Christian Fellowship Center

“Becoming Disciples-Making Disciples”

Godly Wisdom for Managing Money

Welcome

This Seminar on personal finances is intended to be a general introduction to applying Biblical principles in a very practical and concrete way to our everyday Christian walk. The goals of this four-week seminar to equip people to learn and apply God’s financial principles so they may know Christ more intimately, be free from financial bondage to serve Him, and to help bring about the Great Commission. The study is in large part adapted without attribution from How to Manage Your Money by the late Larry Burkett as well as other materials from Crown Financial Ministries. All scripture references are to the New International Version (NIV) unless noted otherwise. Topics include:

- Christian discipleship and personal finances (Session 1).
- Creating a budget: establishing a platform for success (Session 2).
- Getting out of debt and staying out of debt (Session 3).
- Long-term vision for increase (Session 4).

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Godly Wisdom for Managing Money

Session 1: Christian Discipleship and Personal Finances

A. Introduction

1. Where do we live?

The typical person spends 80 percent of his or her waking hours making money, thinking about how to make more money, spending money, thinking about spending money, thinking about how there isn’t enough money, worrying about how to pay bills, and if married, bickering about money. To better understand how we conduct our lives, we must examine ___________________________

Poor stewardship of money and resources is a serious problem among Christians.

- It has been estimated that of the problems faced by Christians, 60 to 80 percent are financial in nature.
- Financial problems are listed as a major reason in a majority of divorces.
- Anecdotal evidence indicates that finances are a major hindrance in Christian witness.

Too long we have pretended that Christians don’t have financial problems. Too often Christians have adopted unscriptural attitudes toward money, believing that spirituality requires a lack of concern with money and financial management.

2. The Lord knows that this is an important part of our lives.

Addressed in Scripture

- Over 2350 verses of Scripture deal directly with finances and money and hundreds more have indirect references.
- 16 parables of Jesus use money or financial management as illustrations.
3. **What has this to do with Christian discipleship?**

   a. What is the slogan of CFC? (Hint: it is on the cover of every Sunday bulletin.)

      \[ \textit{Becoming} \underline{\text{______________}} - \textit{Making} \underline{\text{______________}}. \]

   b. What commandment of God in Scripture is the greatest? (At least according to Jesus in Mark 12:30.)

      \[ \textbf{Deuteronomy 6:5 (AV)} \ And thou shalt love the \textit{LORD thy God} with all thine 
      heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy \textit{might} [NIV: strength]. \]

      How much does God want?

      \underline{______________}

      What is a meaning of \textit{might} or \textit{strength} in this verse?

      \underline{______________________________}

   c. In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus sets out some requirements if we want to be his disciples.

      \[ \textbf{Luke 14:33} \textit{In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.} \]

      Again, how much does God want?

      \underline{______________________________}

   d. God wants to be Lord over \textit{all} of our lives. He wants to be part of \textit{all} of our lives. He doesn’t want us to withhold \textit{anything}.

4. **We want to see** people learn and apply God’s financial principles so they can better trust in God and know Christ more intimately, be free from financial bondage to serve Him, and to be equipped to help bring about the Great Commission. However, these sessions are meant as a general \textit{introduction} to Christian financial management. To really understand these concepts, you will have to study and go through the lessons and scriptures on your own with the help of the Holy Spirit.
B. Wealth and Work


a. Wealth is more than money. It is all that God entrusts to us on this earth.

b. Why work?

   

   "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

   "The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”"

   

   God created us for fellowship with him. Given the above verses, what other purpose was there?

   

   "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”"

   

   What is the reward for work?

   

   Is this reward eternal? _______________ (See 2 Peter 3:11; Matthew 6:19-20)

   

   2 Corinthians 8:9  For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

   Is there an inherent spirituality in being poor? _______________

   

   Proverbs 10:22  The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.

   Proverbs 11:28  Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

   God says wealth is a blessing as long as (1) ____________________________

   and (2) ____________________________.
2. The Christian’s Wealth

a. We all have wealth, that is, resources that God has entrusted to us. Above all else, God is concerned with our attitude. The abundance or lack of money does not affect our relationship with him—only our attitude does.

How can Christians recognize the proper attitude toward wealth when so much false, medieval religious folklore surrounds this area? To understand and accept God’s attitudes we must:

b. Wealth can be a consequence of righteousness and this is not condemned by God.

Proverbs 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.
Proverbs 8:18 With me [Wisdom] are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.
Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Also see Matthew 6:33.

c. God does not promise everyone great material riches nor a life without problems (see James 1:2-3; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Luke 9:23-24). This depends on God’s plan for your life. Wealth is intended as a blessing but contentment is a blessing as well (see Philippians 4:12). However, there are dangers:

1 Timothy 6:6-10 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Proverbs 30:8-9 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

What are the dangers? (1)__________________________________________________________
(2)__________________________________________________________
3. Be Aware of Religious Extremes Concerning Finances

A Biblical, Christ-centered approach to finances must overcome two common extremes:

- Godliness occurs in poverty.
- Christians who truly have faith will prosper financially.

