Financial Planning with a Faith Factor
A 12 lesson practical study on money management

Prepared by the Stewardship Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists
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Authors’ Introduction

Congratulations! You are holding in your hands some life-changing information. We know because we have experienced it. We frequently hear, “Why didn’t someone tell us this before now?” We all must deal with money management. How much better it is if you can go for help to someone with experience. That is just what you are getting with this material—experience—a lot of it!

Gordon Botting, Dick Hanson, Ben Maxson, and Ed Reid have a combined life experience of over 200 years! Yes, we all have grey hair. We all have already raised our families. Together we have been teaching Christian principles of money management for a combined total of over 70 years.

Like many of you, we received our education at a time when very few schools offered courses in money management—let alone life management. But, sensing a need for better personal money management and a desire to share this information with others, we have all, at different times, taken additional training—including seminars and certification programs—that have shaped our lives and ministries. We all are committed Christians and were basically familiar with the Biblical encouragement toward financial faithfulness. What we needed was someone or something to organize what we basically already knew into a practical, easy-to-understand format. We believe that, providentially, we all were individually and at different times led to complete the certification program designed and delivered by the late Larry Burkett and his team in what was then known as Christian Financial Concepts. We feel blessed to have a continuing relationship with Howard Dayton and the new Crown Financial Ministries. In addition, we all have been involved and certified by the Christian Stewardship Association.

Since those early days we all have conducted hundreds of Stewardship and Money Management seminars, printed books, and presented radio and television programs on money management. What makes this material unique is not our degrees and graduate education or the books we have written and read. This material is unique and life changing because we are sharing what we have encountered in our walks with God and the interesting experiences we have had and been told by our students over the years. To our knowledge, there is nothing else quite like this material available that combines in such a unique way the Biblical principles of money management, the practical lessons of life, and proven academic information on this topic.

We have prayed in advance that each person or family that goes through this material will be blessed beyond their expectations and will in the end be a candidate to hear the words of our Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

—Gordon Botting, Dick Hanson, Ben Maxson, and Ed Reid
Editor’s Preface

This book came about in a unique manner. As I presented money management seminars in churches and camp meetings across the North American Division, people would frequently ask if there was additional material I could recommend as a follow-up to my presentations. Families wanted data that was Biblically based and yet had the practical information needed to manage family finances in today’s world. I was familiar with most of the money management material that has been written from a Christian perspective. I felt we could and should produce study material that would outline basic Biblical principles and also include practical application all in one book. This book is the result of that dream.

Committees and groups are good for brainstorming and idea generation but not so much, as we found out, for writing a book. I asked three of my ministry associates, men of commitment and experience, to join with me in some planning sessions for the development of the book. Their names are listed in the Author’s Introduction. We met together for planning and prayer on four or five occasions of two days each. It was quite a commitment of time. During our planning sessions we came up with twelve topics that we felt must be addressed in the book. They are the current chapter titles. We each took several topics, some more than others, and developed a basic outline and did some writing on that topic.

When I started putting the chapters together I discovered that we all had come at the material with a different format. Some of the material was in outline form, some in narrative, and some in prose – but all good basic material. In the editing process, which has taken me about 3 years, I have tried to glean all of the good ideas and illustrations from each team member and also keep up with current information and statistics. The reader will note that on occasion I have used the editorial “we” and other times I have used “I” as the originator of a thought or idea. Some of my ideas and illustrations are unique to me or my family, so in those cases I have used the personal pronoun “I”. I hope this change of singular and plural is not too distracting to you.

For two reasons, all four of us as authors have agreed not to receive any royalty or financial remuneration for our work on this project. The first is that we believe that God has blessed us with the opportunities and experiences that we have had and therefore, for the sake of stewardship education, wish to make our contribution in kind. The second is that we want the material to be made available at an affordable price for all families. Any profit over production costs will be retained by the North American Division Stewardship Department to be used for the production of additional training materials.

I wish to thank Gordon Botting, Dick Hanson, and Ben Maxson for their contributions to this work. And special thanks to my administrative assistant, Lori Bryan, whose work and counsel has been very valuable. It has been our prayer that this book would strengthen Christian families both spiritually and financially.

— G Edward Reid, Editor
Stewardship Director
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists
Welcome to the Faith & Finance Bible study program. We believe you will be pleased with what you learn in this study. These materials will help you discover and integrate Biblical principles into your life. The three primary objectives in this study are to help you:

- identify and explore Biblical principles for dealing with money and material possessions;
- choose practical ways for integrating God into how you manage His money; and,
- make Biblical Christianity more real and practical.

