

Leader's Guide for  
**FINANCIAL**  
**FAITHFULNESS**

Unlocking Scripture to Avoid the  
Distraction of Money



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The book *Financial Faithfulness* and this Study Guide are designed to provide readers with a general overview of personal financial strategies, not to take the place of advice from a qualified financial professional. Some material addressed in this book and study guide may be affected by changes in the laws and/or interpretation of laws since they were written. Therefore, the accuracy and completeness of the information in these materials and the opinions shared are not guaranteed to produce particular results. The strategies outlined may not be suitable for every individual. If legal, accounting, tax, investment, insurance, or other expert advice is needed or appropriate, the reader is strongly encouraged to obtain the services of a financial professional.

## Chapter 1 Leader's Guide

### Why a Biblical Perspective?

The "toys" are all different, but the underlying issue is the same. It is easy to believe that more money and stuff will make us happy.

In Melissa Kruger's book, *The Envy of Eve*, she gives two lists that help us discover what we believe about money...and God. Take a look at these.

Money = Security

Money= Happiness

Money=Relational Peace

Money=Comfort

Money=Respect

Money=Pleasure

Money=Experiences

Money=Possessions

Money=Reward

Put a check mark by the statements you have a tendency to believe.

Now, let's replace "money" with "knowing God."

Knowing God=Security

Knowing God=Happiness

Knowing God=Relational Peace

Knowing God=Comfort

Knowing God=Pleasure

Knowing God=Experiences

Knowing God=Possessions

Knowing God=Reward

Melissa challenges us to ask ourselves, "What do I really believe?"

Pray Psalm 139:23,24 as we start this journey together:

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Write a prayer, asking the Lord to reveal areas in your heart where you believe that money, rather than God, will satisfy you.

*Lord, you know my heart. Will you reveal to me where I am believing that money will make me happy and satisfied? I want to believe that you are true contentment. Increase my belief! Amen*

In scripture, money is mentioned 2,350 times. What does this tell you about God's view of money?

*Because God mentions money so many times, it must be important to Him.*

If money is important to God, as His followers, handling money from a biblical perspective should be important to us, too.

Complete these sentences:

A significant connection exists between our Spiritual Lives and how we handle Money .

The way we handle Money is certainly an Indicator of where we are in this process of Sanctification .

Paraphrase these sentences in your own words.

*The way I handle money should show that I am a Christian. I should handle money differently.*

Read Acts 2:44-45 – How did the early church show Spiritual Maturity with their resources?

*The early church was very generous, not stingy, with their resources. They freely shared with their brothers and sisters in Christ as needs arose.*

Finish this sentence:

As Christ-followers who desire to glorify God, we show our movement toward spiritual Maturity in part by the way we handle our Wealth .

“We are constantly bombarded with our culture's ideas that claim we can find security, happiness and fulfillment through riches. Movies, advertisements, social media and television shows relentlessly proclaim that contentment is found when there is an abundance of wealth. “

List some examples of culture's screeching message to us about money.

*TV Commercials, advertisements, pop-up offers on the internet, magazines, catalogs, movies – all of these communicate that more stuff “satisfies”.*

How can we combat these messages we hear?

*We must spend time in the Bible. We must fill our minds with HIS truth.*

Read Philippians 4:11-12

How are these verses encouraging to you about your own contentment?

*Realizing that true contentment IS something the Lord can teach me. I must be willing to learn it from Him.*

In light of the statistics about our wealth compared to the world's, do you believe you are rich? Write "I am rich" here:

*I Am Rich.*

If you and I are rich, why do we need a biblical perspective of money? Finish this sentence:

A biblical perspective is a critical *Safeguard* against these pitfalls.

God owns it ALL. Rewrite this phrase below.

*God Owns It All.*

What is Ben Patterson's definition of a steward?

"A steward is someone *Entrusted* with another's *Wealth* or

*Property* and charged with the responsibility of

*Managing* it in the *Owner*'s best interest.

Write 1 Corinthians 4:2 below.

*Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*

Write at least 2 synonyms for "trustworthy"

Faithful, Dependable, Conscientious, Devoted, Honest, Honorable, Obedient, Unwavering, Steadfast

In the soccer story, how did Griffin show faithfulness?

Griffin did what he was told to do. It didn't matter that the other players didn't score. What mattered was that he obeyed his coach. He was faithful because he pleased the coach.

How does the world define contentment? Contentment = More !

When traveling to the Dominican Republic, Roger's boys asked, "Dad, how can they be so happy when they don't have anything?"

Where do these people find their contentment?

These Dominican Christians realize that true contentment and joy comes from who they are in Christ and from the hope He has given them.

Finish this verse:

But those who want to Get Rich fall into Temptation and a Snare

and many foolish and harmful Desires which plunge men into Ruin and

Destruction . (I Tim. 6:9)

Read this verse out loud. What dangers await those who want to get rich?

Those who want to get rich are going to be greatly distracted from what matters the most. They will make foolish decisions that lead to destruction.

Why do you think this verse is so harsh?

God really wants to warn us against this desire to be rich. He knows that more won't satisfy our hearts. He knows we'll be tempted to think it will, so he makes the dangers very clear.

Now complete this verse!

Instruct those who are Rich in this present world not to

be Conceited or to Fix Their Hope on

the Uncertainty of riches, but on God,

who richly supplies us with all things to Enjoy. (I Tim. 6:17)

Rewrite the word used to describe riches:

Uncertainty

Write the opposite of *uncertainty* here:

Sure, Stable, Unchanging, Reliable, Definite

Look up John 1:17 and write it below.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Underline that phrase that describes God.

Why can we confidently Fix Our Hope on Him instead of on our riches?

We can place our hope in God because He NEVER changes. He is sure! We can rest secure in Him. Our wealth is changing and uncertain. It does not deserve our hope.

Write a brief prayer, asking God to forgive you for putting your trust in what you own, and to help you Fix your Hope on Him!

Lord, I confess that I often believe the lie that my riches will satisfy me and make me happy. Too often, I trust in my money. I know that only YOU do not change. Will you increase my faith in you? Will you help me to put my unwavering hope in your unchanging character? I do love you and I do want to handle what you have given me in a way that pleases you. I want to be your faithful steward. Amen.

## Chapter 2 Leader's Guide

### The Purpose of Money

In order to develop a biblical perspective of wealth, we need to begin with a correct understanding of money. To do this, let's first examine what money is not, and then we'll look at what money is.

1. Money is not a measure of our Worth .

It what situations are you tempted to feel money is a measure of your worth or another person's worth?

Meeting new people, comparing jobs, having people come in our home, especially if they have a really nice home, comparing anything they have to what we have – can bring either pride or envy.

Re-read this verse:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10 NASB)

What does this verse say about you and me? We are His

Workmanship .

The NIV uses the word *handiwork*, and the Living Bible translates it *masterpiece*,

Circle the word that means the most to you:

Workmanship      Handiwork      Masterpiece

How could believing that God sees you as His creation change your view of your value being related to your money and possessions?

I would know that by value is because God made me valuable and loves me, period.



Finish the last sentence of this section.

Our True worth is not our Net Worth our value is Completely Dependent on what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross to forgive our sins.

2. Money Is Not a Reward for Godly living.

Randy Alcorn tells a story of a California businessman and a Chinese professor who praised God for His blessing in their lives. What struck you about this story?

*It was stunning to see that both saw God's hand of blessing and control. I am humbled by the Chinese man's ability to praise God even when being stripped of his possessions and family.*

What does this section say about God's blessings? Finish the sentence below:

God's blessings are Numerous , Varied and Undeserved .

3. Money is not a measure of Success .

Was this surprising to you? Yes

How does God define success in these verses?

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Josh. 1:8 NASB)

*God defines success as knowing God's Law and obeying what it says.*

### What Money Is

Fill in the blanks below and write a statement or two explaining each.

1. Money is a Tool .

A tool of Discipline .

*I can show self-control in my spending. I must learn to spend LESS than I make! Handling money is a great way to learn discipline, because it is not good to get everything I want.*

A tool to fulfill the Great Commission .

*I can support churches and missionaries and other ministries with my finances. By using money for eternal purposes, I can make temporal money have an eternal impact.*

A tool to move us toward Holiness .

*I can be more like the Lord in being generous and holding my possessions lightly. All obedience reflects holiness, even obedience with my money.*

2. Money is a Test .

A test of our Loyalties .

*My use of money shows if I love God or love money. Do I handle my money the way God wants me too? Do I believe He owns it all? Am I His ambassador? My spending patterns reflect my beliefs.*

A test of our Perspective .

*I must keep my gaze on God and focus on what is eternal. Since there are two distinct views of money (the Bible's and the world's), my use of money is a constant test as to which perspective I will have.*

3. Money is a Testimony

*I should handle money differently than culture does, and in doing so I will show my love for Christ. Since God's way of handling money is so different from the world's way, this should be a clear testimony of my faith in God.*

Pray the prayer at the end of the chapter.

*Lord, help me put on your eternal lenses. I want to see all I have as yours. I desire to be your faithful steward. In Jesus's Name, Amen.*

## Chapter 3 Leader's Guide

### Making Wise Financial Decisions

Without goals our financial decisions are dictated by other people, unchecked emotions and perceived urgency, all of which obstruct wise decision-making.

Without goals, what can dictate our financial decisions?

1. *Other People*
2. *Unchecked Emotions*
3. *Perceived Urgency*

Which of these are you most likely to respond to?

*Perceived Urgency*

When we choose to set financial objectives, our choices become purposeful and we stay focused on what is most important.

When we set goals, our choices become *Purposeful* .

In order to be intentional with our financial goals, **write** them down, **share** them with someone else, be held **accountable**, and **surrender** each goal to our heavenly Father—*if it is God's will*.

