

GOSPEL FINANCE SEMINAR: SESSION #1: THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF MONEY

3 Ways to Relate to Money

There is a name change from the past due to a different understanding of finances. If you scan across culture, you will often find two ways that people relate to money:

1. **Rebellion.** This is the liberal spender, the person who doesn't care to keep a budget, and isn't for sure how to spell budget. They don't let anyone look at how much they make or how much they spend, and they don't care. Just buy, buy, buy. Get what you want as soon as you want it. New rims on the cars even though you just lost your 3rd job in the last 2 months. \$20,000 on credit cards, so might as well get another one.
2. **Religion.** This is the conservative spender, the classic saver. This person has spreadsheets out their ears to understand how every little penny will be spent or saved or invested or given or whatever. They have the next two years planned out and how percentages are going to change over those years so that savings get bigger, debt gets lower, and spending is appropriate. Their approach to money is very important to their value; you would guess that they were completely evaluated based on how well prepared they are financially. Keep the rules, don't bend the rules, and make up some rules as you guy to make sure you stay in line.

The funny thing is that for either of these ways to handle money, either one can be *personal*, private, and protected. The liberal spender claims their own right to the money (or lack of money) they have. The conservative spender claims their own right to organize and plan their money they have (and know they will have over the course of the next few years, according to their percentages on the 3rd column of their 5th spreadsheet). That is why we no longer call this *personal* finance seminar. I want to suggest there is a 3rd way to relate to money, a way that might include elements of either of these first 2, but is certainly not either of them.

3. **Gospel.** This is the person who believes down deep that their money isn't really theirs. Money is a gifted tool that is used to glorify Jesus through heartfelt obedience. This is the person who has been riveted by Jesus leaving his heavenly riches and becoming poor so that we might find all of our riches in Him. This is the person who is drinking in so much grace upon grace that they can't help but be generous. This is the person who gladly lets their checkbook and bank statements be open books to others in their HC because they already are certain of their acceptance and security in Jesus. He has seen their checkbooks, and he receives them with grace.

With that in mind, we want to look at 3 aspects of money - not just 1.

1. The gospel **message** about money. What does the Gospel say about money?
2. The gospel **practice** of money. In light of the gospel, what do we do with money? This is where we will look at taking stock of your current financial situation, setting a budget, and planning for the future.
3. The gospel **purpose** of money. In light of the gospel, how can we use money and what would that look like? This is where we consider what money has to do with the mission of God. If God is on mission, and we get to be on mission with him, to reconcile all things to Himself, then how is money an important part of that?

The Gospel Message About Money

CREATION: God created many good things and stuff for our enjoyment. You can see this in creation, and all of the abundant gifts God gave to Adam. Adam wasn't placed in a shack and told to be poor. He was placed in a beautiful garden and was told to take dominion, own stuff, and multiply. We see this desire of God in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 6:17: *God richly provides us with everything to enjoy.* So we know that stuff isn't evil; it isn't a sin to have money or make money.

FALL: When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, the effects went way deep. We ourselves still feel the effects today. To discover just how much our hearts have been marred by sin when it comes to money, consider a few teachings of Jesus:

- a. Money Makes it Hard to be Saved (Matthew 19:16-26). It is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, even impossible! And we are rich. All the statistics of the world make it obvious that each of you in this room are among the wealthiest in the world. The effect of sin in our hearts means that money prevents us from salvation, setting up many roadblocks. Bad news, huh?
- b. Money Makes it Hard to Worship God (Matthew 6:24). Jesus is saying it is impossible to serve both God and money. This is quite precarious, very dangerous. What do we do? Each of us know what it is like to have our eyes fixed on income and spending and the new tech toy and the bigger car. Each of us have experienced what it is like to serve money. But Jesus is saying that means we weren't worshipping God. Bad news, huh?
- c. Money Makes it Hard to Hear the Word of God (Matthew 13:18-23). The cares of this world are the things we have to spend money on or the things we choose to spend money on. And Jesus says that this is precisely what chokes the word out of us. Bad news, huh?
- d. Money Makes it Easy to be Arrogant (Luke 12:13-21). When you get a little bit of money, we often just want more. The sin in our hearts isn't satisfied with a raise; we need another one. The sin in our hearts isn't satisfied with a new shirt; we need a new closet. And often in our culture, we don't buy our bigger barns with our own money; we buy it with borrowed money, only compounding the problem. Bad news, huh?

In each of these stories we see the tremendous, devastating effects of sin. What hope is there, then? I think every single one of us would admit to participating in all of these. What hope is there for us, then?

REDEMPTION: Because of the deep, penetrating, twisted love of money anchored in our hearts, Jesus showed up to do what we could never do. Paul says it simply and clearly in 2 Corinthians 8:9: *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.* Jesus gave everything - all of his riches, all of his prestige, all of his comfort, all of his power, all of his life. Jesus died for us, in our place - for the greedy, the comfort-obsessed, the power-hungry, the selfish, the money-worshippers, the word-of-God-rejecters, the arrogant fools.

