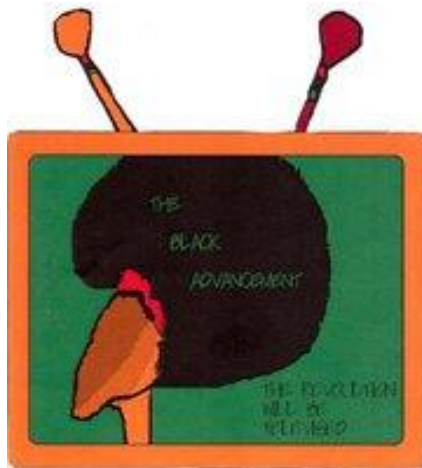


**Black Advancement Inc.**

**Presents:**

The  
Credit  
Commandments



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

October 1, 2016

## **FOREWORD**

### **BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE**

To all who have decided to take this pamphlet or read it online, the biggest take away from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of The Credit Commandments is if you believe you can achieve. Success is predicated on will power and the ability to do what must be done. Financial discipline is something that takes time to do but can be done.

By maintaining discipline and believing you can achieve your goals, you will not only be able to get out of debt, you will be able to stay out of debt. This is not rocket science and none of these techniques are new, they are just forgotten. Somewhere along the way we forgot how to sacrifice for what we wanted, how to make do, and how to depend on ourselves. The hope of this Credit Commandments pamphlet is to simply remind you of what you can accomplish when you have a plan. To quote legendary head coach and commentator Herman Edwards, “A dream is a goal without a plan,” so develop a plan and stick with it while remaining flexible to what life brings you.

If you find this program to be helpful, you are obligated to share it. Our biggest problem as human beings is that we fail to help others as someone once helped us. Share this information, it may save someone’s life, or at least their life savings.

Peace and all people - Advance!!!

**Agyemang Asante Goodman**

**President of Black Advancement Inc.**

# THE CREDIT COMMANDMENTS

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## **I. B.I.B.L.E. (Before Investing Balance Living Expectations)**

Always, always make a plan and try your best to stick to it. This is the first and greatest commandment. For all people, especially people who are married, it is extremely important to have a financial plan when it comes to your future. How much do you want to save for your children's college fund? What type of house do you want to live in? What do you want for yourself? Do you want to fully retire by the time you are 65? These are just some of the many question that you must ask yourself in order to know how much money you will need to set aside going forward. Make your plans and goals achievable and list them with realistic timelines and expectations. By doing this you will force yourself into taking a serious look at your habits.

### **EXAMPLE:**

Here are some questions to help you get started with your B.I.B.L.E.

- 1) I want to retire by age \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- 2) I want to have a million dollars in my retirement fund by the time I am \_\_\_ \_\_\_ years old
- 3) I want to save \$ \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_, \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ for my children's education by \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- 4) I want to own a condominium, house, apartment, townhouse by \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- 5) I want a (new or used) vehicle by \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_
- 6) I want to take a vacation every \_\_\_ years/months

The Six Month Nest – In cases of an emergency, such as being furloughed/laid off or a medical crisis for you or someone in your family, ideally you would want to save upwards of six months of all your expenses. This will afford:

1. The time to be able to look for new employment

2. Help pay for one's responsibilities without the immediacy of being strapped for cash.

By doing the math on your expenses and based on your standard of living, you should be able to have a good estimate on how much is needed to float you during this difficult time period. Do not be discouraged at the amount, instead focus on what you can do with the larger goal in mind.

**DID YOU KNOW:**

- The younger you are the cheaper your life insurance costs will be.

## II. NEVER DENY THY OWN SUPPLY

You are your biggest investment/asset. Consider the following:

**Checking Account** – Open a checking account. Try to avoid any banks that charge you for having less than a certain amount in your account (i.e. maintain a balance of at least \$100 dollars in your checking account or pay a penalty). If you cannot find a bank that meets this requirement, join a credit union.

**Pay Yourself First** – Every time that you get paid you should make it a point to pay yourself 10% of that payment. Remember, you cannot lose money if you invest in yourself.