*Download the goal-setting weekend plan to purposefully and intentionally set financial goals. (Go to [www.FinFaith.com](http://www.FinFaith.com) to download the agenda)*

Once you've clearly written out your financial goals, you now have a framework for making purposeful decisions in order to accomplish your objectives. But, how do you make sure that your decisions are wise?

1. Seek Biblical wisdom

Psalm 119: 105 - Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

2. Pray

James 1:5 - But if any of you lacks Wisdom let him Ask of God who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it Will be given to him.

3. Be in Agreement with Your Spouse

1 Corinthians 1:10 - I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you Agree with one another in what you say and that there be No Divisions among you, but that you be perfectly United in mind and thought.

4. Get Godly Counsel

Proverbs 15:22 - Plans fail for lack of Counsel , but with many Advisors they succeed.

5. Have a Long-Term Perspective

Matthew 6:19-21 - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth , where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven , where neither moth nor rust

destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.

6. Be Willing to Wait

Proverbs 28:20, 22 - A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes Haste to be rich will not go unpunished. A man with an evil eye Hastens after wealth, and does not know that want will come upon him.

7. Be Careful Not to Presume upon the Future

James 4:13-15 - Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If The Lord Wills , we will live and also do this or that."

8. Watch Out for Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7 - Be anxious for Nothing , but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

9. Make Decisions that are Consistent with Your Goals

Psalm 37:23 - The steps of a man are established by the Lord ;  
and He delights in his way.

After looking at these 9 tips for making financial decisions, are any surprising?

The importance of making decisions in unity with my wife. Be careful to avoid anxiety in making financial decisions.

Which really resonated with you?

Just how important it is to make goals and to write them down.

Write down your three most important financial goals?

1. Begin giving 10% of my gross income to my church and other charities.
2. Pay an additional \$250/month towards the principal of my home mortgage.
3. Start a 529 savings plan for my children to save for college.

## Chapter 4 Leader's Guide

### The Power to Make Wealth

I was going crazy. I was in a dark place. As I cried over my frustration one morning, God impressed on my heart one of the clearest lessons He has ever taught me. It was as if He said, "This is what it is like when you are focused on yourself and are unproductive." I don't think I will ever forget that moment. I had a great excuse to be lazy. After all, I was essentially confined to my bed. My days consisted of post-op care and aspirations of walking to the mailbox and back. But, the lesson was so very powerful. As I slowly regained my health and energy over the following months, I was reminded over and over again how wonderful it is to turn our focus away from ourselves and to be productive for the Lord. I came to realize that this is one of the greatest blessings of work.

What surprising lesson did Roger learn?

*How wonderful it is to turn our focus away from ourselves and to be productive for the Lord!*

We typically choose our occupation based on the income it produces, a way to support our current and future lifestyle. I want to challenge this widespread view of work.

According to these sentences, what is the typical view of work?

*To make money to support our lifestyle and future goals.*

Do you share this view? Circle one: Yes/No

Let's look at the Biblical Reasons for Work.

1. We Have an Innate, *God* – *Given* Drive to be *Productive* .

Finish this portion from the text:

The timing of this verse is intriguing because God gave Adam this “work ordinance” of caring for the garden Before sin entered the world. This means that work is Good and part of what God Designed us to do in His perfect creation. Work is Not a punishment for sin; it just became Hard as a result of sin .

Why is the timing of God’s command for Adam to work important?

Because it was before sin entered into the world.

Look back at the passage above and finish this sentence.

This means work is Good .

## 2. Work Provides Fulfillment

Fill in the blanks from the chapter:

We experience True Fulfillment when we use our God-given gifts and skills to Serve God . Our satisfaction is Never complete when we toil for men and women or when our primary motivation is Financial Security .

Put these sentences in your own words below.

I'll only really be happy and content in my work if I'm working for the Lord.



3. Work Presents an Opportunity to Provide for our Families and for Others .

Finish this verse:

At the present time Your Plenty will supply what They Need , so that in turn Their Plenty Will supply what You Need . (II Cor. 8:14 NIV)

Have you seen an example of this in your life?

When we were first married, money was really tight. On several occasions, some church members were of great help to us by buying us groceries and giving us money to pay our bills.

4. Work Provides an Environment to Live Out our Christian Life.

All work gives us the opportunity to let our lights shine through our good works and love for others, bringing glory to our Father.

Think about your work. Can you think of a way you can intentionally be a light? Is there a certain area in particular that needs light? Write some ideas below.

Answers will vary. A sample may be to help people's conversation be uplifting and encouraging rather than filled with gossip and negative, critical comments.

5. Scripture Commands Us to Work

1 Thessalonians 3:10 - For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

## A New Definition of Work and Income

Work is the physical and mental energy exerted to be Productive in what God has Called and Equipped us to do.

## A Change in Focus

Read this section:

The world views work as a means to an end (financial freedom) and yearns for the day when it is no longer required. In contrast, Scripture teaches that great fulfillment comes from labor because it is part of what we are created to do. It is not something that we try to quit as soon as we can; service for the Lord is something we should always do in some form.

The Biblical view of work may or may not involve income, since money is not the only purpose of work. Instead, the primary focus is to be productive for the Lord. God did not pay Adam for his initial work, but I am certain that he garnered great satisfaction from caring for the garden and pleasing his Master. Never in Scripture is the aim of work portrayed as self-serving. It is always focused on others—working as unto the Lord, providing for our family, and providing for others.

Write the views on work under each heading.

### World

*A means to an end; Yearning for a time when we no longer have to work; Money; Self-serving*

### Scripture

*Fulfilling; What we are created to do; Should always work if we are able; Primary focus should be to serve the Lord; Focused on others; Work as unto the Lord; Provides for our families; Provides for others*

Put a star by the description that most resembles you.

## God Owns It All

Read the following passage carefully.

Only when we understand that God owns everything are we able to surrender our misconceptions of ownership. Even for mature believers, one of the last areas of surrender to the Lord is money. If we fail to recognize God's ownership by holding money and possessions tightly, we expose ourselves to the very serious dangers of loving money.

Ownership matters. When we own something, we can do with it as we please. If we are caring for another's property, we do not have that same privilege. We become stewards, required to faithfully care for the borrowed items in the owner's best interest. ...We recognize everything we have is God's, then we act on this truth by handling our wealth for His benefit.

Underline the words: own/ownership, surrender, stewards, faithfully

Why is changing our focus of ownership so important?

Because it is only when we realize that everything belongs to God that we will really be motivated to see work and money from His perspective. It is then that we are able to accept His set of rules, understanding that He knows how things work best.

Rewrite the last sentence. "We recognize..."

everything we have is God's, then we act on this truth by handling our wealth for His benefit.

## God Gives the Power

What does the Bible say about our ability to make wealth?

He is responsible for the wealth that we have. This is not a popular view, but it is true. We think we are in control, and that it is our education, skill, and our hard work that creates wealth and gives us the ability to be rich. But, this is not what the Bible says.

Deuteronomy 8:18 - But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Since God owns it all, He can both give and take what He wants when He wants. We experience great freedom when we understand that our responsibility is to work hard for the Lord, depend on Him for our needs, and live within the income and wealth He allows.

What gives us freedom?

*When we understand that our responsibility is to work hard for the Lord, depend on Him for our needs, and live within the income and wealth He allows.*

The Balance of Work

Where do you fall on this continuum?

Work as little as possible-----Work too much

Roger's friend encouraged him to set boundaries, then told him, "Determine the amount of time you can spend at work to maintain your priorities, and trust God with the rest."

Do you need this encouragement in your work? Yes

What last tip does Roger offer in this paragraph?

One additional tip for maintaining balance in your life is to make sure you

Take A Day Off Each Week . Scripture is emphatic about

accomplishing our work in six days (Exodus 34:21). We are created to need a day off. I have found that I accomplish more during a week with a day of true rest than I do in working seven days without a break. God knows how we function best.

## Chapter 5 Leader's Guide

### Giving – Don't Miss the Blessing

As believers, we should experience joy and freedom in our giving, not the binding nature of compulsion.

Generous Giving Brings Joy and Freedom - not Binding compulsion

After years of studying what the Bible teaches about giving, I have reached a simple, non-debatable conclusion: God calls His children to be generous!

Rewrite the last sentence: God calls ...

His children to be generous!

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. (II Cor. 9:10-11 NIV)

When the Bible references financial stewardship, faithfulness is always framed in generosity.

Think of a generous person you know. Describe them.

The most generous person I know is always aware of other people's needs and looking for ways to help others. What is most amazing is how it is an everyday occurrence, not just something she does once a week.

After reading the sobering statistics on Christian's giving, how do you feel?

Guilty and frustrated that Christians often are no different with our money than the rest of the world.

What have you been taught about giving a tithe?

*That it is more of an optional behavior since it is not mentioned in the Old Testament.*

How did you react to this statement?

10% is a great place to start and a bad place to end.

*I have never really thought about this before, but I can see how it makes sense.*

Why does Roger say this?

*“Because some of us need to give more than 10% in order to be generous! Scripture tells us to give in proportion to how much we have, and that we have been blessed with more so we can give more (II Cor. 8:11). In II Cor. 8:3 some even gave ‘beyond their ability.’ What seems generous for one is not necessarily generous for all.”*

Finish C.S. Lewis' quote: “I do not believe we can settle How Much

we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give More than we can Spare .”

Why Give Generously?

Giving Is an Act of Worship

Honor the LORD from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce;  
(Prov. 3:9 NASB)

I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. (Phil. 4:18 NIV)

We worship when we give, recognizing that God owns it all and thanking Him for His provision. He is the creator of heaven and earth and the author of everything that is good. He even sent His only son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins so that we might have eternal life! Our regular giving is a tangible reminder of God's authority and our need to praise and worship Him.

