

Trust God to live debt-free life, Millersville author says

Get a divorce.

That's the advice a marriage counselor gave Patrick and Leslee Brady in the early 1980s when the young couple sought help. The counselor rarely recommended such a drastic measure, but she saw no chance of reconciliation for the bickering couple. She even called it a "big mistake" for the Bradys to have married in the first place.

After a silent car ride home, Patrick and Leslee dismissed their counselor's advice. They spent a lot of time talking to one another about the root of their problem. Then they prayed to God for guidance.

"We realized that everything that was wrong with our marriage was related to the fact that we bought a house we couldn't afford," remembered Patrick, a religion teacher at Archbishop Spalding High School in Severn.

The parishioner of Our Lady of the Fields in Millersville said buying a house with an out-of-reach mortgage led to other debts, including consumer loans and credit card balances of nearly \$30,000. On top of that, the Bradys had two car loans.

"It brought us into a downward spiral that put us so desperately in debt that it affected every aspect of our lives," Patrick said. "We were living a lifestyle well above our means."

In a new book called "Walk Confidently with God: A Practical Guide to Living a Debt-Free and Stress-Free Life," Patrick details how he and his wife found their way out of their quagmire. He offers practical financial advice and places a strong emphasis on trusting God for security.

"After we hit our knees in prayer, our first step in getting out of debt was giving money away," said Patrick, a Naval Academy graduate and former academy instructor. At a friend's suggestion, the Bradys began tithing as a demonstration of their total trust in God.

“We decided that it was God’s money to begin with,” he said.

Through prayer and tithing, the Bradys’ mindset changed. They became uninterested in keeping up appearances and more focused on their spirituality, Patrick said.

“Once we recognized and felt God in our lives,” he said, “getting past the toys was not difficult at all.”

Within eight years, the Brady family was completely debt-free. Patrick went on to help build FTI Consulting from a start-up venture into a multi-billion-dollar publicly traded company.

In his book, the author said a key part of getting out of debt is analyzing where the money is going. Then one must stop the bleeding by cutting expenses. He advises that the money saved from reduced spending be used to pay down debts – beginning with the smallest debt and then gradually moving up to the bigger ones. His book provides step-by-step guides for money management. On his Web site, www.patrickabrady.com, the author also provides tools that can be downloaded to track daily spending and develop a budget. The site additionally features short videos discussing the money-management techniques outlined in the book.

Twenty-five percent of the proceeds from the book will be used to help pay for the construction and operation of a new school in St. Marc, Haiti, within Baltimore’s sister Diocese of Gonaives.

“I’m not a guy who sweats it anymore because I trust God,” said Patrick, who gives parish presentations based on his book. “Once you know God’s got your back, you have confidence it’s going to be OK.”

Visit www.patrickabrady.com to order the book or contact the author.