**EXAMPLE:**

If your Paycheck = \$1,000 you give yourself \$100.00 (through 401K, Thrift Savings Program (TSP), or your own Savings Account)

Like any major change in your life such as eating differently or starting to workout, it will hurt at first. You will feel the effects of having less money in your pocket. If you don't have access to a 401K or a TSP, we suggest you automatically deposit your 10% into a savings account. This will help you adjust to your new totals by tricking your mind into believing this is how much you actually make. This 10% can be used to support a variety of situations such as:

- 1) Emergency fund
- 2) Vacations
- 3) Down payments (car/house)
- 4) Long Term Debts (college loans)
- 5) Unemployment Back-Up

**Savings Account** – If you have money coming into your checking account on a recurring basis you should get a

savings account and have an appropriate amount (10% if possible) automatically deposited to your savings account (If possible you should have more than one savings account).

Automatic Deposit –Use automatic deposit. Most employers have this available. This will make it easier for you to keep track of your money and you will never have to worry about losing your check!!!

Pre-Tax Payments – Work programs such as 401K and TSP take money out of your paycheck before taxes are taken out. If maintained and managed this can help you retire comfortably, however if you take money out of these programs prematurely you will be penalized and back taxes will be taken out of that amount.

Pay in Cash - Opt to make cash payments whenever possible; try not to take on unnecessary debt; and set your parameters and stick to them!

### III. KNOW THY LIMITS

There is only one thing worse than wanting what you can't afford - buying it. In order for you to truly be debt free, you must know what you can and cannot afford. Set limits on big purchase items and have a plan on how to pay for them.

EXAMPLE:

If your monthly Paychecks = \$4,000 and you want a new car that cost \$800 a month you will pay 20% of your total income to that one item.

Understanding the true value of something will help you decipher what you can and cannot afford each month. If you need the latest cell phone with all the apps that come with it, and it can substitute for several other things such as a laptop, television/cable bill and house phone (landline), then the value of that phone is justifiable to you. However, if you decide to purchase a new vehicle 'just for show' when you drive to a job that is maybe 5 or less miles away from your residence, then that is not reasonable. There are plenty of ways to stop over indulging like:

- 1) Buying used or refurbished electrical items (laptop) oppose to new ones
- 2) Buying clothes from the thrift store oppose to new ones
- 3) Buying a used, more fuel efficient car as opposed to a 20xx

The following table lays out a notional budget for a \$4000.00 monthly income:



<b>Using \$4000.00 a Month Income</b>	<b>Rules of Thumb on Funds Distributions per Month</b>
<b>\$1120.00</b>	<b>Home = 28%</b>
<b>\$400.00</b>	<b>Home Maintenance/Utility = 10%</b>
<b>\$400.00</b>	<b>Savings = 10%</b>
<b>\$800.00</b>	<b>Car / Transportation + Gas = 20%</b>
<b>\$680.00</b>	<b>Food + Entertainment (including Cable) = 17%</b>
<b>\$400.00</b>	<b>Church/Charity = 10%</b>
<b>\$200.00</b>	<b>Telephone/Cell = 5%</b>

Small Steps – If you have a hobby that you refuse to give up on like collecting movies or buying new shoes every year for your recreational sports league, try to get these items as cheap as possible. For instances, get shoes for the grip as opposed to style, or buy used DVD's in good condition. I guarantee you will save upwards to \$20 or more. Remember it is not about not having things, it's about not having things at all cost.

Set A Weekly Budget Meeting With Yourself – Every week at a set time review your finances to make sure you are still on track.

Avoid Impulse Buying – When shopping make a list of the items you need to buy, not want but need. By sticking to the list you will avoid the dreaded impulse buy, which will only steep you in further debt.

Store Cards – Becoming a member of a grocery store chain can literally save you tens of hundreds of dollars over time. Some of these grocery store chains also may offer other financial benefits such as money off of gas.

Coupons – Couponing is another way to save big money. This can apply not only to groceries but also restaurants, oil changes, and even more.