Or consider Romans 5:8 in the language of money: *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* While we still refused to give any money away; while we demanded a raise and another raise and another raise; while we were the prodigal son who claimed his inheritance early and spent it on prostitutes and toys; while we refused to put a budget together or while we hid behind our fancy budget; before we changed our money habits, Jesus died for us, in our place.

We don't figure out how to handle money so that we can get God's acceptance. We already have God's acceptance, regardless of how messed up our finances are right now. And because we are so amazed by Christ's sacrifice, we are motivated to figure out how to handle finances - in his strength, with his grace.

RESTORATION: The story doesn't end with the cross and our redemption. There is a promise of a full restoration of all things. Jesus didn't merely die to get you saved and out of debt; he died to reconcile all things to Himself. This is what Paul means in 2 Corinthians 8:9 when he says that we become rich through Jesus' poverty. He isn't talking about us using the cross to justify extravagant, self-centered lifestyle. That is the prosperity gospel, and it is false. Paul is talking about when things are restored to Jesus. What does money look like in the new heavens and new earth? Well, because of the radiance of the face of Jesus, money, which once looked so attractive to us, has now become the thing that paves the street. Gold is asphalt. A bunch of rocks mixed with some stuff, and we walk and drive on it.

So what do we do in light of this?

GOSPEL FINANCE SEMINAR: SESSION #2: THE GOSPEL PRACTICE OF MONEY

This section is about telling the story of the gospel in your finances. It is about reflecting redemption, the marvelous acceptance we have in God because of the cross. It is about what Jesus empowers us to do; not what we do to earn him.

A Plan for the Future

1. Foundation of budgeting: giving, saving, spending.
 - a. Giving: start with 10%, even if that includes hurt.
 - b. Saving: get to a \$1,000 emergency fund ASAP, even including hurt.
 - c. Spending: tell every dollar where it will go before it tells you where it went.
2. Get out of debt. Increase giving.
 - a. Proverbs 6:1-5; Proverbs 22:7; Romans 13:8.
 - b. See Debt-Master Worksheet and Debt Snowball Worksheet.
 - c. As you go, track with the Cut Up Cards Worksheet.
3. Save up 3 to 6 months expenses for emergencies. Increase giving.
 - a. This will be added to the \$1,000 already saved.
4. Prepare for your later years. Increase giving.
 - a. Lamentations 3:27; Acts 20:24.
 - b. Invest at least 15% of your household income into Roth IRAs and pre-tax retirement.
5. Model it for your children. Increase giving.
6. Pay off your house early. Increase giving.
7. Increase giving.

For further learning in this area, see Appendix #1.

Focus on Budgeting (see following worksheets)

Focus on Debt (see following worksheets and Appendix #2)

FOCUS ON BUDGETING: INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE

Every single dollar of your income should be allocated to some category on the following pages. Every single dollar! Money “left over” should be put back into a category even if you have to make up a new category. You are making your spending decisions now – ahead of time.

Fill in the amount for each subcategory under *Subtotal*; then fill in the total for each main category under *Total*. As you go through your first month, fill in the *Actually Spent* column with your real expenses. This might be more than budgeted, or less than budgeted. Make a note of it either way. If there is a substantial difference between your budget and reality, something has to give. You will either have to adjust the amount allocated to that area up and another area down; or you will have to better control your spending in that area.

Percent of Take Home Pay is the percentage of take-home pay that category represents. Example: What percentage of take-home pay did you spend on Housing? We will get percent for each main category and compare that to the Recommended Percentages. This can be very revealing.

- ** by an item means you should use the envelope system.
- // by an item means it is not a normal monthly expense. It is best to plan your annual expenses for these items, then divide by 12 to get your monthly budget.

Starting out, the Emergency Fun should get ALL the savings until 3-6 months of expenses have been saved. Then other savings can go to future purchases.

THE ENVELOPE SYSTEM

The envelope system is another built in way to help you control spending. Since self-discipline is never fun, remember these passages:

- Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the Spirit is...self-control. If you think that using an envelope is stifling the Holy Spirit in your life, that is thinking backwards. In fact, using an envelope to control spending is evidence of the Holy Spirit in your life!
- 2 Timothy 1:7: God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
- Titus 2:1-6. In very practical instructions, Paul tells Titus to encourage the following age groups to be self-controlled: older men, older women to teach younger women, younger men.

The envelope system means you take that pay period's budget out of your bank account as cash. Stick it in an envelope, and you can *only* spend what is in that envelope. No more! If you don't spend it all in one pay period, save it up for the next one.

Dishing out cash hurts. Even though debit cards are a wonderful replacement to credit cards, it is easier to swipe plastic than it is to pass over green bills. Consider these facts:

- Dunn and Bradstreet did a study that showed that a plastic card user spends 12 to 18 percent more when using their card than when using cash.
- *Consumer Reports* says that 75% of airline miles are never redeemed. The rewards are worth the extra 12-18% you will spend. Use cash!