The following table contrasts a Christ-Centered approach with the two extremes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessions are:</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Stewardship</th>
<th>Prosperity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I work to:</td>
<td>Meet only basic needs</td>
<td>Serve Christ</td>
<td>Become rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godly people are:</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Faithful</td>
<td>Wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungodly people are:</td>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>Unfaithful</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give:</td>
<td>Because I must</td>
<td>Because I love God</td>
<td>To get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spending is:</td>
<td>Fearful and joyless</td>
<td>Prayerful and responsible</td>
<td>Carefree and consumptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Godly Stewardship

1. What is Stewardship?

a. The key to understanding God’s will in finances is the proper understanding of stewardship. By Webster’s definition, a steward is “one who manages another’s property.” We are merely stewards of God’s property while we are on earth. He can choose to entrust us with as much or as little HE desires, but in no case should we ever take ownership. Until the Christian acknowledges God’s total ownership, he can’t experience God’s direction in financial management.

b. Luke 16:10-11 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with very much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

Stewardship of worldly wealth indicates our
2. What is Good Stewardship?

Matthew 25:14-30 “Again, it [the kingdom of heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

a. To what did Christ equate this parable? ______________________________

b. Why was each given a different amount? ______________________________

c. How were the faithful servants rewarded? ______________________________

d. What made the last servant behave in an unfaithful manner?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

e. What were the consequences of the last servant’s beliefs (see also Luke 19:22).
3. The Requirements for Stewardship Pleasing to God

a. **Trust (faith) in God.**  *Hebrews 11:6*  *And without faith it is impossible to please God.*

b. **Acknowledge God’s word.**  *Isaiah 55:9*  *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

c. **Acknowledge God’s direction.**  *Proverbs 3:5*  *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.*

d. **Acknowledge God’s ownership of possessions.**  *Psalm 50:10, 12*  *...for every animal of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills....for the world is mine, and all that is in it.*

e. **Acknowledge that you are God’s possession.**  *2 Corinthians 1:21-22*  *...He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 7:23; Ephesians 1:13-14)*

f. **Have God’s eternal perspective.**  *Matthew 6:19-21*  *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Why is each of the above necessary for good stewardship?
D. How God Uses Finances


If we are seeking his wisdom, he promises to supply it. But understand that God’s will is not always coincidental with our wishes. God will often withhold funds in order to teach us a lesson. Too often we as Christians strike out on our own without clear direction from God, violating the principle in Matthew 4:7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Those who do so regularly have not really accepted God’s wisdom as superior. Let’s examine how the Lord can use money to instruct us.

2. Trust

 Matthew 6:32-33  For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

What is God’s promise in this verse? __________________________________________

What is the prerequisite? ___________________________________________________

Also see Hebrews 11. For balance, see James 1:2

3. Ability to supply

 Mark 11:24  Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

For what can we trust God if we are in his will? ________________________________

 James 4:2-3  ...You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (Also see Philippians 4:19)
4. Our Trustworthiness

**Luke 16:13** “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You can not serve both God and Money.”

If you are devoted to money, you can’t be trusted because you are *not* devoted to ______

5. Love

Many Christians fail to trust God because they inwardly feel God wants to deprive or punish them.

**Matthew 7:11** “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those ask him!”

In this verse, are we to take the perspective of a child or of a father? ________________

6. Direction

**Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.

We are to trust _______________________

We are *not* to trust ______________________________________________________

Then __________________ God will ______________________

Also see Galatians 6:9, Isaiah 55:8-9.
E. Financial Bondage

1. What is Bondage?

a. Just as God uses money to enhance and direct our lives, Satan will use it to shackle us. What is often called a financial problem often is really a symptom of a deeper spiritual problem. Before we get to some practical suggestions we need to understand the spiritual roots and signs of many financial difficulties. We also need a firm foundation in Scripture in order to have the faith to walk out the practical steps (see Romans 10:17). In short, we need the guidance, conviction, and power of the Holy Spirit.

b. Christians should learn to recognize the danger of financial bondage. At one time, financial bondage meant physical bondage (see Matthew 5:25-26). But now mental bondage, caused by financial pressures, traps and destroys many thousands of families each year. Why? Usually because someone violated one or more scriptural principles.

2. Overdue Bills

Proverbs 3:27-28  Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"--when you now have it with you.

What is God's principle of paying? ________________________________

3. Worry

Proverbs 15:16  Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.

Also see Proverbs 10:22 and Philippians 4:6

4. Laziness or a lack of desire to be excellent

Proverbs 24:33-34  A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

Proverbs 21:25-26  The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.

Proverbs 19:15  Laziness brings on deep sleep and the shiftless man goes hungry.