## **IV. THOU SHALT PAY THY BILLS (On Time)**

Paying your bills on time is the best way to build up your credit score and to stay out of debt. This is the most troublesome of all the Commandments. The first thing you should do is to determine what you really need and what you don't need. This can help cut into the amount you spend on bills. Do you really need the television package with all 996 channels? Do you really need the latest cell phone when your other one is still supplying all your needs? Do you really need the 20XX luxury sedan or hybrid or SUV? [you get the picture] These are questions that you should keep in mind when it comes to paying bills and the amount you want to pay. When paying the recurring big bills such as the mortgage, car payments, or college loans your aim should be to pay them off early. This can be achieved by doing two simple things:

- 1) Try to pay more than the minimum payment due
- 2) If it's a fixed bill (the same amount every month such as a car bill) pay more than the amount specified in the statement, if you can:

Account Number:	1234-6789-1235-10112
<b>New Balance</b>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>
<b>Minimum Payment Due</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>
Payment Due Date	01/01/2soon
Amount Enclosed	\$ _____ . _____

### **DID YOU KNOW:**

- Your car value depreciates up to 20% as soon as you drive it off the lot

- You can negotiate your rates for your credit cards by working with the credit card company
- If you pay in excess of the base amount on fixed bills even \$5 you could save \$100's over time. By "over paying" you pay off the interest on your loans quicker. Also "over paying" some bills such as your energy or gas bill, can leave you a credit and if sustained overtime, you can build a big enough credit for the bill to pay itself.
- You can set up an automatic bill payment for most of your bills. Companies are trying to cut cost and are willing to make online services available to all their customers. Be aware that setting up an automatic payment may take away your ability to adjust the time in which you pay, making it harder if unexpected expenses pop up.
- If you have a fixed bill, such as a car payment, you may be able to shift a month of payments if you are unable to pay a particular month. This month could be tacked on the end of your debt calendar pushing back the end date of the loan by a month. Please contact any or all of your fixed bills payments to see if this option applies for you.
- Avoid Payday Loans at all cost! Outside of being outlawed in 18 states and tightly regulated in 19 more (including the District of Columbia). Payday loan companies are known to have high interest rates, hidden fees, and aggressive lending and collection practices.

## **V. AND IT WAS WRITTEN ...DOWN**

In order to understand how you can get out of debt, and stay out of debt, you must know your expenditures for a given month. If your bills total more than your paycheck(s) you have big problems, but for the sake of argument let's say that you have money left over. What do you spend it on? Where does your money go? Write it down and there will be no doubt. Although you can keep track of this by having an online account with your bank or by writing your purchases down on a random piece of paper, we recommend a checkbook ledger. Even if you pay for most of your goods online (bills, DVD's, etc.) you can overdraw from your account, which can lead to some serious penalties.

**EXAMPLE:**

<b>DATE / CHECK #</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DEDUCTION/DEPOSIT +/-</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>
<b>3 Jan - #2085</b>	<b>Cell Phone Bill</b>	<b>- \$100</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>4 Jan</b>	<b>Coach</b>	<b>- \$200</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>6 Jan</b>	<b>Clothes</b>	<b>- \$75</b>	<b>\$125</b>
<b>7 Jan</b>	<b>Club LIV</b>	<b>-\$110</b>	<b>\$15</b>

Online Banking – Online Banking can be especially helpful when it comes to checking your balance, spotting miscellaneous fees, and quick transfers of cash from one account to another. However, it is very important to understand that if you pay your bills via mail, that the deductions will not appear in your online statement until the company has cashed the check. If you are not cautious and do not keep track of your own spending, you can find yourself in debt because you trusted the computer rather than your receipts.

Receipts – One way to know exactly where your money goes is to keep all of your receipts until you record them. Keeping

your receipts in your wallet or your purse will force you to sit down and go through and record them before you throw them away. This, will not only remind you of what you are spending money on, it will serve as an example of how often you spend money.

- If you recognize that you spend a majority of your money on one item such as shoes, clothes, cigarettes, etc. you can save by simply buying one less pack a week, or one less pair of shoes a month. Small steps can make a big difference!!!

## **VI. DO IT THYSELF**

Although there are many ways you can cut your spending, one of the most overlooked is the ability to fix, prepare, or even create things for yourself. Being able to change your own oil (car permitting) or grow your own vegetables can go a long way. Doing things by yourself can provide entertainment for the family that is not only productive but also fulfilling. The more things you know how to fix or make yourself--the better.