According to this paragraph, how is giving an act of worship?

*Giving recognizes God's ownership of everything and reminds us to thank Him for providing for our needs, both material and eternal needs.*

God has established two specific groups who are tremendously important to Him—

1. *Those who are in ministry*
2. *Those who are poor and neglected*

Giving Meets Needs Close to God's Heart

Those in ministry

In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. (I Cor. 9:14 NIV)

List some people in ministry you can share with generously

*My church in general; maybe some of the teachers in the church. Some friends who are missionaries with Campus Crusade for Christ.*

The Poor and neglected

But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (I John 3:17 NASB)

“The needs are overwhelming. Pastor Andy Stanley says, ‘Do for One what you wish you could do for Everyone ’”

Do you have a “One”? Yes/No

If not, begin praying that God will open a way for you to serve those in need.

### We Receive Blessings

Some find it uncomfortable and self-serving to consider individual reward or benefit as any part of our motivation for giving.

Do you feel this way? Sometimes

But, God consistently promises that He will abundantly bless those who are generous. If He did not want this to be part of our incentive, He would have just told us to give without ever mentioning the rewards. Instead, He talks about our receiving blessings both in this world and the world to come. Embracing this truth from God's Word is critical to change how we view giving.

### Blessings in This Life

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. (Prov. 3:9, 10 NASB)

Roger lists verses in this chapter to show the consequences we suffer for being stingy and the blessings we enjoy from being generous. List them below:

The consequences for being stingy:

- \* We will have many curses
- \* We will never be content



And, the blessings we enjoy from being generous:

- \* *We will have everything we need*
- \* *We will be filled with joy and our work will be blessed by God*
- \* *We will be content*
- \* *We will be refreshed*
- \* *We will receive kindness and help from others*
- \* *We will experience joy from our giving*

#### Blessings in the Life to Come

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. (Luke 12:33 NIV)

Why do you think Christians don't give more?

*"There are many reasons-financial problems, lack of trust, absence of vision, and selfishness. Most Christians want to give more than they do. The problem is not one of desire but of priorities, as a multitude of goals compete for our dollars."*

Let's look at two reasons:

We Don't *Read*

Increased Bible reading and significant giving are highly correlated because what God says about benevolence is clear, consistent, and compelling. In order to contribute more of our dollars, we need to read and believe God's Word.

We Don't *Plan*

Research suggests that lack of planning is the primary reason Christians don't give more.

Each of you should give what you have *Decided* in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (II Cor. 9:7 NIV)

Paul's use of the word "decided" carries with it an element of planning. Scripture explains that certain spending priorities are more important than others. This is why the chapters in this book are sequenced as they are. Since giving is our first priority in the *Priority Order of Spending*, it is important to determine our giving *before* we make other spending decisions. If we have not purposed our giving in advance, we end up contributing our leftovers.

Put a star by the reason that is a struggle for you?

Roger introduces the *Priority Order of Spending* here. What is the First in our priority?

1. Giving

Lifestyle Generosity

First Timothy 6:18 proclaims, "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share." Second Corinthians 9:11 explains, "so that you can be generous on every occasion." Generosity is more than just the money we give on Sundays; it should permeate our daily lives, defining who we are. As followers of Christ, we should display lifestyle generosity. Lifestyle generosity is showing our love for God and others with our money and our actions.

Have you ever considered the importance of your life being marked by generosity?

Not very often.

Look at the paragraph above and fill in these blanks:

Generosity is more than just the money we give on Sundays; it should

Permeate our daily lives, Defining who we are. As followers of Christ, we should display Lifestyle Generosity ....showing our love for God and Others with our Money and our Actions .

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with *actions* and in truth. (I John 3:18 NIV)

Looking at the list of ideas for showing lifestyle generosity should inspire us to show our love for Christ in this tangible way. Choose 5 things on this list – or think of others – that you can try right away!

1. *Return a shopping cart for someone loading a car*
2. *Leave a note of thanks with your tip*
3. *Write a thank-you note to someone who has positively influenced your life*
4. *When a driver merges into your lane, greet him or her with a wave and a smile*
5. *Give to those who ask me for money*

## Chapter 6 Leader's Guide

### The Truth About Taxes

Many Christians are increasingly frustrated with the taxes the government imposes, especially as more and more of the money we work for is used for programs and policies we often disagree with. But as much as we complain about taxes today, they used to be more formidable, at least for those with the highest incomes. During the 1950s and 1960s, the top income tax bracket paid 90 percent of what they earned! As recently as 1981, married couples sent 70 percent of their income above \$215,400 to the federal government.

While our taxes aren't this steep today, they are not likely to decrease anytime soon, since the federal government and most state governments are in serious debt. It is frustrating when we don't end up with as much money as we could have had.

What is your reaction to these paragraphs? Do you feel frustrated about taxes? Do you feel relief when you read how high taxes have been in history? Do you still feel frustrated with the amount you are taxed?

*I am frustrated about how much I pay in taxes. It was surprising to see that the top tax brackets used to be higher. I am still frustrated with how much I pay in taxes.*

In the story of Paul and Silas and the slave girl, why was the people's reaction so severe?

*Because what Paul did by casting out the demon took away her owner's opportunity to make money and profit from her fortune telling. Our true heart shows when our money is affected.*

Similar to the slave girl's owners, we get angry when the government takes more of our money. And that reveals a big part of the problem; we consider it *our* money. When we recognize that God owns it all, our financial perspective changes, and we begin to view government and taxes differently.

Have you considered that your belief that God's owns of all we have will change how we view taxes? Yes/No

Let's dig into this concept together:

### We Are Subject to Governmental Authority

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. (Rom. 13:1–2 NASB)

Look at this verse carefully. Who establishes authority?

*God does.*

If we resist the authority God has established, what is our consequence?

*We bring condemnation upon ourselves.*

Yikes!

"Let others lose sleep over the election. Let others grow bitter from party or petty rivalries. Let others cast their hope with the people of the elephant or the donkey. Not followers of Jesus. We place our trust in the work of God. How many kings has He seen come and go? How many nations has He seen stand and fall? He is above them all. And He oversees them all. So, while others get anxious, we don't. Here is what we do: we pray." (Max Lucado)

First of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1–4 NIV).

Instead of resisting authority, what does Max Lucado encourage Christians to do? (Check all that apply)

- \*Lose sleep
- \*Grow bitter from party rivalries
- \*Cast our hope in political parties
- ✓ \*Place our trust in God and his work
- ✓ \*Recognize God's rule and sovereignty throughout history
- ✓ \*Pray

What are some things we can pray for?

*We can pray for God's blessing to be on whoever is elected. We can pray that those who are elected will look to God for guidance and wisdom. We should pray that God will unite our country, strengthen us and appoint and anoint our leaders.*

Christians Must Pay the Taxes They Owe

Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. (Rom. 13:7 NASB)

If we owe it, we must pay it. This verse does not say we should pay tax only to those who use it wisely, or only to those who are godly. It says to pay what we owe.

I love the story of Jesus finding the tax money in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17! Jesus' paying this tax allowed Him to stay above reproach, protect His witness, and prevent taxes from becoming a distraction."

Write these three things Jesus did.

1. *He stayed above reproach*
2. *He protected His witness*
3. *He prevented taxes from becoming a distraction*

Do you see the value in these? *Yes*

We have now learned the second step in the *Priority Order of Spending*. Fill in the first two below:

1. Giving
2. Taxes

### The Truth about Taxes ... Taxes Are Not the Problem

Read this paragraph carefully:

The truth is that taxes are not the problem. Blaming our financial struggles on taxes reveals an issue with our perspective. Are we forgetting that God owns it all? Do we believe life consists of our possessions? Do we think lower taxes would make our lives better, because we would have more to spend on what we want? Do we really suppose having more money will make our lives better? When we blame taxes, we stoke our appetites to desire more money, which creates serious consequences.

Sit with these questions a moment, and honestly seek your heart. Now read this verse.

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.  
(1 Tim. 6:9 NASB)

If we see taxes as the government taking what rightfully belongs to us, we will be bitter, angry, and resentful. But if we understand that God owns all of our money and establishes authority, we will be more likely to submit to the government and realize paying taxes is a necessary and important priority.

Underline the adjectives that can describe us if we believe taxes are taking away what is ours.

What opposite words, then, could describe us if we surrender all to God, recognizing it's all His and we must obey and be faithful.

Joyful, content, peaceful, grateful

### Seek Wise Tax Counsel

When seeking financial advice, partner with someone who has both technical expertise and godly insight in order to receive wise counsel.

### General Tax Planning Tips

#### Flee from Tax Advice That Is Dishonest

Proverbs 13:20 does not say that the companion of fools will become a fool; it says that he will suffer harm.

#### Be Careful of Making a Decision Primarily to Save on Taxes

Allow the tax effect to be one part of the process rather than the primary motivation.

#### Strive for Simple Tax Planning

Never participate in a strategy you do not understand.

O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me. (Ps. 131:1 NASB)

If you cannot explain a tax strategy to your spouse, pass on it.

#### Be Proactive in Tax Planning

The value of forward tax planning is often a matter of timing. Imagine receiving a phone call from your tax preparer on April 15, explaining you owe an unexpected \$15,000 to the IRS today. Assume conversely that you work with your financial planner in July to formulate a tax projection for the current year. It reveals you will owe \$15,000 next April. While the news is the same, you handle it much better. Why? You have nine months to prepare for the liability and possibly implement strategies to reduce the tax owed.



Be *Above Reproach* with Taxes

As believers, we should be completely honest, without even a hint of immorality.

Rewrite this sentence. Without even a ....