The Faith & Finance material has been prepared with 12 chapters or lessons and can be studied in a variety of ways. You may do an individual study if you are a motivated self-starter, or you may participate with a small group at church or in a home. The advantages of the small group format are the opportunity to review the material after studying it and to glean ideas and learn from others as you interact together.

Each lesson will present a memory text from the Bible. So that you can learn the same one that your group members are learning, we will suggest the New King James Version and will print it at the beginning of each lesson.

The lesson then will continue with a reading section that will introduce the topic and lay down the principle(s) for study. Following the chapter reading will come a Bible study and, in most cases, a practical application section with forms that have been prepared to help you see your current situation and/or make plans for your future.

You will receive the greatest benefit from this material by taking each lesson seriously. Learn the memory text, read the lesson, and prepare the study material. At each step pray that God will guide you and open your understanding for a lasting application in your life.
Lesson 1

Why Money Management is Important to the Christian

Memory Text: Matthew 6:33
“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Money and Value

What is it about money that is so alluring, so tempting? Stop and think about it for just a moment. How do you feel when the bills are due and you don't have the money you need to pay them? Then, how do you feel when you cash your surprise birthday check and you have a crisp $100 bill in your pocket? There is a strange sense of security when you have enough money. With enough money you can purchase whatever you want. Or at least that is often the thought: “Just think of what we could do if we just had a little more money!”

Pause for a moment and consider how much our society focuses its attention around money—how to get more, how to invest it, and how to spend it. Money is equated with success and power, with recognition and position, with accomplishment and importance. On the other hand, the lack of money is often seen as failure and weakness.

God and Money

Have you ever thought of trying to live without money? Many people in the world do. But it would be rather difficult in our society. On the other hand, have you ever thought of living without God? What if you had to choose between money and God?

Jesus contrasts the competing power of money with God by stating, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, wealth, riches]” (Matthew 6:24). There are few places in Scripture where God makes such a direct comparison. Yet the competition is very real. Money competes for our interest, our time, and our energy. It easily distracts us from more important priorities.

Two-thirds of Jesus’ parables deal with money and material possessions or our attitude toward them. There are well over two thousand Biblical references that deal with this topic, while there
are only about five hundred verses on prayer and fewer than five hundred on faith. Obviously, God thinks knowledge about money is very important. Money plays a crucial role in our lives. We cannot deal without it. Even God’s church has to deal with money. So, the issue facing us is not whether or not we will deal with money, but rather the level of importance or priority it has in our lives. It is a matter of what we love—a matter of where we will focus our passion.

What is your passion? What motivates and drives your life? Though these are not easy questions to answer, they reflect on two contrasting forces that shape our life and character.

Jesus said, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). And Paul warned us in writing to his young friend Timothy, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10).

Starting at the Beginning

How do we deal with money, since we cannot get away from it? The starting point should be where God starts, Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The very first thing that the Bible establishes about God is that He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and this forms the foundation for everything else the Bible says about Him, about who we are, and about how we should relate to Him.

The fact that God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth means that everything belongs to Him. This is precisely why David wrote, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters” (Psalms 24:1, 2). Stop and think of what would change if this concept of God’s ownership became a reality in our thinking. How would our priorities be different? Would we choose to use our time differently? Would we place greater importance on relationships? Would we give God more time? Would we change the way we think or the way we act?

We cannot truly accept God as Owner unless we learn to trust Him. Only when we experience the treasure of God’s love and grace can we deal correctly with material possessions—our treasures. Without the security of a personal walk with God, we will seek security on our own. In this materialistic world, we will search for security in money or in that which money can buy. But regardless of how much we have, security eludes us, for money is always temporary and what it buys rapidly wastes away. The wise man said, “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

The true value of money only can be seen in the context of God’s kingdom. Money is only a tool or symbol. Thirty pieces of silver purchased Judas’ betrayal of his Master (See Matthew 26:15; 27:3-9). Two mites demonstrated the relationship of faith and trust of a lonely widow whose only support was a God she had learned to worship (See Mark 12:42-44). The pieces of silver were cast back at the feet of those who had rejected the Savior. The two mites, however, continue to stimulate endless gifts of grace and love. Money we invest in this world ultimately passes away. What we invest in God’s kingdom stores up treasures for eternity.

Does this mean that we should give all our money to God? Of course not! It already belongs to Him. What it means is that we recognize that every part of life becomes an act of worship as we manage God’s assets in the different dimensions of His kingdom. For example, tithe becomes recognition of who God is and who we are; offerings become acts of worship and praise, celebrating experienced grace and the wonder of a God who provides for all our needs; and what we invest in supplying the needs of our family is also an act of worship as we care for those God has put in our immediate trust.