- Things You Can Make/Grow For Under \$10

- 1) Tomatoes
- 2) Basil
- 3) Peppers
- 4) Baby Food
- 5) Bread
- 6) Soap (at least the book)

- Things You Can Fix Up Yourself That Cost More Than \$50

- 1) Toilet/Commode
- 2) Clothes (Sewing)
- 3) Sink
- 4) Painting
- 5) Furniture
- 6) Hair (Women & Men)

By doing or growing things for yourself you not only save money, you also get the added bonus of knowing where your food comes from and possibly eating a little healthier. This is just one step on the path to self-reliance and independence.

Packing Your Lunch – Its' not the sexy thing to do but bringing in your food from home can save you a decent amount of money overtime oppose to going out with colleagues or eating at the work cafeteria.

Crockpot Meals – If you want a meal that will last you a long time, requires just some preparation, and taste good for days, you should invest in a crockpot. Crockpot meals can sustain you and your family for days and usually require limited ingredients. With the assistance of online recipes, you can cook a big meal at a smaller price.

## ***VII. LOVE THY NEIGHBOR***

It has occurred to all of us that in order to pay bills you have to have money in the first place. We know and understand that times are tough and in some cases after you get paid, if you have a job, you may be out of money before the next payday. For this reason alone, the seventh commandment is one of the most important, “love thy neighbor.” By acting like a true community, you can help each other pull through some of the tough times. One example is to cook one large meal for the week and have your neighbor/friend do the same (meatloaf, spaghetti, etc.) and exchange dishes throughout the week. This will not only save you money while helping out each other, it will also allow you and your family to enjoy your mama’s famous spaghetti a little bit longer. Other ideas that can help your neighbor include:

- 1) Throwing rent/ mortgage parties
- 2) Giving used clothes away (especially baby clothes)
- 3) Carpooling when practicable
- 4) Planting a Community Garden
- 5) Watching each other’s children
- 6) Swap Parties (a party exchanging older nice items with another guest)

Bartering Services – By bartering services you are actually exchanging skills instead of paying for others.

**EXAMPLE:**

If you help cater my rent party, I will help paint your living room.



## ***VIII. USE CREDIT WHEN CREDIT WILL DO***

Credit cards are a necessary evil. They can save you from starving and at the same time bankrupt you and keep you in debt for years and years. In order to make credit cards work for you, you must understand how to use them properly. Suggestions include:

- Have a Maximum of Two Credit Cards Per Person (3 per household) – You don't want to have too many credit cards because it creates the opportunity for you to spend yourself into a hole.
- Keep Your Credit Card Out of Reach – Try to make it a habit to not carry your credit card with you at all times. It may be a good idea to only carry it on the weekends or when you are going to buy a certain item. This will help decrease the urge to buy based on impulse rather than need. It will also help you keep down the total on your monthly payments for your credit card.
- Don't Use Your Credit Card to Pay Other Bills – To use your credit card to pay off another bill is merely delaying the payment and increasing the payment on your credit card, making the credit card less manageable and payments more expensive.
- Try to Pay More Than The Minimum – As shown in the Commandment III, if you pay the minimum on any bill you will not only compound your debt, but you will make it virtually impossible to ever get your balance to zero (especially with credit cards).

EXAMPLE:

<b>Payment Information</b>		
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$13,249.86</b>
<b>Minimum Payment Due</b>		<b>\$ 289.00</b>
<b>Payment Due Date</b>		<b>2/soon/20xx</b>
<b>Minimum Payment Warning:</b>		
If you make only the minimum payment each period, you will pay more in interest and it will take you longer to pay off your balance. For example:		
If you make no additional charges using this card each month you pay...	You will pay off the balance shown on this statement in about...	And you will end up paying an estimated total of...
Only the minimum payment	<b>26 Years</b>	<b>\$28,094.00</b>
<b>\$454.00</b>	<b>3 Years</b>	<b>\$16,356.00</b> <b>(Savings = \$11,378.00)</b>

- **Build Credit By Having Manageable Monthly Payment** – Use your credit card to buy little things to help build up credit and get your credit score up. By limiting your purchases to items under a certain amount you will be able to better manage monthly payments.
- **Be Able to Pay Over Time** – Make sure that you get a credit card opposed to a charge card (such as an American Express). Credit cards are flexible and can be paid off over several months in small chunks. By paying whatever amount you can afford you free up money to pay off other obligations.