*hint of immorality.*

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; (Eph. 5:3 NASB)

Do you have any appreciated assets that you should consider using for part of your charitable giving?

*Encourage participants to examine their assets to let for ones that could be given.*

Could a Donor-Advised Fund like the National Christian Foundation help you to be more effective and efficient with your charitable giving?

*Encourage the participants to at least check out the website at [www.nationalchristian.com](http://www.nationalchristian.com) and consider this as an option.*

## Chapter 7 Leader's Guide

### Free From Debt

Debt is an obligation to pay something owed to another. Types of liabilities include home mortgages, equity loans, auto loans, unsecured loans, credit cards, even utility and phone bills. Any product or service we use or consume *before* paying for it constitutes a debt. This is broader than our typical definition and is important to realize as we discover what the Bible says about owing money.

What constitutes a debt?

*Any product or service we use or consume before paying for it constitutes a debt*

List the examples here:

*home mortgages, equity loans, auto loans, unsecured loans, credit cards, even utility and phone bills*

Underline the surprising items Roger included under debt. Is this a new thought to you? Yes/No

Before taking on debt, we should evaluate it three ways—

1. *Biblically*
2. *Emotionally*
3. *Financially*

Biblical Considerations of Debt

Christians *Must* Pay Their Debts

Before acquiring debt, we need a reasonable plan of repayment, remembering that paying our liabilities is a higher priority than savings, investments, and living expenses.

Debt repayment is a higher priority than ...

*savings, investments and living expenses.*

When we take on debt haphazardly, we assume the future will be stable and prosperous. But what if it is not? House values could plummet and make it impossible to sell or refinance. We might spend an expected bonus that never materializes or make a bad investment with borrowed money.

Underline the word "assume". What does haphazardly taking on debt assume?

*That the future will be stable and prosperous.*

Avoid Co-Signing a Loan

The act of cosigning, also called surety, makes you responsible for another's obligations.

He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, but he who hates being a guarantor is secure. (Prov. 11:15 NASB)

The Bible is clear that it is not wise to cosign for others. When a lender requires a guarantor, he or she determined the risk is too great to justify the potential profit without this extra protection. Since 50 percent of all cosigners end up paying back part or all of another person's debt, this biblical principle provides protection.

Roger gives two options rather than cosigning:

1. Make a loan
2. Make a gift

Have you ever considered that the Bible speaks to the issue of cosigning? Yes/No

Don't Borrow to Invest

A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished. A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth, and does not know that want will come upon him. (Prov. 28:20, 22 NASB)

Have you ever been tempted to borrow to invest? What negative outcomes could come from this practice?

*It greatly increases your risk of loss.*

Be Willing to *Wait*

Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Wait for the LORD, and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it. (Ps. 37:7, 34 NASB)

Why is it so hard to be patient?

*Because our sinful nature causes us to want our desires immediately met. We just don't like to wait.*

What does God promise to those who wait?

*We will find our rest in Him. God will exalt us and we will prosper and reap His blessings long after the wicked are cut off.*

Emotional Considerations of Debt

Debt Causes *Stress*

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave. (Prov. 22:7 NASB)

Describe a time you felt financial stress because of debt?

*I remember feeling a lot of stress about a year after we bought our first house and then incurred some credit card debt that we could not pay off. It created a lot of stress and anxiety. It actually made me sick to my stomach.*

Debt Creates *Insecurity*

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. (Rom. 13:8 NASB)

Remember when I divided my clients into two groups, the peace of mind group and the anxious group? In addition to being less generous, the worried bunch was characterized by having much more debt than their content counterparts. The fear of financial loss that accompanies debt is real.

Can you think of a time you felt the peace of being debt-free?

*Absolutely! It was a huge relief when we paid off that credit card. I also remember how good we felt when we paid off our last car loan.*

Debt Reduces *Freedom* and *Flexibility*

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. (Prov. 16:9 NASB)

When our liability payments restrict us from responding to the Spirit's call, we are enslaved to debt. When our monthly payments stretch us so thin we cannot give generously, we are enslaved to debt. Create a financial situation that makes it easy to follow the Lord's direction now and in the future. Less debt always equals more freedom and flexibility.

According to this passage, when are we enslaved to debt?

*We are enslaved to debt when our debt payments keep us from giving as much as want to give or pay our taxes. We are enslaved to debt when our liabilities keep us from responding to God's leading in our lives.*

Describe a time when you experienced lack of freedom or flexibility because of debt.

*I can remember not being able to give what we wanted to give to the relief effort that the church was sponsoring for Hurricane Katrina because our debt payments were so high.*

## Financial Considerations of Debt

### No Good Deals with Debt

“Debt almost always guarantees you will pay more than the actual cost of an item. It is the opposite of getting a good deal. We lose sight of the total cost when we are conditioned to think in terms of a monthly payment.”

Paying Off Debt Is a Risk – Free Investment Return

Briefly explain what this means:

When a debt is paid off, it is like getting a guaranteed investment return at the interest rate of the debt. The reason for this is that you are guaranteed to have to pay the interest on the debt if it is not paid off.

The Value of What Is Purchased with Debt Should Exceed the Cost of Financing.

What are some examples of items that do not follow this requirement?

A car; Most purchases that are made on a credit card like food, clothes, entertainment. Almost everything goes down in value or loses all of its value after it is purchased / consumed.

When have you felt the consequences of not following this advice?

Anytime someone is upside down (the debt is higher than what the product can be sold for) in a car loan or home mortgage. This is especially painful for those who cannot sell their home because they cannot afford to pay the lender what would still be owed after selling their home.

Questions to Ask before Taking on Debt

Biblical

- Do we have the freedom before God to take on this debt?
- Will the debt interfere with our ability to give and be generous?
- What is our motivation for taking on the debt?
- Will it be more difficult to serve God with this debt?
- Are there any options available other than debt?

## Emotional

- Will this debt create stress or anxiety?
- Will this debt reduce flexibility?
- Do my spouse and I agree on the debt?
- Can our goals be achieved in any way other than this debt?

## Financial

- Will the value of the item purchased with debt always be greater than the remaining debt balance?
- Will this debt place an excessive strain on our budget?
- Will this debt interfere with other, more important financial goals?

## Steps to Getting Out of Debt

*Pray*

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Phil. 4:6 NASB)

Finish this part of the verse. Be anxious for ...

*nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

Are you able to obey this command in your current debt situation? *Yes/No*

Acknowledge your financial position before God, and ask for His guidance and wisdom.

*Determine* Where You Are

You must know where you are in order to develop a plan to get out of debt. Begin by writing down all your debts, noting the interest rates, monthly payments, and lengths of term.

If this is something you need to do, write a goal date here to complete this documentation. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Stop Going into Debt

It does not do any good to reduce debt if we replace it with new debt. The goal is to become totally debt-free as soon as possible, and this will only happen if we stop going into debt.

### Snowball Theory of Debt Repayment

Read the steps below and share them with your spouse. If you are currently in debt, determine a goal date to begin this plan as soon as possible.

- List all debts in order, from smallest balance to largest.
- Pay the minimum payment on every debt, except for the one with the smallest debt balance.
- Contribute as much extra as possible to the monthly payment on this smallest debt until it is paid off.
- Once the smallest debt is paid in full, you have freed up the amount of the minimum payment on the smallest debt balance, plus the amount of the extra payments you were making. Take both amounts and apply them as additional payments on the second-smallest debt balance.
- Once the second-smallest debt is retired, you have the payments from the first debt, the second debt, and the extra payments that can all be added to the third-smallest debt balance. The amount of your total payments continues to grow with each debt that is paid off, hence the name of "snowball."
- Continue to follow this strategy until all your debts are retired and you are debt-free.
- Once all of your debt is retired, keep making the payments ... to yourself. Remember to keep rolling your debt payments forward until all your liabilities are retired. Once you are debt-free, keep making your monthly payments, but make them to yourself. This gives you a substantial amount of extra funds that can be used for savings, investing, or even additional giving.

List your smallest debt balance below and determine an extra amount you can contribute towards this debt on a monthly basis to get your snowball rolling!

*A VISA credit card that has a revolving balance of \$1,250.*



## Chapter 8 Leader's Guide

### Investing for the Future

After reading the story of Roger's experience with PolyMedica, record your initial thoughts below.

*These answers will vary with each person.*

From Roger's first-hand failure, he first points out Poor Reasons to Save and Invest. Let's look at these together.

#### 1. Greed

Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (Luke 12:15 NASB)

The desire to be rich is insatiable and leads to ruin. Greed clouds our judgment and must be avoided as a primary investment motivator.

Look back at the verse. Underline the word *Beware*. Now finish the verse. Why should we beware of greed? "For not even when one has an abundance does his life ...

*consist of his possessions .*

Jesus is saying that greed assumes that our life DOES consist of our possessions. Have you felt yourself be tempted to believe this lie? Explain.

*Our society tempts us to believe that we will be happier when we have more money and things. This is certainly the image that is portrayed in Hollywood and all around us. I have certainly felt this way in college and when choosing a career. I also feel this way when I am around people who have a lot of money.*

#### 2. Pride

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited ... (1 Tim. 6:17a NASB)

When our net worth increases due to our growing investments, we have a tendency to swell with self-admiration, looking to our wealth, instead of the Lord, as our security and problem solver. King Solomon spoke of the self-sufficiency of the rich this way: "The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscaleable wall" (Prov. 18:11).

What if we do experience financial gain and success? If we should not be conceited or swell with self-admiration, what should we do? Look up James 1:17, and write it in the space below.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

Our success isn't really from us at all. Every gift is from our Heavenly Father, so should we feel proud for something He's given us? What response would be pleasing to Him as our good gift-giver?