2 Thessalonians 3:10  "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."
5. Deceitfulness

**Proverbs 19:1** Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.

God equates a deceitful man to a _________________________

**Proverbs 20:17** Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel.

6. Get-rich-quick attitude

**Proverbs 13:11** Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

**Proverbs 21:5** The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

**Proverbs 12:11** He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

Get-rich-quick schemes: Ignorance + Borrowing + Haste = _________________________

Also see Proverbs 28:20, 22.

7. Greed, envy, resentment, covetousness.

**Ecclesiastes 5:10** Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

**Luke 12:15** Then he [Jesus] said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

**Psalm 73:2-3** But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (Actually all of Psalm 73 is appropriate.)

A Christian should be able to praise God for another's success and blessings.

Also see Exodus 20:17, Ephesians 5:5 (where greed equals idolatry), Philippians 2:3, Romans 9:20, and 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10 (where the greedy are grouped with idolaters, the sexually immoral and slanderers, drunkards and swindlers--we're not to associate with such that claim to be brothers).
8. Money entanglements, over commitment to work, unmet needs of family.

2 Timothy 2:4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer.

Psalm 127:2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat

Proverbs 23:4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.

1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Also see Matthew 6:33; 15:25.

9. Pride and self indulgence

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Proverbs 12:9 Better to be a nobody and have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

Indulgence is often the result of pride and a false sense of worth.

What gives a man worth? (See Luke 12:15.)

Do you use material possessions as validation of your worth?

Also see Proverbs 12:9, 15:25, 16:18, James 5:1-5.
F. Steps to Financial Freedom

God wants us to be free from frustration and worry, to have peace and freedom. This section will look at some steps to achieving the freedom God wants us to have. (However the problem with "steps" is that the first one may take a year!) Steps require action, not just belief. Action is the obedience that comes from faith (Romans 1:5). Obedience requires submission to God's direction--this is not always compatible with our wishes.

Step #1. Transfer ownership to God.

Ownership results in fear, frustration, anger, etc. Only when we acknowledge that God truly owns "our" possessions are we free. Job is a great example of this. Why was he able to withstand his tragedy? What principle did Job recognize?

Job 1:20-22. At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

[________] really owned Job's worldly possessions (even his ten children).

Step #2. Don't increase debt; get out of debt.

a. Romans 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another....

Psalm 37:21 The wicked do not repay, but the righteous give generously;

If you don't pay your debts, God says you're [______________]

b. Bankruptcy is not an option unless forced upon you or used to protect creditors. A promise or a vow is a serious commitment. We must fulfill our vows (see Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:23; Proverbs 3:27).

c. To become a debtor is a curse (Deuteronomy 28:43-45) and equated with becoming a slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). While scripture does not prohibit debt, debt certainly is not viewed favorably. Given the problems people have with debt, God's wisdom is certainly confirmed.
Step #3. Accept God's direction and be content.

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Also see Proverbs 3:5-10, 10:22, Luke 3:14, Timothy 3:3.

Step #4. Excel in your work.

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Also see Ephesians 6:5-8, 1 Peter 4:11.

Step #5. Provide for your family's needs and have a balanced commitment to work.

Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters...."

Step #6. Put others first.

Christ said if anyone wishes to be first in this world, he will be last in the next (Matthew 20:15). (I suspect there will be a great deal of room at the top in the Lord's kingdom.) Job was a righteous steward of the wealth that God entrusted to him. He used it to build relationships and to bless others (see Job 1:5).

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

What four points are made?

(1) _________________________________________________________

(2) _________________________________________________________

(3) _________________________________________________________

(4) _________________________________________________________
Philippians 2:3-5, 7 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus: *...but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

It all boils down to having the attitude of a ____________________________.

G. In Closing

1. Session 1 Summary

a. God thinks our financial management is important *and* spiritual.

b. God wants to bless you and wealth can be a blessing from the Lord.

c. We are stewards of God’s wealth and good stewardship demands trust and obedience.

d. God uses finances to instruct and guide us. A very tangible test of intangible spiritual fruits as well as attitudes.

e. Financial bondage has symptoms that can be detected. Bondage is usually the result of someone violating God’s principles.

g. By following God’s principles we can avoid or escape bondage. This is accomplished by truly acknowledging God’s ownership and adopting the attitude of a servant.

2. The Next Session: The basic principles of financial planning.

3. Homework Assignments

a. For this seminar to have more than a superficial impact in your life, you will need to prayerfully review the lessons and scriptures. When you review this and subsequent lessons, *prayerfully* check our scripture references and see if we misrepresented Scripture by taking it out of context. (Be of more noble character; as were the Bereans; Acts 17:11.) Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and teach you in the area of finances as you look up all the references yourself (including the additional verses not written out for you). See 1 John 2:20, 27; John 14:26-27, 16:13-15.

b. After you review this lesson, we want to challenge you to commit to God one *specific* financial problem area in your life. Pray about it and seek God’s guidance and providence.