### EXAMPLE:

If your Paycheck = \$1,000 and your Credit Card Balance = \$500 and the rest of your obligations = \$900, you can pay \$100 against the credit card balance. However, if you use a Charge Card that has a \$500.00 balance, the entire \$500.00 is due at the scheduled payment time.

- Beware of the APR –When applying for a credit card, be sure to know the APR percentage and, if applicable, when it begins.

### DID YOU KNOW:

- The more credit cards you have the higher your credit score could be because you have access to more money. (How backwards is that)
- You have to pay off charge cards every month, unless you pay a monthly fee to be able to pay a little less.
- Some credit cards have rewards connected to them you can utilize to get everything from free nights in a hotel to gift cards. These rewards are earned by paying on your credit card. Check to see if this applies to any cards you possess.
- If you have two credit cards and you want to get rid of both of them in favor of getting one card with a higher credit line you can consolidate your credit cards and transfer the balance of the two cards on to your new one. This can not only give you more credit, it can also help your payments if the card you consolidate to has a lower APR. You can consolidate your credit cards and possibly lower your interest rate.

## ***IX. WISDOM IS BETTER THAN SILVER AND COLLEGE LOANS***

Current students will be, future should be, and former students are, aware of the debt that a higher education can cost. College debt can easily become one of the major and compelling financial issues for people ages 22-45 years old. It is true that the higher your education the more you earn. This statistic is often trotted out to validate college as worth the debt. Conversely, paying back that validation can take time and money you may not be able to afford to give. There are ways to get a higher education and not have to pay for it for up to a decade after you get your diploma. Here are some suggestions:

- **Consider Starting At A Community College:** Community colleges cost less, have smaller classes, and have transferable credits to a 4 year University
- **Online Courses:** Most schools now offer many of their courses online including top schools such as Stanford and Harvard. This can cut into the cost of your overall tuition.
- **Apply For Scholarships Early & Often:** The more you look for scholarships the more scholarships you will find. Find out the details of them and work towards them
- **Apply For College in Another Country:** The cost of college can be significantly lower in other countries depending on what you study. However, outside of the Oxford's of the world, you can get a quality education at decent price even factoring in living expenses and the international student fees. This is an especially good idea for post graduate school.
- **Go For The Best Fit Not The Best Name:** Every overachiever wants to go to the prestigious, world renowned, #1 ranked school. However, these schools are

incredibly expensive, and may not be meant for every baby genius. Find a school that gives you the most for your money and fits you as a person.

- **For-Profit Options:** There have been mixed returns when it comes to For-Profit schooling. The beneficiary seems to be more often the school instead of the student, such as “Trump University.” Yet, working professionals have earned degrees that have helped boost resumes and in conjunction may have helped them get a promotion.
- **Work Before College:** I know and understand that it is incredibly difficult to leave academia and return. Still, if the child is not ready to attend, but may not be ready academically or socially it may be better for him/her to work and take a year to grow. This can also help financially by allowing more time to save money by getting a job and putting money away for college. This real world experience may focus a student on their goals when they are ready to attend school.
- **Trade School:** Not everyone is meant for the traditional routes of education. If you recognize that you are more interested in cars than calculus there is nothing wrong with going to a trade school. Remember, everyone needs to get around, wear shoes and clothes, and need a plumber at some point.
- **Military Service:** The United States Armed Forces is one of the best institutions in the world. Not only will it help pay for college, it will also open up several different career paths, and is one of the best creators of leaders in the world.

## ***X. LOVE THY HABITAT (the place where thy honor dwelleth)***

It has long been said the “American Dream” is to own your own house. This dream has become a nightmare. Presently, people are unable to pay their mortgage, or unable to sell their homes because they are ‘underwater’. Yes, we are living in tough times when it comes to the housing market, however, you don’t have to settle, even in a house you are currently in.