*Give Him thanks, praise Him, be full of gratitude, give Him glory.*

### 3. *Fear*

When it comes to money, we have many fears. Those who lack financial resources worry about not having enough. "What if we cannot afford college, lose our jobs, encounter a medical crisis, or don't have enough to retire?"

The fear is different but often stronger for those with plenty of wealth. They agonize over losing what they have. "How would life change if our income is decreased, if we suffer a large loss with our investments, or can no longer afford the privileges and possibilities that come with having an abundance of money?"

Put an "x" along the line below where are you tempted to fear:

Not having enough-----X-----Losing what I have

Explain why you placed yourself where you did on this fear scale.

*Because it makes me nervous to think about not being able to provide for my family in the way that they have become accustomed. It would be really hard if I could not send my kids to the college they wanted to go to or to provide the things that my wife would like.*

After going through these 3 Poor Reasons to invest, put a star by the one you feel is the most likely to creep in.

Greed

Pride

★ Fear

Let's look at a Biblical Philosophy of Investing.

Remember, all we have is the Lord's. We are called to be faithful stewards of what He has given us. Scripture teaches that investments are a tool we can use to advance God's kingdom. The investment result is not all that matters. The process is of extreme importance.

Underline the phrase *faithful stewards* in the paragraph above. Now finish this sentence. The investment result is not all that matters. The process is of extreme importance.

A Biblical Philosophy of Investing

Have a Greater Purpose

What is your purpose for investing?

*If I am honest, I am simply investing to make more money in order to provide security for me and my family so that we can cover our wants and needs..*

Developing a biblical purpose for saving and investing is the first step in making wise decisions. At Ronald Blue & Co., we believe investing helps people provide for their families, do good works, and be generous.

Write the three purposes of saving and investing that are highlighted above:

1. *Provide for family*
2. *Do good works*
3. *Be generous*

Are any of these surprising to you? Yes/No. If so, circle the surprising purpose of investing.

Find the Right *Balance*

This biblical investment rationale promotes balance. There are three ways to invest: too little (presumptuous), too much (hoarding), or just enough (prudent savings).

If we don’t save enough, we are guilty of presuming on the future. We are warned against hoarding in the parable of the rich farmer.

Look at the chart below. Where do you see yourself? Put an “X” there.

| Save Too Little<br>(Presumptuous) | Save Just Enough<br>(Prudent Savings) | Save Too Much<br>(Hoarding) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| X                                 |                                       |                             |

Our objective should be to strive for the middle ground. Let’s call this *prudent savings*.

How to Invest

Be *Humble*

Wise investing requires humbly understanding we cannot know the future with certainty. Humility leads to better outcomes when we focus on the process of investing, rather than just short-term performance. Humility encourages us to seek wise counsel and to keep our hope in God, trusting Him for the outcomes He controls.

From the paragraph above, look at the underlined hints about humility, and write them here:

1. *We cannot know the future with certainty*
2. *Focus on the Process instead of the performance*
3. *Seek wise counsel*
4. *Trust in God for the outcome*

Understand *Risk*

...risk is the possibility of loss associated with the prospect of growth; risk is linked to what causes or destroys growth. Greater opportunities for growth *always* come with higher levels of risk, so we must view these together.

Let's write that again: Greater opportunities for growth *always* come with *higher* levels of *risk*.

As investors, we continuously face a number of risks, including

- Longevity risk— *Outliving* our money
- Inflation risk—losing *purchasing power* as prices increase
- Volatility risk—having to sell assets when values are *low*
- Behavioral risk—making *bad* decisions based on fear or greed

We have to understand the risks involved with various investment options and then decide the appropriate amount of risk to take.

To accurately pair risk and return, investors must first determine when they will need their invested funds.

Draw a line to match the time frame with the amount of risk.

Short term needs  Less risk

Longer-term needs  More risk

Are you taking an appropriate amount of risk with your savings and investments?

*I think I am more conservative in my 401k than I am with my college savings accounts. This probably does not make sense because I will need the college funds way before I will need the 401k money.*

Practice *Diversification*

Diversification reflects *humility* while concentration implies *arrogance*.

Why is this?

Since we don't know the future, we need to diversify our investments. In addition, no one has ever been able to consistently predict the investment markets. Since God is ultimately in control, we need to stay diversified rather than concentrating based on a hope or a prediction.

Solomon understood this need to mitigate risk.

Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth. (Ecc. 11:2 NASB)

Are your investments diversified? Yes/No

Plod Patiently

Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow. (Prov. 13:11 NIV)

How is the growing money gathered?

Little by little. Slowly over time. Not all at once.

The level of our patience and our ability to make careful, wise decisions will affect our stamina to weather short-term market fluctuations. Be diligent by focusing on the more predictable factors that determine long-term results. Do not be swayed by the unpredictable short-term movements of markets.

Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. (Prov. 14:29 NIV)

With your finances, which describes you? Circle one. Patient or Quick-tempered?

If you are trying to get rich quick and not being patient, describe how you will change your behavior to plod patiently with your savings and investments.

I am going to stay away from get rich quick schemes and plans and focus on a long-term plan. I am not going to play the lottery or engage in other behavior that has the motivation of getting rich quick.

Invest According to *Time Frames*

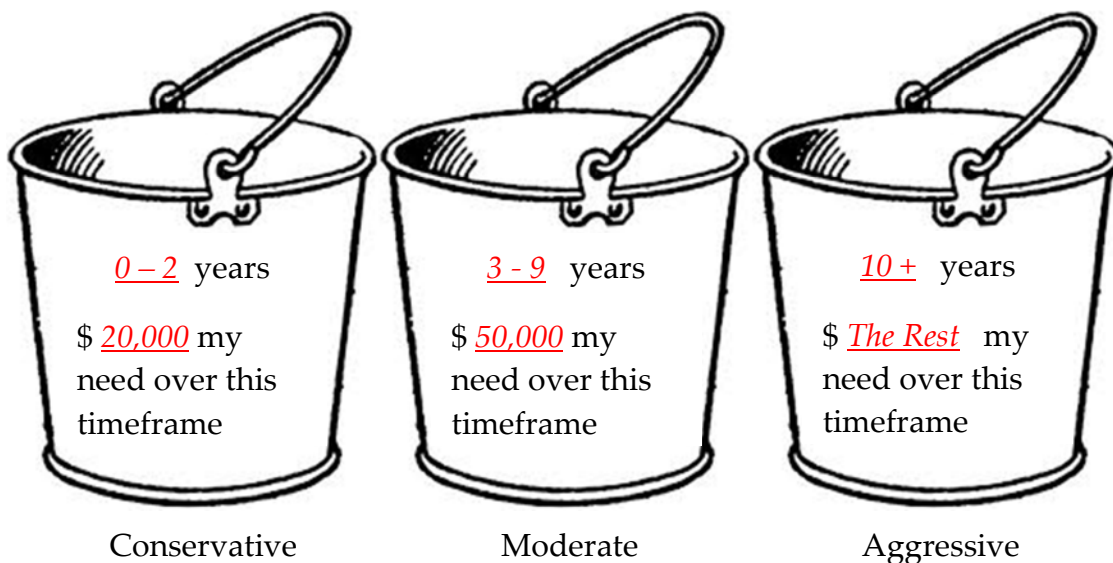
Read the following paragraphs and use the information to write on the buckets below.

The first bucket (two-year money) is invested very conservatively and, thus, maintains most of its value during the downturn. You are easily able to access these funds when needed without suffering a significant loss.

The cash flow needed from your investments in years three through nine is invested in various bond funds. While these suffer some declines during this bear market, the losses are much less severe than stock losses. Less than two years after the downturn began, these investments have fully recovered, and when you begin to make any necessary withdrawals, the values are higher than they were in 2007.

The assets needed in ten or more years are invested aggressively in various stock and commodity funds, and they did experience large declines during the tumultuous eighteen months. While it is not easy to view the losses on your statements, you realize you can be patient, because you do not need these assets for at least ten years. You stay calm and are very thankful to have other provisions or your shorter-term needs.

Write on the buckets below the time frame of the three categories and the amount that you think you will need from your savings and investments over this these time frames.



Count the Cost

The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps. (Prov. 14:15 NASB)

What does it look like for you to count the cost with your investments?

*I need to make sure that I can be comfortable with my investments. For me, part of counting the cost is realizing that I need to control my spending to make sure that I can continue to contribute the amount I want to contribute to my 401k.*

Pursue Peace

Watch out for anxiety, because as Proverbs 12:25 says, "An anxious heart weighs a man down." Paul commands us in Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing," which includes our investments.

What do you need to do to have more peace and less anxiety with your savings and investments?

*I need to discuss all of my investments with my spouse to make sure we are in agreement and comfortable. I need to make sure that I am investing according to my time frames. When the stock market goes down, I am going to take a deep breath and remember that the money that is invested in stocks is not needed for at least 10 years.*

Faithfulness

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. (1 Cor. 4:2)

While we often judge our decisions based on outcomes that are impossible to predict, God asks us to be faithful stewards, following a biblical process for making decisions. Then, free from anxiety and full of peace, we can leave the outcome in His competent hands.

What does God ask us to be? Faithful Stewards

We can be free from anxiety and full of peace , and we can leave the outcome in His competent hands.

Now that sounds like a wonderful offer, doesn't it? Yes!!



## Chapter 9 Leader's Guide

### Who Needs a Budget Spending Plan?

Did you chuckle at the “first world probs” listed at the beginning of this chapter? Can you think of any other “probs” that seem significant, yet in light of the world's struggles, they're not?

*Have fun with this sharing the answers that the group comes up with.*

We don't understand the world's poverty, and the world does not comprehend our wealth.

Have you been in your own city or on a trip where you saw poverty? Yes/No

Explain how you felt about the contrast with your life styles?

