My mother's upbringing was financially challenging. When she began to make money, she spent freely and shared generously. Both influenced how I viewed money.

As a young wife and mother, I faced financial struggles. While my husband was stationed in Iraq, I returned home from work one day with our three children to find the electricity and water disconnected. I remember lying in the dark, exhausted by the bills and the worry.

This was my "lights out" moment.

My circumstances didn't change overnight. But my determination to change them did.

Your Moment to Reflect

1. How have your upbringing, experiences, or beliefs shaped your relationship with money?

2. Have you experienced a moment when you knew your financial habits needed to change? If not, what is motivating you to make changes today?

Find Your Tools

Takeaway 2: Create a plan that works for you

Plan your work, and work your plan. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Your system might be a notebook, a spreadsheet, an app, or your online banking tools. The best tool is the one you understand, will actually use, and can stick with.

I began by listing my debts and obligations in a notebook. Later, a spreadsheet and online calculator gave me a payoff DATE—a finish line I could work toward. But the calculator didn't pay those bills. Consistency, choices, and sacrifices did.

I also learned why saving matters. When I was laid off in 2017, I was unprepared. By the time another layoff came in 2020, I had saved about four months of income. This didn't make losing my job easier, but it provided some breathing room.

Two Ways to Tackle Debt

Debt snowball: Focus extra payments on the smallest balance first while paying minimums on the others. Small wins can build momentum.

Debt avalanche: Focus extra payments on the highest interest rate first while paying minimums on the others. This can reduce interest costs.

Tools You Can Explore

- Notebook or spreadsheet — simple, flexible, and inexpensive
- Debt payoff calculator — undebt.it
- Debt calculator — ramseysolutions.com/debt/debt-calculator
- Budgeting apps — YNAB or Monarch Money (subscription options)
- Savings goals — smartypig.com
- Financial education — consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/

Your Moment to Reflect

What's one small change you could make to strengthen your financial foundation?

My Creditor Inventory

Know what you owe

Gather your statements and list your debts in one place. Awareness is not judgment—it's the first step toward a plan. Do not include full account numbers or other sensitive information.

Creditor / Account	Balance	APR	Minimum	Due Date

Total Outstanding Debt: $ _____

Total Monthly Minimum Payments: $ _____

Look for Patterns

- Which debt has the smallest balance?
- Which debt has the highest interest rate?
- Are any accounts overdue?
- How do you feel seeing your obligations written down in one place?

Need more space? Grab a notebook or print another copy of this page.

My Monthly Cash Flow

Know what's coming in and what's going out

Give every dollar a purpose. Estimate a typical month, then adjust using your actual numbers.

INCOME (A)

Primary income	
Additional household income	
Other income	
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME (A)	

FIXED EXPENSES (B)

Housing	
Vehicle payments	
Insurance	
Phone / internet	
Minimum debt payments	
Other fixed expenses	
TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES (B)	

VARIABLE EXPENSES (C)

Groceries	
Utilities	
Transportation	
Dining / entertainment	
Personal care / shopping	
Other variable expenses	
TOTAL VARIABLE EXPENSES (C)	

SAVINGS & IRREGULAR EXPENSES (D)

Emergency savings	
Holidays / birthdays / travel	
Car maintenance / annual bills	
Other savings / irregular costs	
TOTAL SAVINGS & IRREGULAR (D)	

MONEY REMAINING = A − (B + C + D): $ _____

CyPhi's Tip: Check your spending weekly so you can adjust before the month is over. A budget is a tool you revisit as life happens.

My Debt Payoff & Savings Action Plan

Take what you've learned and put it into action

A payoff calculator gave me a finish line, but I still had to do the work. Use this page to choose a first step and make room for both debt reduction and savings.

My Debt Payoff Strategy

Snowball (smallest balance) Avalanche (highest APR) Not sure yet

My first focus debt: _____

Current balance: _____

Minimum monthly payment: _____

Extra amount I can pay each month: _____

Estimated payoff date: _____

Explore a payoff schedule at undebt.it. Keep paying required minimums on other debts.

My Savings Goal

What I'm saving for: _____

Amount I want to save: _____

Amount I have saved: _____

Amount I can set aside each payday: _____

Target date: _____

Consider a separate savings goal or bucket. Explore smartypig.com.

How I Will Use My Available Cash

Extra debt payments: _____

Savings: _____

Other priorities: _____

One Step I Will Take This Week

_____

Date I will take this step: _____

Strengthen Your Foundation

Takeaway 3: Build financial freedom with purpose

Financial freedom isn't just about what we accumulate. It's about what we're able to do with what we've been given.

For me, financial freedom means peace, being prepared for unexpected challenges, and having opportunities without debt controlling every decision. But most of all, it means being able to give.

Living in the Overflow

One Sunday, a visiting pastor placed an empty 12-ounce cup inside a bowl and poured water into it from a 16-ounce bottle. She explained that the water represented God pouring His love, salvation, blessings, and forgiveness into our lives. The cup filled, and water overflowed into the bowl.

"This overflow is what we use to bless others."

My Cup Runneth Over

Psalm 23:5

That illustration stayed with me. What God blesses me with isn't just for me; it's an opportunity to bless somebody else. And I joke that my last name is Philpot for a reason—because my cup runneth over!

You don't have to be wealthy to be generous. You can give time, share knowledge, encourage someone, or help meet a need when you are able. Generosity is about how we use what we have.

Your Moment to Reflect

1. What does financial freedom look like for you?

2. What could greater financial stability allow you to do?

3. How can you bless or encourage someone with what you have today?

Start where you are, with what you have.

Your Next Step Starts Here

A commitment to your financial foundation

You have reflected on your story, explored tools, and pictured what financial freedom means to you. You do not have to change everything today. Choose one meaningful next step and keep moving.

My Commitment to Myself

One money habit I want to change:

One action I will take in the next seven days:

My target date:

Someone who can encourage or support me:

A Final Word of Encouragement

It's important for me to wear comfortable, stable shoes that support my feet. They don't remove every challenge, but they help me keep moving forward and doing the things I enjoy.

Financial tools work in a similar way. A budget, a list of debts, a savings goal, or a simple notebook will not eliminate every obstacle. But they can help you make decisions with greater clarity and confidence.

Just take the next step. Take care of your foundation, and your foundation will take care of you.

Be blessed,
Cynthia Philpot aka CyPhi (sounds like Sci-Fi)

I AM CyPhi | Learning. Growing. Becoming.
iamcyphi.com/finance

This workbook is for educational purposes and reflects personal experience. It is not individualized financial, tax, or legal advice.