FOCUS ON BUDGET: INCOME SOURCES

	Amount	Period/Describe
Salary 1	_____	_____
Salary 2	_____	_____
Salary 3	_____	_____
Wages 1	_____	_____
Wages 2	_____	_____
Bonus	_____	_____
Self-Employment	_____	_____
Interest Income	_____	_____
Dividend Income	_____	_____
Royalty Income	_____	_____
Rents	_____	_____
Notes	_____	_____
Alimony	_____	_____
Child Support	_____	_____
AFDC	_____	_____
Unemployment	_____	_____
Social Security	_____	_____
Pension	_____	_____
Annuity	_____	_____
Disability Income	_____	_____
Cash Gifts	_____	_____
Trust Fund	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____

FOCUS ON BUDGET: TEMPLATE
MONTH: _____ 2011

Budgeted Item	Subtotal	TOTAL	Actually Spent	% of Take-Home Pay
Giving to the Kingdom				
Tithe to Church	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Savings				
Emergency Fund	_____		_____	
Retirement Fund	_____		_____	
College Fund	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Housing				
Mortgage/Rent #1	_____		_____	
Mortgage/Rent #2	_____		_____	
//Real Estate Tax	_____		_____	
Home Insurance	_____		_____	
//Repairs/Maint	_____		_____	
Furniture/Appl	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Utilities/Bills				
Electricity	_____		_____	
Water	_____		_____	
Gas	_____		_____	
Phone - Home	_____		_____	
Phone - Cell #1	_____		_____	
Phone - Cell #2	_____		_____	
Trash/Sewer	_____		_____	
Cable/TV	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____		_____	
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
**Food				
**Groceries	_____		_____	
**Eating Out	_____		_____	
**Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Transportation

Car Payment #1	_____	_____	_____
Car Payment #2	_____	_____	_____
**Gas	_____	_____	_____
//**Repair/Maint	_____	_____	_____
Car Insurance	_____	_____	_____
//License/Taxes	_____	_____	_____
Next Car	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

Clothing

**Children	_____	_____	_____
**Adults	_____	_____	_____
Cleaning/Laundry	_____	_____	_____
Shoes	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

Medical/Health

Disability Insurance	_____	_____	_____
Health Insurance	_____	_____	_____
Doctor	_____	_____	_____
Dentist	_____	_____	_____
Optometrist/Glass	_____	_____	_____
Prescriptions	_____	_____	_____
Vitamins/Herbs	_____	_____	_____
Gym Membership	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

Personal

Life Insurance	_____	_____	_____
Child Care	_____	_____	_____
**Babysitter	_____	_____	_____
**Toiletries	_____	_____	_____
**Cosmetics	_____	_____	_____
**Hair Care/Cut	_____	_____	_____
Education	_____	_____	_____
School Tuition	_____	_____	_____
School Supplies	_____	_____	_____
Child Support	_____	_____	_____
Alimony	_____	_____	_____
Subscription #1	_____	_____	_____
Subscription #2	_____	_____	_____
//Org Dues	_____	_____	_____
Gifts to Friends	_____	_____	_____
//Christmas	_____	_____	_____
**Miscellaneous	_____	_____	_____
**Have Fun!	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

Family Recreation/Leisure

**Entertainment _____
 //Vacation _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____

Debt (Which is \$0 ASAP)

Card #1: _____
 Card #2: _____
 Card #3: _____
 Card #4: _____
 Card #5: _____
 Card #6: _____
 Card #7: _____
 Finance Comp #1 _____
 Finance Comp #2 _____
 Credit Line #1 _____
 Credit Line #2 _____
 Student Loan #1 _____
 Student Loan #2 _____
 Student Loan #3 _____
 Student Loan #4 _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____
 Other: _____

GRAND TOTAL of MAIN CATEGORIES: _____
 Less Household Income: _____
 Equals **\$ZERO everytime**

RECOMMENDED PERCENTAGES

There is no hard and fast rule for these. These are from Dave Ramsey's *Total Money Makeover*. For further reference, see www.crown.org for what they recommend.