The key issue here is one of attitude. One approach says that we are the owners. The other joyfully confesses our dependence on God as the Owner of all. Therefore, if we do not recognize God
as the Owner of the money He places in our hands to manage, then that money begins to own us! This is why God makes a contrast in the context of whom or what we serve. “You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24).

So, how do we manage our money influences our relationship with God. Our checkbook, credit card or bank statements are a constant diary telling the stories of how we make God the priority of our lives. Do we allow our meaning and security to come into our walk with God, or do we seek them in our ability to accumulate and use the wealth of material possessions for our own purposes? Who or what will be god in our life? Choose today! What has won the passion of our heart? Is it money? Or, is it God?

The glorious reality is that when we accept Christ, we become part of a new kingdom, a new reality. We are part of His family. We are not trying to work our way into the kingdom. We are not trying to earn the throne. We are already on the throne. We are in Christ. The rest of life is simply living out stewardship. Unfortunately, many have come to think of stewardship as simply a means to get people to give more to support the church. This book is designed to open a window so that we can see with our own eyes the Biblical principles of money management.

The Gospel and Lordship

We begin in view of the cross and how the concept of Lordship influences stewardship. True worship begins with and is based on a relationship with Jesus, intimately knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord. This is why the gospel is the foundation for stewardship. Without the experience of the gospel, stewardship becomes simply a form of spiritual slavery—just another way of perpetrating a performance-based religion and life.

The content of salvation is what we receive when we accept Jesus as Savior. He promises to come to us through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-20) that we may be transformed and “be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Ephesians 3:16, 17). Jesus gives us His righteousness. He forgives us and makes us a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). When we receive Christ, He brings the power of God into the human heart, and we live from the very throne of God (Ephesians 2:6). All of this is included in Christ when we accept Him. The very life we live is lived in Him (Galatians 2:20).

The consequence of salvation produces a life of discipleship and obedience. One cannot have Christ dwelling within and remain the same. God promises to give us a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). He promises to replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh and to put His Spirit in our hearts. He further states that He will cause us to walk in His principles. Paul presents the same concept when he states that it is God who will work in us both to will and to do (Philippians 2:13). The natural result of experiencing Jesus as Savior also leads us to share with others what we have experienced.

So how do we experience this dynamic salvation? There is no way to dissect the mystery of grace. The work of the Holy Spirit in a sinner’s heart can be experienced but never described in full detail or understanding. Every part of this dynamic experience of salvation is by faith and choice of will. We choose to believe that what God says is true, and we choose to act—allowing God to work through us.

This brings us back full circle to stewardship as the integration of the saving relationship with Christ into every area of life. In the past you may have felt that Lordship was just obeying God. Now we can all understand that Lordship is accepting God as Him at His word. And choosing to accept Him is the only way to work out His will in our lives.

Because of our sinful nature and the influence of sin all around us, each day we must choose to reaffirm our relationship with God. Each day we must accept His gift of grace. Each day we must surrender to His indwelling Lordship. Each day we must abandon ourselves to Him to be controlled and empowered through the living presence of Christ. Only then will obedience be a joyful experience of seeing His power at work in the midst of our struggles.
Lesson 1 | Why Money Management is Important to the Christian

This is how tithing becomes an experience of joy—reflecting on our relationship with God. When we bring this intimate partnership into the material area of life, we realize that everything we are and have belongs to Him. Joyfully we worship Him with tithe and offerings, reminding our own hearts of who He is. Only the dynamic experience of salvation can move tithing, or any other part of lifestyle stewardship, out of the drudgery and slavery of legalism and into the joyful life of grace.

Sacrifice and Giving

Sacrifice is not so much what we give up—"givin’til it hurts"—but rather, what we offer to God in recognition of who He is (Creator of Heaven and Earth and Owner of everything) and who we are in relationship to Him. Worship was the context for the first Biblical sacrifice. Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God. One was rejected and the other accepted. The difference lay in their attitudes toward giving. Cain, full of pride, chose his own way; Abel, on the other hand, willingly followed God’s instructions. “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4).

In this sacrifice of obedience lies the foundation for the entire concept: What we give to God, and how we give, reflects an internal attitude toward God. We find the same true meaning of sacrifice in God’s rejection of King Saul and his offerings. His offering of animals (from the Amalekites) was unacceptable because of His attitude of rebellion against God’s direct instructions. “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22, 23).

In exploring sacrifice as worship, we discover powerful principles that can help us transform our lives into anthems of praise to our Creator God. The first sacrifice was offered in the Garden of Eden. Sin had destroyed the relationship between man and God. Shame had darkened the human heart for the first time. And in the shadows of eternity, God met the nakedness of guilt and shame with the symbolic covering of animal skins. For the first time, an innocent life was sacrificed because of a sinner’s guilt. Humanity was banned from Eden. Yet the restoration of Eden was assured in the promise of another sacrifice: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15). Calvary made that promise an historical reality. God’s heel was bruised and the bonds of sin were broken.