Pre Buy – Before you decide to buy a house, you should first list what you want. Because of the times we live in, it is better to buy what you want. Is it important to you to have a whirlpool, 3 bedrooms, no stairs, a washer and dryer, and a school close by? If so, put these items and others like it on your list. After you make the list of what you want, find the price range that you can afford (Not a house you think you can afford, a house you know you can afford). Your list will crystallize and make sense and maybe that whirlpool isn’t a number one item but an accessory. After this you want to research what type of deal you can afford, 30 year fixed or 15 year fixed? Due to the current market, you should try to find a house you can grow into, especially couples, and not a house you can grow out of.

Post Buy – After buying your home, understand it is a long-term investment and not a short turnaround for profit. Invest in your home and make it the house you want. Increase the value of your home by upgrading items such as the flooring, kitchen cabinets, or bathrooms. Buying a house doesn’t mean you only have to own and live in that specific house. If you put the work into your current house, you can rent it out to others who need a place to stay and perhaps move into a home that you feel fits your new needs.

- Bi Weekly Program – If you want to pay off your house quicker and have more money in between paychecks, try to sign up for the Bi-Weekly Payment Program. On a 30-year mortgage, you could pay your mortgage off years earlier.

(You must be approved by whoever your loaner is for the Bi-Weekly Payment Program)

**EXAMPLE:**

Monthly Payment Program - \$1000.00 per month mortgage (12 payments per year)

Bi Weekly Program -\$500.00 every two weeks. This allows you to make 26 payments in a year which equates to an extra mortgage payment each year. On a 30 year fix-rate mortgage, the home will be paid off in 23 years rather than 30 years.

**DID YOU KNOW:**

- When you own your home you are responsible for everything and I mean everything that goes wrong in there. If you have any handy friends that like to help out keep their number on speed dial
- USDA Loan Program – The USDA program is a Government program you can use to help afford a home with low rates and low to no down payment. Although the loan was originally for “Rural Housing” many suburban housing areas are also eligible. You are eligible if for the USDA you have decent credit and a household income for 1-4 members less than \$74,750 or a household with 5-8 members up to \$98,650.
- HARP Program – If you have remained current on your mortgage and you want to refinance despite having little to no equity in your home this is the program for you. Through HARP, you can lower interest rate, get shorter loan terms, or change from an adjustable to fixed-rate mortgage. To take advantage of this program you must have a loan from Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. This program will end by September 30 2017. For more information on HARP go to <http://www.harp.gov> .

## ***XI. GOD BLESS THY CHILD THAT'S GOT THOU OWN***

For all the people who have children, or one day hope to have some, remember this commandment and keep it close. Involve your child in financial discussions. The more that your child/children is/are informed and exposed to finances the better they will handle their own finances. This type of honesty with your children will better prepare them in their transition into managing monetary affairs of their own, such as saving for college or understanding how to deal with rising gas costs. The more the child sees and understands the more likely he/she will act more responsibly in matters of finance. Use these times to teach the next generation about money:

- 1) When you are paying bills (tell them what you are doing and why)
- 2) During family meetings
- 3) While shopping for any big ticket item (vehicle, home appliance, etc.)
- 4) When the children/child want a car
- 5) When discussing allowance

Encourage your child to think big. There are children who have bought and invested in properties, started their own businesses, and made enough money working to pay for their own college.



## ***XII. RENDER UNTO CEASAR***

The biggest payday for a majority of us is the day our tax returns come back from State and Federal Government from the past year. Depending on your family income and deductions, a family could receive a substantial amount of money a one time. If used properly, this money could be used throughout the year to rid yourself/your family of some lingering financial problems and help your long term aspirations of financial freedom.

Here are some things you could do with your tax returns:

1. Put money into your child(rens) college fund
2. Pay down or off your credit card, your vehicle, or your medical bills
3. Repair your vehicle or things in your house

By breaking down your needs into a list you can section off your return to go towards specific items.