Main Category	Your Actual %	Recommended %
Charitable Gifts	_____	10-15%
Savings	_____	5-10%
Housing	_____	25-35%
Utilities/Bills	_____	5-10%
Food	_____	5-15%
Transportation	_____	10-15%
Clothing	_____	2-7%
Medical/Health	_____	5-10%
Personal	_____	5-10%
Family Recreation	_____	5-10%
Debt	_____	as much as needed until 0%

FOCUS ON BUDGET: ALLOCATED SPENDING PLAN
MONTH: _____ 2011

Pay Date: _____
 Income for Period: _____
 Giving to the Kingdom
 Tithe to Church ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___

Savings
 Emergency Fund ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Retirement Fund ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 College Fund ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___

Housing
 Mortgage #1 ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Mortgage #2 ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Real Estate Taxes ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Home Insurance ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Repairs/Maint ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Furniture/Appl ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___

Utilities/Bills
 Electricity ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Water ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Gas ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Phone - Home ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Phone - Cell #1 ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Phone - Cell #2 ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Trash/Sewer ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Cable/TV ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___

**Food
 **Groceries ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 **Eating Out ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___
 **Other: _____ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___

Transportation

Car Payment #1	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Car Payment #2	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Gas	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Repair/Maint	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Car Insurance	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
License/Taxes	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Next Car	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

Clothing

**Children	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Adults	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Cleaning/Laundry	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Shoes	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

Medical/Health

Disability Insurance	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Health Insurance	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Doctor	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Dentist	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Optometrist/Glass	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Prescriptions	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Vitamins/Herbs	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Gym Member	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

Personal

Life Insurance	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Child Care	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Babysitter	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Toiletries	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Cosmetics	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Hair Care/Cut	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Education	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
School Tuition	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
School Supplies	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Child Support	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Alimony	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Subscription #1	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Subscription #2	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Org Dues	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Gifts to Friends	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Christmas	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Miscellaneous	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
**Have Fun!	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

Family Recreation/Leisure

**Entertainment	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Vacation	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

Debt (Which is \$0 ASAP)

Card #1: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #2: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #3: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #4: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #5: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #6: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Card #7: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Finance Comp #1	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Finance Comp #2	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Credit Line #1	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Credit Line #2	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Student Loan #1	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Student Loan #2	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Student Loan #3	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Student Loan #4	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Other: _____	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

GOSPEL FINANCE SEMINAR: SESSION #3: THE GOSPEL PURPOSE OF MONEY

The funny thing about the gospel is that it doesn't save us *from* money and completely disconnect our lives from money. Indeed, the gospel empowers us to work hard and steward our money well. What does God want us to do with that money? What is the gospel purpose for money?

This is where we consider what money has to do with the mission of God. If God is on mission, and we get to be on mission with him, to reconcile all things to Himself, then how is money an important part of that?

Luke 16:8: *The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.* So we see Jesus commending a shrewdness, a sharpness, keenness, a discernment about what to do with money. Then Jesus continues in Luke 16:9: *And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.*

So Jesus is talking about our money, and he tells us to make friends using that money. But not just any friends. There is a difference between how the sons of this world are supposed to be shrewd and how the sons of light are supposed to be shrewd. We are supposed to make friends in a certain way. We are supposed to make the kind of friends that will receive us into the eternal dwellings. What's he talking about? He is talking about using money to win friends to Jesus! And then when wealth fails - i.e., death - those friends will be greeting you in heaven. Previously, they wouldn't have joined you in heaven; they would have suffered the wrath of God eternally in hell. But now - because you used money to become friends with them - they will receive you into heaven. This is the gospel purpose of money: to win friends to Jesus!

And this completely reframes Luke 16:10-13. No longer is "being faithful with little" merely about saving money and staying on a budget; it also includes making friends with money - the kind of friends who will share eternal life with you! If you want to discern if you are being faithful with the little you have, ask yourself if you are using your money to win your friends to Jesus. Are you?

The primary way we do this is through giving, and I want to highlight 2 kinds of giving.

- 1. Giving through the church.** All of us are on mission with God and his people. There are no lone ranger missionaries. Therefore, one of the primary ways we seek to make friends who will welcome us into heaven is by giving to the local church.
 - Notice that the "rebellious" givers might still do this, just at the end of the month with only the leftovers.
 - Notice that the "religious" givers might still do this, just at the beginning of the month in a way that is devoid of joy or connection to God.
 - This is why Paul writes about both consistent giving and joyful giving. 2 Corinthians 9:7: Each one must give as *he has decided* in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a *cheerful* giver. And Paul says that the deepest motivation for giving has to be the gospel - Jesus becoming poor for us so that we might be rich in Him, towards Him (2 Corinthians 8:9).
 - I would highly recommend starting at giving 10% to the local church, then...
- 2. Whole Life Giving** - to the poor, to neighbors, to coworkers. This is the kind of giving that can't really be tracked easily. You can't really get a tax-deduction for this at the end of the year. It has so permeated every aspect of your life, that you are simply generous with all things.
 - Luke 12:32-34: Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you his kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- Matthew 19:21
- Matthew 5:42: Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
- Matthew 10:8: Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.
- Luke 6:30: Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.
- Luke 6:37-38: Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.
- Luke 14:13-14: But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they can *not* repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.
- Acts 20:35: It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- Romans 12:20: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty give him something to drink; for by doing so you will reap burning coals on his head.
- Galatians 6:2: Bear one another's burdens.