*Usually after being in another country, we feel the contrast of our own wealth. We take so many “needs” for granted – realizing that many don't have what we MUST have. Quite a perspective changer.*

Most Americans place in the top 1 percent of the world's income, and we assume our abundance is for our enjoyment.<sup>1</sup> Andy Stanley calls this the “consumption assumption.”

What is the Consumption Assumption?

*Assuming that what we have is mostly for our own enjoyment. Assuming that we deserve it all.*

Why has God given us so much? Is it just so we can be extra comfortable? If it is not all for our pleasure, how much should we spend?

How would you answer these questions?

*I know the correct answer is to say that all I have is certainly not all for my own enjoyment. The problem is that the way that I live often says something different.*

The journey to determine how much we spend begins with changing our assumption about consumption. A focus on spending money solely to acquire things causes us to live as if our time on earth is all that matters. This incorrect perspective distracts us from what matters most to God.

What is an incorrect focus/perspective?

*To spend money solely to acquire things – acting like life on earth is all that matters. To be mainly concerned about our own comfort and enjoyment.*

Who does this perspective distract us from?

*It distracts us from the most important things in our life – our relationship with God and with others. It can make us less effective for God.*

Describe a time when your own consumption assumption distracted you from God.

*Oddly enough, this has happened more in my life when I have had excess money than it did when we barely had enough. One specific example is when we build a house. It seems that for six months, we were almost completely consumed with all of the details of the house.*

Culture's popular plan is to pursue higher education in order to make more money so that we can buy more things, not remembering the danger that often accompanies our satisfaction with earthly comfort.

Illustrate culture's plan below:

*Pursue higher education* → *Make more money* → *Buy more things*

One of the most frightening verses in Scripture highlights the peril of a life fixated on the temporal.

As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; therefore they forgot Me. (Hos. 13:6 NASB)

Why is this verse frightening?

*It shows how incredibly distracting money can be. The ultimate distraction is forgetting God!*

Having an abundance makes it easy to become consumptive, which often leads to a migration of our hope from God to our riches. Is it any wonder history shows that when a nation's wealth increases, its collective dependence on God decreases?

Having an abundance makes it easy to be consumptive.

Being Consumptive leads to a migration of our hope from God to riches.

In the hymn, Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, the fourth verse says:

O to grace how great a debtor  
 Daily I'm constrained to be!  
 Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,  
 Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
 Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
 Seal it for Thy courts above.

Underline the two lines that start with "Prone".

What is our heart's natural tendency? To wander away from God.

Now look back at the sentences that you filled in. What does our heart's hope migrate or wander from in our state of being consumptive?

It wanders from placing our hope in God.

Look back at the hymn lyrics. What is the prayer in the last two lines of the stanza?

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Where Is Our Focus?

It is our heart's focus, not our actual level of spending, which determines whether we love things and use people or love people and use things.

Let's stay with this thought for a minute.

It's our heart's focus, not our actual level of spending, which determines whether we love things and use people or love people and use things.

Write this idea in your own words.

*I guess it comes down to whether my focus is mainly on myself or others.*

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. (1 John 2:15–16 NASB)

The Bible does not provide strict mandates explaining what amount of spending is consumptive and what is balanced. It is a matter of the heart whether our wealth is our treasure, regardless of how much we have.

Underline "It is a matter of the heart."

In Psalm 139:23 and 24, David prays:

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Underline the word "heart". What is he asking God to do with his heart?

*To search it and know it, to test it and see if there is anything offensive in it.*

Why is this such a vulnerable prayer?

*Because it might show us some things that are very selfish and uncomfortable.*

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:21 NASB)

A.W. Tozer provides four questions to help us discover our heart's treasure:

Write a brief answer after each question.

- What do we value most?
- What would we most hate to lose?
- What do our thoughts turn to most frequently when we are free to think what we will?
- What affords us the greatest pleasures?

The realization that it is possible to spend too much allows us to grapple with the question of how much we should spend on living expenses.

Rewrite this question:

*How much should I spend on living expenses?*

But before going any further in our budget making, we must deliberately ask the Lord to help us keep our gaze on Him, as King David prayed.

One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple. (Ps. 27:4 NASB)

Why is it important to keep our gaze on Him, specifically in our budgeting?

*Because it is so easy for us to get off track with our focus when it comes to money.*

How Much to Spend?

We determine our maximum spending level by following the priority order of spending, which begins by calculating how much we will need to cover charitable giving, taxes, debt payments, and saving for future needs. Once we subtract these from our income, the amount that remains establishes the *most* we can spend on living expenses without jeopardizing these higher priorities. We create financial stress when we spend our money backward—spending first on lifestyle and then hoping to have enough left for giving, taxes, debt, and savings.

Look back at the description of the Priority Order of Spending. Fill in the numbers with the first priorities.

1. *Giving*
2. *Taxes*
3. *Debt*
4. *Savings*

After these four, what can we establish?

*The most we can spend on living expenses without jeopardizing these higher priorities.*

Once we have calculated the maximum amount we can spend by following the priority order of spending, our second level of assessment is more difficult.

Should we spend less than what we could spend? This is a personal decision that must not be legalistic but based on prayer and conversation with our spouse. The goal is to find a spending level that fights against the consumption assumption and protects our focus.

Underline the personal question we must prayerfully consider.

### Give An Account

So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:12 NASB)

As a steward of God's resources, we should be able to give an account of our current spending.

Are you currently keeping an account of your spending? *Yes/No*

If your answer is no, consider using something like the free and user-friendly web-based program called Mint.com which has set a new standard by making money management almost simple. Over the past few years, technological advances have reduced the amount of time needed to accurately track expenses and account balances.

### Predetermine Spending

Our spending habits speak volumes about our priorities. When we review our patterns, we are more likely to make wise and God-honoring decisions about our future spending. This predetermining of expenses is usually called a budget. However, this "B" word has developed such a bad reputation, I prefer the kinder term "spending plan."

How has budgeting worked for you (or not worked) in the past?

*At times it has worked great, and at other times it has created a lot of stress because of the time it took and some of the arguments that would ensue based on spending.*

The goal of a spending plan is to help us spend money in a way that is consistent with our priorities, protecting us from being consumptive and preventing our hope from drifting away from God and toward money.

Re-write the goal of a spending plan in your own words?

*To help us spend money in a way that is consistent with our priorities which are hopefully in line with God's priorities.*

What does a spending plan protect us from and prevent us from?

*From being consumptive and preventing our hope from drifting away from God and toward money.*

Invest In Relationships

Dr. Ken Boa, president of Reflections Ministries, once asked a powerful question: "If you had to summarize the Bible in one word, what would it be?"

There are many good responses, but Ken's insightful answer was "relationships"

What was your response to Ken's answer?

*Jesus; Love; God; Hope; Redemption; Salvation*

Investing in our relationship with God and with people should be more consuming than our own comfort. If we create categories in our spending plan designated for investing in relationships, and if we create some margin in our budget to be able to respond to unexpected opportunities to bless others, we will experience authentic joy. By predetermining our spending, we can ensure resources are available for these purposes.

What categories do you have designated for relationships?

*We have one category that is for spontaneous giving throughout the year. Another category is for the Bible studies that we lead. Lastly, we have a category for special dates and trips with each other and then with our kids individually.*

How can you make this a more significant priority?

*It helps greatly to make the budget categories, because we are pretty good about spending our entire budget!!*

Investing in people is satisfying, rewarding, and lasting. When we predetermine our spending and create a margin, we leave room for the things that are most important.

How are you challenged to invest in people with some of your margin?

*It makes a lot of sense and I do want to allocate more margin for these purposes.*

What actions can you take to make this a reality?

*Create budget categories for this specific purpose, which may mean I have to spend less in some other areas.*

Use these instructions to complete Priority Order of Spending Chart at the end of this chapter's study guide.

Complete the categories of Income, Giving, Taxes, Debt and Savings in order to determine the most you can spend in Living Expenses.

Once you determine the total amount necessary for living expenses, populate your individual categories. Start with fixed expenses and items that are not easily decreased. This includes categories such as insurance and utilities. Then move to the remaining categories that are most important to you. Keep in mind the goal is to not exceed your total amount for living expenses, and you should strongly consider leaving some extra margin.

*This assignment will be really hard for those who have not been tracking their expenses. They may need to take the next month or two and start tracking their expenses on Mint.com or another source just to get an idea of where they are and how they are doing with their spending. But, if we are not able to complete this chart, that is indicative of a big problem. We can't control our spending if we don't know what our spending is.*



# THE PRIORITY CASH FLOW SYSTEM

## INCOME

Deut 8:17-18 Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth...

Earned Income \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nonreinvested Interest/Dividends \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gifts \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Income \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARITABLE GIVING

2 Cor 9:6-8 ...Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart....cheerfully...

### PAY TAXES

Rom 13:7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due...

### PAY DEBT PAYMENTS

Prov 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lenders slave.

### SAVINGS

Prov 13:11 He who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

### USE FOR LIVING EXPENSES

Matt 6:24 No one can serve two masters...  
Phil 4:11 I have learned to be content....

|                 |                |                     |                        |                      |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Tithe _____     | Federal _____  | Home Mortgage _____ | Emergency Fund _____   | Housing _____        |
| Offerings _____ | State _____    | Home Equity _____   | Major Purchase _____   | Utilities _____      |
| _____           | Soc Sec _____  | Credit Cards _____  | Retirement _____       | Food _____           |
| _____           | Medicare _____ | Auto Loans _____    | Extra Debt Pymts _____ | Clothing _____       |
| _____           | Total _____    | Other Loans _____   | Other Savings _____    | Transportation _____ |
| _____           |                | _____               | Total _____            | Entertainment _____  |
| Total _____     |                | Total _____         |                        | Medical _____        |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Insurance _____      |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Children _____       |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Education _____      |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Gifts _____          |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Miscellaneous _____  |
|                 |                |                     |                        | Total _____          |

## Chapter 10 Leader's Guide

### Rethinking Retirement

According to the first part of chapter 10, describe what has changed in recent history regarding our view of retirement and working?

