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The Importance of a Trellis

*When you gather the grapes of your vineyard,
do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien,
the orphan, and the widow.*

Deuteronomy 24:21

A few years back, a group of us gathered in the wine country of Northern California to celebrate the thirtieth birthday of a dear friend's youngest daughter. It was a memory-making, enlightening, and grand celebration.

One afternoon, as we were walking through a vineyard and were surrounded by lush, green, healthy vines, I realized my technical knowledge of how grapes are grown was surprisingly and embarrassingly limited. The aha was that only some vines would bear fruit . . . others would not; vines growing along banks of the hills along the trail, as gorgeous as they were, would not bear fruit, while those with the support of a trellis have the opportunity to be quite fruitful.

*What are the pieces I
need to build my trellis
to produce this fruit?*

All the vines had the same environment: cool nights, rich soil, proper watering, pruning, and sun—yet without a trellis, no fruit. A trellis is essential to support and guide growth, allow air to circulate, and most importantly to expose the vine to full sunlight . . . and yes, this also relates to finances.

Practices such as budgeting, financial planning, saving, patience, dialogue, and wise investing provide the cool nights, rich soil, watering, and pruning, while thoughtful development of core values, awareness of passion, vision, a Rule of Life, and openness to change provide a flexible trellis.


*A trellis is essential
to support and guide
growth.*

A trellis for a vineyard requires a series of wires, braces, and wooden posts. The structure, although adaptable over time and changing conditions, must have longevity, including the ability to withstand harsh

weather, brutal wind, and long periods of heat. The structure needs to be deeply anchored in the ground so as not to topple with every slight shift in the soil.

Components for your financial trellis—the wires, braces, and posts that support your financial picture—are a result of reflection on and discernment of your priorities.

Ask yourself along with significant others in your life, “What is the fruit I wish my handling of finance matters could produce?” “What are the pieces I need to build my trellis to produce this fruit . . . what light and air and grace and hope and love can I weave together to bring it forth?” Form this discernment into a group of core values

and spiritual practices, then weave them in your Rule of Life to guide you in showing forth God's light and *ruach*—wind, spirit, and breath. In other words, fruitful financial planning is a matter of both heart and mind, practical and conceptual—both/and not either/or. 



Reflection Questions

- 1** Read Deuteronomy 24:19–22. Much of this fifth book of the Hebrew Scriptures aims to provide the framework for a covenant between Israel and God. It invites God’s people to have an awareness of the obligations each individual has toward God and one another. What does this passage mean to you in the context of your life today?

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4 What are your core values and how can you apply them to your financial planning?

