

# DO THE MATH

## WHICH INDUSTRY CAN BLACK FOLKS CLAIM FINANCIAL OWNERSHIP OF?

With all that our foreparents gave to build America's wealth, we as a people should be in a more powerful financial position, not sweating out our days on the work-and-spend treadmill, deep in debt.

Even if we're not sinking in debt today, our pensions and social security alone won't sustain us in later years. But opportunity is always knocking; with active faith, we can open the door to prosperity. We can learn from financially independent people. We can learn to count

Make it a mission to employ the magic of compounding, which makes millionaires and is as basic to wealth building as ABCs are to reading and writing. The magic of compound interest is brilliantly illustrated in a story that tells how the emperor of China offered one wish to the inventor of the game of chess. The inventor replied that he wanted one grain of rice on square one of the chessboard, two grains on the second square, four on the third, and so on through square sixty-four. The unsuspecting emperor agreed to this seemingly humble request, but he didn't do the math. Doubling the grains of rice on each square, the final one would require more than 9 quintillion (a nine followed by 18 zeroes) grains—more than all the rice in China.

The power of compounding applied to money over time can help us create the financial future we want. Just saving lunch money—say \$10 a day, equal to \$300 a month—for 40 years would give us \$144,000. But the same investment at 5-percent interest compounded annually over 40 years adds up to \$457,806. Up the interest earned to 10 percent, and we'd end up with \$1,897,224.

Volatility in the financial market demands that we have a diversified wealth-building plan that includes home ownership and a compounding retirement-savings fund. And smartly investing in mutual funds as well as entrepreneurial efforts and real estate—perhaps with a partner—will help us pass along wealth, not debt, to our family. Working closely with a professional financial planner, whose job it is to know investments and count our money with us, not for us, is a must.

Polish, presentation and quality brands are important to sisters. But those who plan to finish rich have awakened from the dream that more is better. They aren't about show; they've defined what enough is, and they save for what they want. They know that above all things, it is God's wish that we prosper, that material wealth is but a reflection of the spiritual riches we must seek first and always.

Develop your own yardstick for what is valuable. Harvest happiness from the exquisite pleasures around you—the ever-changing sky, fresh flowers, the chatter of children at play. Before going to the checkout counter, consider the future and the financial cleavage in the Black community. Stand still for a moment and do the math.

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