These verses and others show us that giving should be permeating throughout every single aspect of our lives. In one sense, giving should be a line item in our budget. But in another sense, giving should be in every line item in our budget. Take for example:

- Grocery budget increases because you are regularly having friends over who don't know Jesus yet.
- Entertainment budget increases because you invite friends along to the concert or movie or sporting event.
- Eating out budget increases, but for the sake of generous tips at local restaurants where you are building relationships with servers and bartenders and neighbors.
- Gift giving to friends and neighbors on their birthdays or Christmas or Easter or July 4th.
- Communities make sure there is no needy person among them.
- Paying down debt at a slower rate so you can take a pay cut to move into a strategic missionary space.
- Paying down debt as a faster rate so you can have more funds available once you land in a long-term housing situation.

At the end of the day, this means going through each line item in your budget and asking the questions: How can I use this line item for gospel purpose? How can I use this line item to make friends who will welcome me into heaven?

3 Stories as Examples: (1) Our HC helping with abnormal childcare costs; (2) Our HC helping our neighbors with gift cards; (3) Misawa HC helping friend whose wife died of cancer without having life insurance.

So who are the friends in your life right now you can love using the tool of money? And what next steps will you take in your friendship with them so you can clearly display the generosity of Jesus to them?

Friends	Notes	Next Steps

APPENDIX #1: EXPANDED RESEARCH ON PLANNING

Plans.

Clearly, many of us think differently about plans. For some of us, plans refer to what should have happened a few minutes ago. For others, plans refer to the minute details of how life is going to happen five years from now, and we have it all figured out already – done to the color of shirt we're going to be wearing that day.

Here is how Jesus weighs in: **Luke 14:28-32**. Here is proof that Jesus uses humor in his teaching. He paints this picture of a man who starts out building a tower, but he can't finish. So everyone makes fun of him. And he tells us of a king who goes to war without considering all of the costs that are going to go along with that. Jesus says that both of these things are stupid. And serious. In context (Luke 14:25-27), Jesus is referring to the cost of being his disciple, of hating father and mother and spouse and child for His sake, or taking up our cross for his sake. This planning thing is serious, and we need to apply that intensity of planning to our finances, for Jesus' sake.

Proverbs' on Plans

- **Proverbs 6:6-11**: Go to the ant, you sluggard! This has to be one of the most humbling commands. Solomon extols the ant because the ant – without any leader – prepares food in the summer and gathers food for the winter. The ant prepares today for what will be happening in the future. In contrast, what we can do is get lazy, put it off, get some sleep and try to forget about it. Solomon says the lazy philosophy of life ends up in poverty.
- **Proverbs 15:22: Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.** (Also see Proverbs 20:18.) This means you should seek counsel was financially wise people when you make money decisions. Don't go ask your broke brother-in-law. Don't just do what feels right. Seek wise counsel from people who you know handle their money in a way that honors Jesus!
- **Proverbs 16:3**: Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. **The reason for budgeting, the reason for saving for retirement, the reason for getting out of debt is to honor God.** This is where the teachings of Jesus provide a great balance.
- **Proverbs 21:5: The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.** Solomon observes in life that those who plan and act those plans out surely lead to abundance. (And, of course, we would all rather have abundance! That abundance isn't for us to trust in or worship; that abundance is to give away.) Now, how many of us would say that our financial lives are characterized by *planning*? I know my family doesn't do this well. How many of us would say that our financial lives are characterized by *hastiness*? Impulse decisions and purchases. Buying before we see if there is money left in the account. Put in on a card and we'll pay it off later. Many, many of us live that way. Here are some shocking stats:
 - 80% of college seniors have credit-card debt, and that is even before they have a job! (Ramsey, TMM)
 - 90% of people in our culture buy things they can't afford. (Ramsey, TMM)
 - Most families have at least \$2,000 in credit card debt with no good plan for paying it off. (MSN Money)

So, between Jesus and Proverbs, it is clear that we should *plan*. We can't just keep on doing what we have always done. For the vast majority of us, if we just keep on doing what we have always done, it won't work. It sure hasn't worked, yet. So here is a plan that I recommend. It is largely based on wisdom from guys like Dave Ramsey, Larry Burkett, and the new leaders at Crown Financial Ministries.

A Plan for the Rest of Your Life

1. **Build a foundation that will last for the long term. Start this today.** Don't wait until the end of the month. Don't wait until you get a raise. Do this right now. Dave Ramsey says that changing the way you handle money is 80% behavior and only 20% knowledge. Most of us in this room already have plenty of knowledge to handle our money right; we just don't have the heart to do it. So today is your opportunity to stop looking for excuses and start doing things differently. What does it mean to build a foundation that will last for the long term?
 - a. **Give to the kingdom of God.** We discussed this already. Put priority on this. Don't save it for last – if there is money left over. This goes first. When the check comes in, or when the money is direct deposited into your account, take what you choose to give and give it. Let giving have priority.
 - b. **Save up \$1,000 as an emergency fund.** Do whatever it takes to put \$1,000 away in the bank and leave it there. Don't touch it unless you absolutely have to.
 - c. **Control spending with a budget.** There is the B-word. It is the word that nobody likes. It feels stifling and mean and legalistic. But, in reality, it can be freeing and wise and good. Both Jesus and Proverbs would highly encourage the B-word. Next week we are going to walk through step-by-step how to set up a budget.