People used to work their entire lives, now we our goal is to live comfortable without working. When income was no longer from working the land, a worker's economic security was threatened by factors outside his/her control, such as layoffs and recessions. The extended family used to live together. Now, families no longer stay together and care for one another as we age.

Describe any part of this history that was surprising to you?

Social Security was a short-term solution, only paid to few people, since the age 65 was older than the average life-expectancy.

#### The Challenges of Retirement

##### *Identity Crisis*

After forty years of work, much of our self-image and identity are derived from our profession. As believers, our identity should always be based on who we are in Christ. More than ever, we must view ourselves through our Savior's eyes during these later years.

Our identity should always be based on who we are in Christ.

Why do you think retirement would be such a challenge for our identity?

When we no longer spend our days in a familiar place, the structure of life disappears. At the same time, we often encounter health issues that limit our activity. The combination of these factors can be overwhelming, especially when we no longer feel productive.

##### *Fear of Not Having Enough*

Financial peace of mind never results solely from how much we have. The answer is found in prudently planning for the future, while making sure that our hope remains in God. Ultimately, He is the source of our provision. Remember,

He owns it all, and we are just stewards. We cannot control the future, but we can control where we place our hope. Money is not worthy of our trust.

Do not worry then, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear for clothing?" For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt. 6:31–34 NASB)

Based on the paragraph and verse above, fill in the chart below

Our responsibility

His responsibility

*Prudently save for the future*

*To know our needs*

*Keep our hope in God*

*To take care of us*

*Be good stewards*

*To control the future*

*Seek First His Kingdom*

*Don't worry*

*Spousal Adjustment*

During our working years, we primarily see our spouses in the morning and at night. For many couples, it can be very stressful when, suddenly, they are together all day. We should not adjust to this transition by spending less time together but by making our marriage relationship a priority throughout our working years *and* in retirement.

Think of some creative ways you can make your marriage a higher priority now!

1. *Have a regular date night each week or every other week.*
2. *Determine your spouse's love language and act according to this.*
3. *Pray together on a regular basis.*
4. *Devote the first ten minutes when arriving at home in the evening to talk to each other about your day.*

## The Problem with Traditional Retirement

Our golden years should be our most fruitful, since we have more time and money than ever before.

How can you prepare now to make your retirement years fruitful?

*I need to figure out what I enjoy the most and how I can be most productive for the Lord in what I enjoy. This might include writing and coaching more.*

## What Does Scripture Say about Retirement?

### *Work Ordinance*

Sin makes work hard, but labor is still necessary and good.

We are given work to do because we are made in God's image, and He works.

Work provides us with a wonderful opportunity to live out our faith. If we toil for the Lord, our labor is never in vain. Almost all work provides us with the opportunity to love God and to love and serve others.

Rewrite the underlined phrases below:

*labor is still necessary and good*

*we are made in God's image, and He works*

*Almost all work provides us with the opportunity to love God and to love and serve others*

### *Is Retirement Ever Appropriate?*

Write the definition of work

*the physical and mental energy exerted to be productive in what God has called and equipped us to do*

Write the better definition of retirement

*a time in life when we have greater flexibility in how we are productive for God, since the need for earned income is greatly reduced or no longer needed*

*When to Retire*

If we are going to reduce or eliminate income for the rest of our lives, we must count the cost so that we don't run out of money during the middle of our retirement. The two significant factors to consider are

1. living expenses, which we can manage, and
2. investment returns, which we cannot completely control.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope in the uncertainty of riches ... (1 Tim. 6:17a NASB)

Underline the word uncertainty. What is uncertain? Riches

What is the aim of a steward?

To be faithful

Counting the cost of retirement and being willing to control living expenses are parts of the process of being faithful.

Underline the two parts of being faithful in retirement.

*Should I Retire?*

This is a far different question than, "Can I retire?"

The way I am most productive for the Lord is to keep working in my current vocation.

My job gives me incredible opportunities for influence, but my occupation comes with great stress. At some point, I need to exchange some of the stress for spending more time where I am productive and have influence.

I need to change my vocation sooner rather than later in order to be more productive and effective for the Lord.

Put an "X" by the description that fits you.

### *What Am I Going to Do If I Retire?*

To help determine our passion, we can ask ourselves, "If I had no need to earn money, what would I do?"

*I would still do what I do now for my work, just not quite as much. This would allow more time for some of my other passions.*

Should you consider any of these options now?

*It is probably a little too soon, but it might be a possibility in a few years.*

We can avoid the possible frustrations of retirement when we use the gifts and skills God gave us to serve others.

List some ways you could serve others in retirement or now.

*I can teach more at church and be more involved in leadership at church.*

### *Why Plan for Retirement?*

If retirement is so often misinterpreted and overvalued, why should we bother planning for it?

*Because savings is a means of not presuming on the future.*

What does presuming on the future mean?

*None of us know how long we are going to be able to work. With life expectancies continuing to increase, it is logical to assume we will need to provide for ourselves for many years beyond what we are able to work.*

### *The Balance of Saving*

As we discussed in chapter 8, there are three ways to save. What are they?

1. *Not enough*
2. *Too much*
3. *A prudent amount*

What can you call too much? Hoarding

What is hoarding?

Hoarding is an excessive accumulation of money and things for the primary purpose of our own comfort and provision. It seeks to limit our dependence on God or anyone else.

How can we be balanced?

To be balanced is to responsibly plan for the future while continuing to trust in God's sovereignty.

Define the Line

What does it mean to define the line?

Defining the line is the process of determining how much is enough to meet our financial goals.

Defining the line begins with believing it is possible to have enough.

Underline the word enough.

How much is enough for you?

This can be determined through a free retirement calculator called ESPlanner Basic at [www.basic.esplanner.com](http://www.basic.esplanner.com). For more complex situations, a financial planner is needed.

Retiring Well: Evans's Story

What inspired you about Evans's retirement story?

It was really cool to see how fulfilled and productive he is being in retirement. I love how he is leading so many mission trips.

Regardless of whether you are retired or just beginning your career, how can you implement some of the tips from this chapter to be more productive through your work right now?

These answers will vary, but it will be helpful for the group to hear the various responses.

## Chapter 11 Leader's Guide

### Provision for Life's Most Difficult Times

Every day, people are diagnosed with terrible sicknesses, suffer natural disasters, and fall victim to senseless tragedies. Sometimes, the scope of these catastrophes is too difficult to comprehend. On December 26, 2004, a massive tsunami killed nearly 250,000 in a matter of hours in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and other countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. Our country was stunned and horrified in December of 2012 as twenty children (twenty-six total fatalities) were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Why is there so much pain and evil around us? If God is good, why is the world full of so much sickness, disaster, and death?

How do you answer these difficult questions?

*This is probably one of the hardest questions for us to answer, and we likely will not completely understand until we get to heaven. There will always be an element of trust and faith that we must have.*

As we begin a chapter on the financial implications of life's most difficult times, it makes sense to first try to understand why this world does not work as God intended.

In the beginning, when the earth was created, everything was perfect, working just the way that God designed and desired. There were no floods, hurricanes, or tornados; no sickness or death. God granted humans complete authority over the earth, and it worked flawlessly.

Describe the state of earth when God created it.

*It was perfection. All things working flawlessly as God intended and created. Nothing died.*

So what went wrong? Sin entered the world. God only had one rule for Adam and Eve - that they not eat from the fruit of one particular tree. Why did God have this rule? Because He knew we would gain something we did not want, the



knowledge of good and evil. Their sin left a gaping chasm between how things should be and how they were. It is because of sin that God casts judgment on everything, and death enters our reality; everyone and everything must now die.

As a result, tragedies like the tsunami and the Newtown shooting happen, proof God's perfectly designed world has gone awry.

What happened to God's perfect creation?

*Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, which is what I or anyone else would have also done if we were them. This caused evil to enter the world and gave them the knowledge of good and evil.*

God judges severely because He is perfectly just. This is not easy to understand. When we question how God can allow evil to exist, we fail to comprehend two things:

1. *How bad sin is*
2. *How good God is*

We must hate our sin, for it is our collective sin that brings about pain, disaster, and death.

Fill in the blanks below:

We must *hate* our *sin* .

However, it is because of God's vast mercy that there is a solution. Through His Son, Jesus, He fixed the problem we created.

Fill in the blanks below:

Because of God's vast *mercy* , there is a *solution* .

Explain how Jesus is our solution.

*We have to have a solution to our problem of sin. Otherwise, we must pay the penalty for our sin, which is both earthly death and eternal separation from God. Jesus pays the price for our sin which allows us to live an abundant life on earth (although we still will die) and to be with God for eternity in heaven.*

“Lord, forgive me for my sin which causes the evil in this world. For what I deserve is the full consequence of my sin, immediate and permanent separation from you. But, thank you, Lord, for your grace.”

### Biblical Principles Regarding Insurance

#### *Protect and Provide*

The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. (Prov. 22:3 NIV)

As believers, it is wise to seek protection from danger and to provide for our families. We accomplish these, in part, through various forms of insurance.

#### *Abide by Laws*

Laws and stipulations may require that we carry certain types of insurance. For example, most states mandate automobile liability insurance if we drive a vehicle, and mortgage companies necessitate property insurance for homes with a loan.

#### *Choose Prudently*

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. (Prov. 27:1 NASB)

We should have enough so as to not *presume upon God*,  
but not so much that we stop *trusting Him*.

