

## **Q&A with Ron Willingham, Author of *The Ten Laws of Wealth and Abundance***

**Q: You have written many other books, mostly dealing with sales and professional development. What inspired you to shift your focus to personal finance?**

A: I've been in the professional training and development field since the mid-60's. About 25-30 years ago, as I conducted training courses, I began to notice that more and more people have money problems—sometimes as many as 60% of the employees I was hired to train. These folks couldn't live for 2 months without a paycheck. This reality undoubtedly creates some stress, and that affects their performance at work. In truth, I began this book in the mid 1980's. The circumstances for its publication were not ideal at that time, so I put it on the shelf. But every now and then, usually on a Saturday, I'd pull out the manuscript and rework it, like an artist who couldn't quite put the brush down. When I sold Integrity Systems a few months ago, it felt like the time was right to finish things up. So the wisdom contained in this book is like a good wine—it's been aged for several decades!

**Q: This book really stands apart from other works about wealth. Why did you decide to use a fictional story as the means of communicating these principles?**

A: Well, I really wanted to do something different, to connect these life principles with a concept that would capture people's attention. The truth is that most people already know, for example, that they should spend less than they earn. This is a simple matter of mathematics! Yet possessing this common sense is pointless unless people make the conscious choice to apply it. I shared these laws in story form so that readers can discover the principles in an interesting, memorable way, even as they are picking up some quotable quotes from Old Ben. There are also some people who are intimidated by self-help books that throw around a bunch of high-faluting financial terms. I wanted to package these ten laws in a form that is accessible to everyone.

**Q: How did you dream up the idea of using Ben Franklin as the key character for teaching about wealth and abundance?**

A: I've always been a fan of Ben Franklin, so to speak. About forty years ago I read his autobiography. It's really a fascinating book. When I finished it, I began doing some things differently in my own life. I've always loved the clever sayings from *Poor Richard's Almanac*, and I think most people who know anything about American history would recognize the wisdom and ingenuity of Old Ben. Who better to serve as the mouthpiece for these wise, life-shaping ideas?

Truthfully, though, the story is less about Ben Franklin than about Andrew Baldwin, the young, cash-strapped clerk Ben takes under his wing. If he can practice these laws and develop positive habits, anyone can. It's my hope that the fictional story of Andrew's

rise to wealth and abundance will inspire those who think they could never achieve such things.

**Q: Have you practiced these laws in your own life?**

A: You know, I really have. Most of these ideas are things I have learned the hard way—by making some mistakes and deciding to do things differently. When I first started this book, I wondered if people would question whether I had earned the right to be heard. Forty-two years ago I started a company from scratch. I had no money—in fact, I started out with debt. There have been times in my company’s history when I have, once again, been broke. But I learned meaningful lessons from these hard times. I recently sold that company for several million dollars. I hope that is credential enough!

**Q: If you had to pick one idea from your book as the most important or fundamental concept, which would you choose?**

A: Well, it’s hard to pick just one, but the fundamental idea is definitely this: *You have the power to determine your financial freedom.* We are in control of the choices we make, and generally those choices directly affect the level of financial success that we will enjoy in life. Many people fail to connect the concepts of cause and effect and, consequently, find themselves in needless financial trouble and unable to move forward in a career. That should never be the case, particularly for the Christian.

**Q: What is your greatest hope for this book to accomplish in the lives of its readers? Is the accumulation of wealth the final objective?**

A: I’m glad you asked that question. No, the accumulation of wealth is not the ending point of the book. It’s just the beginning. The final law of wealth and abundance is this: *Increase your wealth by sharing it.* I don’t believe God ever intended anyone to grasp wealth too tightly. And true wealth and abundance means more than just grabbing all the cash you can get. Wealth is measured in ways other than dollars and sense. When we have been wise, made goals, given our employer more than we are paid to, spent less than we earned and chosen to associate with people whose character and accomplishments we admire, the financial rewards that follow will be meaningless if we don’t invest them in the noble works of God. My greatest hope is that people will not only use the ideas of managing money but will also then take those ideas further to examine their values, their life purpose, to think more deeply toward spiritual values. These ten laws are basic wisdom principles, not spiritual promises. But I do believe that we bring glory to God by working hard and by being wise and disciplined stewards of the resources He has allowed us to enjoy. When we have our own finances in line, we are in a much better position to be of financial use for His Kingdom.

**From more information contact Diane Morrow 800.927.1517  
dmorrow@tbbmedia.com.**