2. **Get on a crazy-fast plan to pay off all debt. Use the “debt snowball!”**
 - a. Understand what the Bible says about debt.
 - i. **Proverbs 6:1-5.** Solomon tells his son that if he has entered into any debt of any kind that he should get out of it as quickly as possible. Go to the person you owe money to and do whatever you can to get out of debt, and the best way to do that is *pay it!* Vv. 4 and 5: Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler. So, **get out of debt and do it fast!**
 - ii. **Proverbs 22:7: The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.** That is the reality of the situation. We may try to disguise it differently, but the truth is that we are slaves to those we owe.

Stop right now and make a quick list of all your masters. This is called the **Debt-Master Worksheet**. Write out all Credit card companies, student loan companies, car companies, hospitals, relatives, mortgage companies that you owe money to. Now look at that short list and remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24: No one can serve 2 masters! So, get out of debt (and stop whining about it)!
 - iii. **Romans 13:8:** Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. You can take that as far as you want – some would even say it means debt is a sin. I at least would say, “Debt is stupid and should be avoided at all costs!” But no matter who we are, we all want this, don't we? Don't we all want to owe no one anything? How many of you enjoy writing checks to people for stuff you bought years ago? How many of you look forward to paying your pet student loan each month? None of us! So, **get out of debt, so you can love one another more.**
 - b. If you have done Step 1, then you don't need credit cards ever again! Cut them up, cancel them, and kiss them good-bye. In your workbook you have a worksheet called **Cut Up Cards**. Fill that out for each credit card you get rid of. Then celebrate because

you have one less master in your life. Have you ever wondered why they call it *MasterCard*? Maybe they're thinking biblically.

- c. In the next couple of weeks, we will talk through **the debt snowball**. The debt snowball, which I picked up from Dave Ramsey, is the best application of Proverbs 6:1-5 that I have been able to find.

3. Save up 3 to 6 months of expenses as an **emergency fund**.

- a. Use *this* savings for emergencies. And please know this: it will happen. Emergencies happen.
 - i. **Money magazine says that 78% of us will have major unexpected events (that could cause financial crisis) within the next 10 years.** Don't bank on being that other 22%. Lay offs happen, moving to a different city happens, car wrecks happen.
 - ii. *Parenting* magazine said that 49% of Americans could cover less than one month's expenses if they lost their income today.
 - iii. **Define your emergencies**, and make sure they really are emergencies – not just some really awesome new truck you've got to get!
 - iv. **Make sure your emergency fund is easy to access.** You don't want to pay to use your emergency fund. Stick it in a Money Market account, where you can write checks on it and use it but it still earns you a little bit of money. This emergency fund is not for you to make money on – so don't try to use it for high interest stuff that ties up the money to where you can't get to it. That defeats the purpose.
 - v. The size of your particular emergency fund can depend on the nature of your work and risks. For example, if you are purely commission-based in your job, then save up to 6 months' salary (like a real estate agent). If you have a steady job with a solid company that hasn't declined in decades, then you could lean more towards 3 months' salary.
- b. Do not do this with the arrogance of the man who built the bigger barns and bigger houses. **Do this with the gospel-idea of not paying interest and not being a slave to a debt-master, so you can give and love more freely.** The truth is 2 people can do exactly the same thing, but 1 of them can completely miss the point.

4. Prepare for your later years.

- a. Understand the Bible's perspective on the final chapter of your life. Don't just naturally drift towards the classic retirement path of your family or friends or other Americans.
 - i. **Lamentations 3:27: It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.** Among other things we can learn from this verse that it is good to work when you are young. As you get older, it will (usually) be more difficult to be more productive.
 - ii. **Acts 20:24:** But I do not account my life of any value or as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Live like Paul did. Finish well.

Change the entire way you value your life today, and that will change the way you view retirement. Also see 2 Timothy 4:7: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. That is how we want to finish!

iii. For an excellent perspective on retirement read *Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper, available at www.DesiringGod.org for purchase or free.

iv. In summary: As we grow older it will be more and more difficult to generate income. We should prepare for that. We should not lose mission or passion as Christians, but we should seek to discover more mission and passion at the same time we lose income-generating potential.

b. **Invest at least 15% of your household income into Roth IRAs and pre-tax retirement.**

i. Consider these astonishing stats:

1. **USA Today said that more than half of us Americans do not systematically, financially prepare for retirement.**
2. This will blow your mind: 40% of the people who make less than \$35k per year, said that the best way to have more than half-a-million dollars at retirement is to win the lottery!
3. And for some strange reason, **80% of us think our standard of living will go up when we retire.** That is backwards. The fact is (according to USA Today) only 3% of people over 65 are actually financially secure. We've got work to do!