### Practical Thinking Regarding Insurance

#### *Life – Stage Matters*

What is a prudent amount of insurance? This is an individual decision based on budget, family needs, and stage of life. Those with young children and multiple financial needs often need more insurance. As net worth grows, we become increasingly self-insured and typically need less insurance. Similar to what we

discussed with investments, it is not wise to have too little or too much insurance.

Describe your current life stage. How does this affect your insurance needs?

*We are getting closer to being empty nesters. As my kids grow older and gain their independence, my need for life and disability insurance should decrease.*

Consider High Deductibles

Think of insurance as protecting against the catastrophic not the ordinary. This means it is often wise to use high deductibles and self-insure smaller risks when an adequate emergency fund is in place.

Do you have an adequate emergency fund to self-insure up to the amount of your deductibles? Yes/No

What are some examples of insurance where a high deductible makes sense?

*Automobile, property, and health insurance*

## Life Insurance

In general, life insurance should be viewed as a living expense, not as an investment, as it serves two primary purposes—

1. *Survivor's Benefits*
2. *Estate Liquidity*

## Disability Insurance

What is Disability insurance?

*Disability Insurance is designed to replace a portion of earned income if sickness or injury makes working impossible.*

When is disability insurance more important in a working career? Why?

*This coverage is more important early in a working career, when a long-term disability could eliminate many years of income. It is not as critical as one approaches retirement, since most disability policies only pay benefits until age sixty-five or seventy.*

### Umbrella Liability Insurance

What is umbrella liability insurance?

*Umbrella liability insurance provides liability coverage beyond the limits of automobile and homeowner policies and is relatively inexpensive.*

How is the need of umbrella insurance different from other insurance?

*Unlike some of the other insurance types we have discussed, the need for umbrella liability insurance protection actually increases as one's net worth grows.*

### Long-Term Care Insurance

Among the most significant financial threats we face late in life are the costs associated with long-term care. Seventy percent of those who are sixty-five or older will require some type of long-term care services during their lifetime, with the average need lasting three years. A staggering 20 percent will need care for more than five years.

When is a good age to purchase long-term care insurance? *mid-50s to early 60s*

Should everyone purchase this insurance? Explain.

*No, Not everyone should purchase long-term care insurance. Some cannot afford the premiums or may determine the size of their assets do not necessitate having this type of coverage. Those with a larger net worth may be able and willing to self-insure.*

How has the care for our elderly parents changed?

*In the past, the aged were valued for their wisdom, morality, and knowledge. Today, it is too common for the elderly to be viewed as a burden. As a result, nursing homes and retirement facilities are full of the neglected and the lonely.*

How can a home-health-care provision be helpful?

*A home-health-care provision is important because it provides the option for parents to live with children while they receive care. Far too many who are put in facilities live out their final years in deep loneliness, as their families are too busy to care for them.*

Reflect on what you've learned about insurance. What are some steps you can take to provide for and protect your family based on what you've learned?

1. *I need to use the sickness and tragedy in the world as a reminder to hate my sin and to remember that it is my sin that causes the world to not work the way God intended.*
2. *I need to spend some time making sure that we don't have too little or too much insurance, especially in the area of life insurance.*
3. *I need to be willing to do what it takes to care for my parents and my wife's parents as they grow older. By doing so, we will honor them.*
4. *I need to yearn for heaven more, realizing that God's perfect creation will be restored where there is no need for insurance.*

## Chapter 12 Leader's Guide

### A Legacy Worth Leaving

How did you feel about the story of Joshua Bell playing, unnoticed, in the subway station?

*This is a really impactful story to me. It is even more powerful after watching the video (a link is available at [www.FinFaith.com](http://www.FinFaith.com)). It really makes me think about what is most important and how I often get distracted from these things.*

When we don't have enough margin, our stress level goes up, our focus narrows, and our relationships suffer. In other words, we neither notice nor take the time to hear the music.

Does this describe you? Are you lacking breathing room and margin? Explain.

*There are times when I need to be more intentional about creating margin. The big thing for me is to take time at the beginning of each week to plan to be proactive spending time in the relationships that are most important – God, family, friends, employees.*

#### The Beauty of Wisdom

Wisdom along with an inheritance is good and an advantage to those who see the sun. For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors. (Ecc. 7:11–12 NASB)

Since it is knowledge that makes an inheritance beneficial, we must figure out how to impart financial wisdom to our children and grandchildren so that they can be faithful stewards.

#### Training Children and Grandchildren

You can't leave *character* in a trust account. You cannot write your *values*

into the will. You cannot bank traits like *courage, honesty* and

*compassion* in a safe-deposit box. What we need is a *plan*, a long-

term *strategy* to convey our convictions to the *next generation*.

*Seven Key Principles*

Under each principle, as a review, explain what it means.

*Understand That God Owns It All*

The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. (Ps. 24:1 NASB)

*Ownership changes everything. God owns everything that we possess. Thus, our job is to manage what we have in His best interests.*

*Give Generously*

Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share ... (1 Tim. 6:18 NASB)

*Our lives need to be defined by generosity. There is more joy in giving than getting.*

*Set Long-Term Written Financial Goals*

Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established. The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. (Prov. 16:3, 9 NASB)

*Written goals provide direction and help minimize distractions.*

*Avoid the Excessive Use of Debt*

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave. (Prov. 22:7 NASB)

*Avoid it where possible and seek to eliminate it where it exists.*

*Avoid a Consumptive Lifestyle*

Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions. (Luke 12:15 NASB)

*We cannot allow life to be centered on things. Not being consumptive starts with spending less than we earn.*

*Build Liquidity*

Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in summer and gathers her provision in the harvest. (Prov. 6:6–8 NASB)

*A prudent level of savings preserves peace of mind and helps prepare us for unexpected expenses.*

*Diversify*

Divide your portion to seven, or even eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth. (Ecc. 11:2 NASB)

*Wealth is best preserved through diversification.*

*Financial Disciplines*

Choose an activity or two you'd like to try and write it/them below each heading.

*Activities That Promote Giving*

*Open a NCF account for my kids.*

*Activities That Promote Smart Spending*

*Take a family mission trip to a third world country.*

*Activities That Promote Saving*

*At the end of the year, match what the kids have saved.*

*Activities that promote planning*

*Set up kids on Mint.com to track their spending.*

*Activities That Promote Investing*

*Open a brokerage account for the kids to buy a couple of stocks that they have interest.*

*Creative Incentives*

*Give the kids \$250 if they listen to the entire Bible over two years.*



## Estate Decisions

Prudent estate planning should consist of these five key decisions.

*Decision One: How Much Should I Give to Children?*

### *Not Too Much*

Be cautious when choosing the amount to leave children. Too much left to children can demotivate them from being productive.

Answer these questions:

What is the worst thing that can happen if I leave my children too much?

*It could take away the desire for my boys to work and be productive. It might overwhelm them. It could take away the satisfaction that comes from providing for their family.*

What is the worst thing that can happen if I don't leave my children enough?

*They will have to work and provide for themselves. Outside of a major health issue, there really are not any catastrophic issues that come from not leaving them a lot of money. However, I would like to help my grandkids to go to private Christian school if this is consistent with their parents' desire.*

What is the right amount to leave to my children?

*I want to be really careful about leaving them so much that they would not have to work. In our minds, this means \$1 million or more.*

### *Plan for Now*

Determine how much you would leave to your children through your estate

today . Estate planning must be done in the present , as changes

can always be made to your documents in the future.

Determine how much you are currently leaving through your estate and whether or not this is the right amount.

*Usually, we are leaving more than we think because we fail to count life insurance. Most people do not know how much they are leaving.*

*Decision Two: How Much Should I Give to Charity?*

It is at least worth considering leaving a portion of our estates to charity, as this can be a wonderful legacy. If a donor-advised fund like NCF is used for estate giving, children can have the privilege of choosing which charities receive their dollars. It is a wonderful way for them to experience the joy of giving.

What do children have to do when they withdraw retirement assets left to them?

*They must pay federal and state income taxes when retirement assets are withdrawn.*

What are the best assets to donate to charity through an estate?

*Retirement assets such as traditional IRAs and 401ks.*

*Decision Three: When Should I Give?*

It is not always wise to leave an inheritance all at once, especially to younger adult children.

Explain how using a trust gives flexibility to when assets are left.

*Through the use of trusts, it is possible to spread distributions over many years after the death of both parents. The trustee can be given the authority to make early distributions for emergencies and other legitimate needs.*

Those with larger estates should consider if some of their surplus can be given to their heirs and charity before death. This is valuable for several reasons.

*Handling smaller amounts wisely will give them a better chance at managing the larger amounts well. It may be more helpful for adult children to receive an inheritance while they are younger than through your estate.*

*Decision Four: What Tools Should I Use?*

In general, everyone should have the following estate documents in place:

1. *A Will*
2. *A Durable Power of Attorney*
3. *A Health Care Proxy*

*Decision Five: Do I Need a Family Conference?*

What are the benefits of having a family conference before a death?

*Mom and Dad can explain their logic and make sure intentions are known and understood. Because money has the potential to harm relationships, a family conference while parents are living can be a great tool to explain intentions while emotions are calm.*

Think of the visual of the woman watching the violin player as the world rushes by on both sides. How can this help you to remember to focus on God during the business of daily life?

*It is a great visual that challenges me to stay focused on God especially during my days that are hectic. It helps me to learn to slow down when my pace does not leave enough margin.*

Financial faithfulness is adopting a biblical perspective of money for ourselves and imparting this wisdom to our children and grandchildren. When it comes to developing a legacy worth leaving, don't miss the opportunities to grasp and impart the wisdom that preserves life!

Write down the three most impactful lessons of this study to you.

1. *Give the participants plenty of time to share these with the group.*

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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