<b>Money Allotted (\$10,000.00)</b>	<b>What The Money Is For</b>
<b>\$3500.00</b>	<b>Child(rens) College Fund = 35%</b>
<b>\$1000.00</b>	<b>Car Repairs = 10%</b>
<b>\$1000.00</b>	<b>Credit Card Debt = 10%</b>
<b>\$2000.00</b>	<b>Emergency Savings Account = 20%</b>
<b>\$500.00</b>	<b>Additional Bills (Medical) = 5%</b>
<b>\$1000.00</b>	<b>Home Repair = 10%</b>
<b>\$1000.00</b>	<b>Miscellaneous (Anything you want = 10%</b>

### **DID YOU KNOW:**

- By saving \$5,500 a year for child they will have \$100,000 by the time they are 18 years old.
- You can earn deductions by giving to charities, non-profit organizations, or tithing. Understanding times are tough and you may not have the money to give to charity or a

non-profit organizations you can earn these deductions by donating clothes throughout the year to a Goodwill or other charities of that same ilk.

### ***XIII. THROUGH SICKNESS & HEALTH OR LIFE AFTER DEATH***

Family or personal illness is one of the leading cause of personal bankruptcy and continues to play an enormous role in American politics. The recent health care debates have become even more contentious, specifically after the passage of the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care), and are more than likely to continue moving forward. Although it is not the ideal way to spend saved money, taking into account your health options may save you money in the end when you really need it.

1. Health Savings Account (HSA) – HSA is a tax-advantaged medical savings account available to people enrolled in high-deductible health plan (HDHP). HSA is not subject to federal income tax at the time of deposit and can accumulate year to year if not spent. HSA's are only acquirable through individual ownership rather than through one's employer.
2. Health Insurance Through Your Employer – If you are fortunate enough to have a job but also have health care coverage, get the best you can afford. This money will automatically be deducted from your check and therefore will become money you don't miss.

OR

There are only two certainties in life...death and taxes. Although, taxes were addressed in Commandment XII, this Commandment deals with the other side of that maxim. Death is a silent financial killer, no pun intended. The cost of things such as funerals and plots can run into the five figure range. Preparing plans for your departure is just as important as preparing financial plans during life. Here are some things you could do for your estate planning:

1. Write A Will – By writing a will you ensure all your assets go where you intend them to go. You should get a lawyer or a notary to help you with all the particulars.
2. Buy Life Insurance – If you can afford it, please do you and your family a favor and buy life insurance. This bill is usually quarterly (once every 3 months) and is only good for a contracted period of time. The earlier you get it the lower your cost will be. Another affordable life insurance option would be to purchase Term Life Insurance, which covers a specific time period and cost less.

## ***XIV. ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE***

There is no shame in admitting that you need help. Without the assistance of others none of us would be where we are in any phase of our lives. From owning your own business to working for the “man,” somebody taught us, hired us, recommended us, etc. for us to be here. Financial assistance is no different. You can learn all that you need to know about the system and how to get your money to work for you. Here are some suggestions:

Television/Entertainment – Between television, the Internet, and radio you can get all the free advice that you need on how to invest, manage, and maintain your money. (Be aware of scams – especially with online advice).

Black Advancement Credit Commandments – Yes, this is a shameful self-promotion, however I think that most people would be hard pressed to find as much good information in one place.

Magazines – Such as ‘Money’, ‘Black Enterprise’, ‘Fortune’ and others.

Human Resources Department at Work – Every employer has a HR section which deals directly with benefits afforded to the employees. By utilizing HR, you can better understand your savings and medical coverages.

Checking Your Credit Score – Thanks to the internet, we have more access to more information than ever. This can be a huge benefit when keeping up to date with your credit score. One good and free source for this is [www.freecreditscore.com](http://www.freecreditscore.com).

Financial Advisers At Your Bank – Every bank has a person whose job it is to breakdown some different options that you can use to have your money work for you. Whether it is opening up a savings account, a college fund, or a mutual fund, these bank employees will give you the information that

you want for free (this may not apply with all banks, double check with your specific bank.)

**MAKE SURE YOU:**

- **Go Inside The Bank As Often As Possible:** The better they know you the easier it will be to get good unsolicited advice from them

Although the “Credit Commandments” has been created by Black Advancement Inc., we fully expect everyone who reads this booklet to contribute to it. This is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition and we know that we didn’t capture everything on the first go around. So, if you desire to add to these “Commandments” or have comments on how we can improve upon this booklet or our other programs, please address them to the Black Advancement Inc. website [www.blackadvancement.com](http://www.blackadvancement.com) or email us at [blackadvancement@gmail.com](mailto:blackadvancement@gmail.com).

All People Peace & Advance!!!