ii. **Remember the order** that this falls into place. Your debt is gone (except for the house), and you have money in the bank. So you can start putting big, big chunks of money away now. So do it!

iii. **Use mutual funds. 97% of 5-year periods and 100% of 10-year periods make good money through mutual funds in the stock market.** The best way to use mutual funds is usually the Roth IRA. If you want more details on all of that, let me know.

iv. Here is an example that would apply to a lot of us: Doug and Whitney get out of debt crazy-fast and by the time they are 30 they can invest 15% of their income in Roth IRAs. Let's assume we are only making \$40k between the 2 of us, so we invest \$6k per year or \$500 per month into our Roth IRA. If we do this from age 30 to age 70, guess how much money we would have when we retire? (Answers.) We would have nearly \$6 million dollars. But, wait, maybe the stock market stays sour for a long time, and we only make half of that. Then we would only have \$3 million dollars to give away at age 70. Tragic, huh? Not really.

5. **Train your children to stay out of debt, including college!**

a. Actually, you should be training your children all along this path. Train them early to give first, save second, and spend last. Train them in the joy of giving. Let them see your budget; help them understand why they don't always get the cool toy at the grocery store.

b. **And prepare for the day they go to college!** If you have trained and disciplined them well, then you helping pay for their college will *not* spoil them. It will help them avoid gathering a long list of debt-masters like each of us have.

- c. I am so thankful to my parents who pressed me hard to go to college without going into too much debt. At the time I was very frustrated with them, but looking back it was an incredible wise move in my life. I thank God for their wisdom that allowed me to graduate with only \$1,900 of college debt, all of which is paid off now.
- d. Practically, use an Educational Savings Account (ESA) funded in a growth-stock mutual fund. These will usually earn you about 12% - much more than any prepaid tuition system or 529 plan.

6. Pay off your home early.

- a. It doesn't help to keep a mortgage for the sake of tax deductions.
- b. It doesn't help to borrow against your home...because you don't borrow anymore!
- c. Then when you sell your house, you keep all the cash. You put that cash with other funds you have saved, and...you buy your next house on cash.

7. Build wealth and give, give, give!

Proverbs 16:9: The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. We can (and should!) plan. We should budget, and we should work that budget into a bigger picture of our financial future. But through it all we must rely on God, and we must trust His provision. We are always at the mercy of God.

APPENDIX #2: EXPANDED RESEARCH ON DUMPING DEBT

We have already seen what the Bible says about money:

- Get out of debt as soon as possible (Proverbs 6:1-5).
- Your debt owner is your master (Proverbs 22:7) and no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).
- We all want to love one another freely instead of make debt payments (Romans 13:8).

Now we want to look at a few other lies that our consumer culture tells us about debt. Then we will outline a very practical, very personal tool to kiss debt good bye for good.

Lie: Debt is a tool and should be used to create prosperity.

Truth: Debt is a huge risk and most often does *not* bring prosperity. If you as the ones who really do have wealth, most of them didn't use debt to get there.

- Debt is a pain and a stress. Even if someone could prove it is a good tool to build wealth, I would still have major contentions because of what the Bible says about debt. Debt is not worth serving two masters!
- 75% of the people on the *Forbes* 400 said that the best way to build wealth is to become and stay debt-free.

Lie: If I loan money to friends or relatives, I am helping them.

Truth: The borrower is slave to the lender.

- Thanksgiving dinner is way different when you are eating with your master and not your parents.
- And biblically we can't use this strategy against our in-laws, even if we want to.

Lie: By cosigning a loan, I am helping a friend or relative.

Truth: You better be ready to pay that loan yourself. The very reason they made you co-sign is because your friend or buddy probably can't pay it back.

- **Proverbs 17:18:** One who lacks sense (i.e., one who is stupid) gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.

Lie: Cash Advance, Payday Loans, Rent-to-Own, Title Pawning, and Tote-the-Note Car Lots are needed to help lower-income people get ahead.

Truth: These are rip-off, predatory lenders that take advantage of lower-income people.

- The idea at Payday Loan shops is that you write a hot check for \$225, which is your first mistake, dating it one week from now. They give you \$200 on the spot. That \$25 equates to a 650% interest rate annually.
- Most Tote-the-Note car lots charge 18-36% interest, and you end up paying way more than the car is worth.
- Rent-to-Own stores end up charging about 1,800% interest after it is all said and done. Why would you want to pay \$20 per week for 90 weeks (\$1,800) for a washer and dryer? You can buy it brand new at retail for \$500. Save up for a few months and don't get ripped off.
- If you don't have the money, don't spend it.

Lie: 90 Days same-as-cash equals using other people's money for free.

Truth: 90 days is not the same as cash. Walk into a store with cash and you'll find out.