Sacrifice for God meant the Innocent One dying so that the guilty one could live. For us, sacrifice must mean surrender, death in Him, and rebirth to a life of praise and worship. For God, it meant loss and pain to restore His creation. For us, it means resolution of our pain—death to sin and birth to His life and power.

The implications of salvation shatter the powerless stereotypes of cultural Christianity. In Christ, life becomes worship (Romans 12:1). As Creator and Redeemer, God owns everything, and we are simply managers of God’s property. We acknowledge that relationship when we offer ourselves to Him. When we sacrifice anything, we are merely returning to the original Owner—recognizing what He has done in lifting us from sin to His very throne (Ephesians 2:6). Thus we really give up nothing but our sinful selves when we offer anything to God in worship.

For the Christian then, there can be no pain in giving, or in any other activity that is traditionally termed “sacrifice.” Pain in our giving only indicates our continued claim to ownership where the sense of sacrifice as loss perverts worship. Acknowledging the majesty of God as Creator of Heaven and Earth, we invite you to commit yourself to God. On the authority of God’s Word, and from the testimony of millions of people who have already done so, you can be assured that your life will be blessed. The practical material to follow in this book will continue to explore in more detail...
the Biblical Principles of money management
having first established the foundation of God’s
ownership and the role of the Gospel as starting
points to build upon.

**Assignment for this lesson:**
1. Pray for your small group members by name.
2. Pray that God will grant you His wisdom as you
   study and apply the material.
3. Memorize the Bible text for this lesson.
4. Complete the daily assignments.
5. Complete the "Lordship and Lifestyle" form.
Worksheet Explanation and Guidelines

Following the narrative and instructional portion of each lesson there will be worksheets for you as participants to complete. There are also several forms for you to complete. This is not “busy work.” We believe that in order for you to see the true Biblical basis for the principles found in this book, each reader must get into the word of God personally to make the connection.

Note this example:

Read and Reflect on Proverbs 3:5-10.

Why does God request that we honor Him with our possessions and put Him first?

When you see an exercise like this it is time to take your Bible and prayerfully consider the message of this passage and answer the questions that relate to the passage. You should respond and write down in your own words what this means to you. Frequently, the answer is in the text itself. You might note that God asks us to put Him first because He is the Creator and Owner of everything. Or, because He wants to bless the rest that we manage. Or, because He wants to be our partner in the management of the resources He has entrusted to us. Or, He wants us to develop trust in Him and look to Him for wisdom and direction.

If you are using the Faith and Finance material as the basis of a small group study, you can keep anything that is confidential to yourself and not share it with the members of your group. But in these Bible references that are given following most lessons, your group leader will invite you to share your ideas with the group and invite discussion on each passage. As you begin each class study session the group leader will invite the participants to pray together for specific needs of the group and requests that come to the group’s attention. Then the leader will give a brief overview of the lesson sometimes by way of a Power Point presentation. Finally the leader will ask for your participation in reciting the memory text and in the worksheet review.

The forms that are filled out by each participant will remain confidential. However, if you have questions regarding how to fill out the forms or what use should be made of them, your leader will be willing to assist you.

It is to your advantage to complete all of the worksheets and forms. The more you put into the lessons, the more you will get out. We pray that the material will instruct and inspire you for the glory of God.
**Lesson 1 Worksheets**

**Why Money Management is Important to the Christian**

*Memory Verse: Matthew 6:33*

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

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**PRAYER TIME:**

Make a list of those in your group who have asked for special prayer needs this week and pray for them each day.

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Pray also for God’s wisdom and blessing as you develop your financial plan.

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**STUDY TIME:**

**Day One**

*Read and reflect on Genesis 1:1, 26-28.*

1. What do these verses say about God, and what do they say about us as human beings? __________

2. According to this passage, what is God’s role in the affairs of this world, and what is our role? __________
Read and reflect on Psalms 24:1, 2; Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalms 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14.

3. According to these passages, what does God own? ____________________________________________

4. What are the implications of the above passages for how we should deal with material possessions?

Day Two

Read and reflect on Mark 12:30 and Romans 12:1-2.

1. What are the implications of loving God supremely as described in Mark 12:30? __________________________

2. What does it mean to offer ourselves to God? __________________________________________

3. In what ways do we conform to this world? __________________________________________

Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17.

4. Where should the honor and glory be in our actions? __________________________________________

5. What does it mean to do everything “in the name of the Lord?” __________________________

6. How would things change in our lives if we applied the principles from these passages? ________________