- Plus, be aware that they are sitting on the edge of their seats to pummel you with about 24-38% interest if you are perfectly on time. Get ready for a mess. Oh, yeah, 88% of these contracts turn into debt. Don't try to be the 12% that gets away with it.
- When I was shopping for cars, the seller always dropped the price once I said I would be paying with cash. It's a major difference!

Lie: Car payments are a way of life. You will always have one.

Truth: Staying away from car payments by driving used cars saves you tons of money.

- Stop worshipping the Jones family and drive something that gets you from A to B. Once you have money to buy a nicer car, pray about it, and buy it.
- *USA Today* says the average car payment is \$464 over 64 months. Let's say you don't have a car payment and put that \$464 into a Roth IRA instead. By the time I turn 65 I would have about \$5.5 million in the bank. Personally, I would pick the millions for the sake of finishing well.
- Here's the plan: put \$464 into a cookie jar for 10 months. Then buy a \$4k car. Keep putting \$464 into our cookie jar for another 10 months. Then trade in and get your \$8k car. Keep on doing this and you will be driving a \$12k car in 30 months. You can get a lot of car for \$12k.

Lie: Leasing a car is what sophisticated people do.

Truth: Consumer advocates, noted experts, and a good calculator will confirm that the car lease is the most expensive way to operate a vehicle.

Lie: You can get a good deal on a new car at 0% interest.

Truth: A new car loses 60% of its value in the first 4 years.

- A \$28k car will only be worth \$17k by the time you pay the 4-year, 0% interest loan. It loses about \$100 in value each week.
- New cars immediately lose a huge chunk of value once you drive it off the lot.
- Buy used, reliable cars and save money!

Lie: You should get a credit card to build your credit.

Truth: You don't need a credit card for that.

- You build your credit by paying your bills, your rent, or your mortgage on time every time.
- If you want to live debt-free, what you need to worry about is getting a good mortgage rate. Here's what you need for that:
 - Paid your landlord early or on time for 2 years.
 - Same career field for 2 years.
 - Have a decent down payment for the house.
 - No other credit, whether good or bad.
 - Aren't taking out a loan that is more than 25% of your take-home pay.

Lie: You need a credit card to rent a car, check into a hotel, or buy online.

Truth: A debit card will do all of that.

Lie: A debit card has more risk than a credit card.

Truth: Nope.

- Keep up with your checking account, and you won't have any problems.
- A debit card let's you do everything a credit card does – except go into debt!

Lie: If you pay off your credit card each month, you get the free use of someone else's money.

Truth: *CardTrak* says that 60% of people don't pay off the cards each month.

- Plus you spend 12-18% more when you use plastic instead of cash.
- Plus 75% of airline miles are never redeemed.
- Stop trying to get free hats or air miles and save your own cash.

Lie: Debt consolidation saves interest, and you have one easy payment.

Truth: Debt consolidation is dangerous because you only treat the symptom.

- You think you've done something about the problem, but you haven't.
- Debt consolidation firms estimate that 78% of the time, after someone consolidates his credit-card payments, the debt grows right back.
- Usually the lower payment is a result of a longer payback period – not a good deal!

Lie: Borrowing 125% on my home is wise because I'll restructure my debt.

Truth: You are stuck in the house, which is not wise.

- If you have any clue about the current housing crisis, you already know this is bad.
- You end up owing more on your house than it is worth, so you can't move.

Lie: But if no one uses debt, our economy will go sour.

Truth: Actually, it would do much better.

- If every single person got out of debt today, yes, the economy would suffer. But if people get out of debt over a period of time, it would actually really help the economy.
- Everyone would benefit except for big rich banks (that make money on lending) and credit card companies. Anybody sad about that?

Lie: I'll just file bankruptcy and start over; it seems so easy.

Truth: Bankruptcy is a gut-wrenching, life-changing event that causes lifelong damage.

- Psalm 15 says that the one who dwells with God is the one who *swears to his own hurt and does not change*. That means that when the going gets tough, you hold to your word. You don't take the easy way out.

Truth: The only debt that can be useful is a home mortgage. That debt is at least partially an investment. Still, pay that mortgage off ASAP, just like you would any other debt!

Now that we have seen the debt in all forms does not help, we can start applying the **Debt Snowball**. The Debt Snowball is the best tool I have seen to apply Proverbs 6:1-5 to our lives.

APPENDIX #3: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Please remember that the most important thing about changing your financial situation is your heart – not your knowledge. Financial success is 80% behavior and only 20% knowledge. And behavior is 100% birthed out of your heart!

- *The Treasure Principle*, by Randy Alcorn.
- *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, by Randy Alcorn.
- *Money: God or Gift*, by Jamie Munson.
- *The Total Money Makeover*, by Dave Ramsey.
- *Financial Peace* (book), by Dave Ramsey.
- *Financial Peace University* (seminar), by Dave Ramsey.
- *How to Manage Your Money*, by Larry Burkett.
- *Your Money Map*, by Howard Dayton.
- *Autobiography of George Mueller*
- Resources on Money available at www.DesiringGod.org.