

## Financial Management God's Way

### God's Promises and Our Stewardship Responsibilities–Session #2 More Interactive

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## What is your understanding of Christian/Biblical Stewardship?

- ▶ Determine what Christian/biblical stewardship is from the following Scriptures.

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What do these verses say about the ownership of your money and material things?

*"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters." (Psalm 24:1, 2)*

*"Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom" (1 Chronicles 29:11 TLB)*

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## Who owns the real estate? God said:

- ▶ *"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants." (Leviticus 25:23)*

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## Who owns the money?

- ▶ *"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty . (Haggai 2:8)*

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You may say: "but wait a second, I have worked hard and used my skills and abilities to earn a good income".

- ▶ Who gave you your skills and abilities?
- ▶ *"You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth ..." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)*

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Is there anything that God does not own? God said to Job:

*"Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me." (Job 41:11 )*

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## Christian/Biblical Stewardship

Key Biblical Principle:

- We are stewards or managers of the money that God has entrusted to us. God is the owner!

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More specifically, Christian/Biblical stewardship is:

1. Acknowledging—in mind and heart—that God owns absolutely everything –e.g. your money, your home, your skills & even your life (1 Corinthians 6:20) and,
2. Using all assets in accordance with God's principles and God's will.

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As practical matter, how do we fulfill our stewardship responsibilities?

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Fulfilling our stewardship financial responsibilities requires the following:

1. On a regular basis, spend quality time in prayer with the Lord, asking God for His wisdom and direction in managing the money that God has entrusted to you.
  - ▶ *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)*

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Fulfilling our stewardship financial responsibilities requires:

2. Study and meditate on God's Word with regard to finances regularly.

*"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Josh. 1:8).*

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Fulfilling our stewardship financial responsibilities requires:

3. Trust God to provide your needs and direct you according to His will.

***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."** (Prov. 3: 5, 6 NKJV)*

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As we fulfill our stewardship responsibilities, what are God's 2 key promises:

1. What did Jesus promise in Matthew 6?

***"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."** (Matt. 6: 31-33)*

And what must we do?

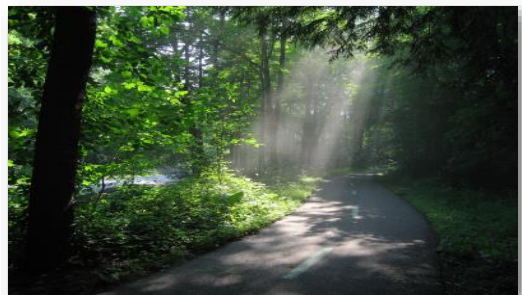
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God's promises:

2. What else did God promise in Psalm 32:8?

***"I [i.e. God] will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."** (Ps. 32:8)*

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***"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."** (Psalms 119:105)*

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## Conclusion:

- ▶ If we acknowledge that God owns everything and
- ▶ if we faithfully use money and material things in accordance with God's Word and God's will,
- ▶ then we can completely trust God to meet our needs
- ▶ and direct our financial decisions.

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## Memory Verses:

*"Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength."*  
(1 Chronicles 29:11, 12 TLB)

*"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty. (Haggai 2:8)*

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## Case Study #1

Bill and Fred are brothers. Both earn typical middle-class incomes. However, their perspectives on finances are very different.

Bill believes that "you can't take it with you" so you might as well enjoy it today. As a result, he spends all of his income (and then some), lives in an expensive home with his wife and family and they drive 2 relatively expensive automobiles. Bill feels that he has worked hard for his money and that he has earned the right to spend it as he wishes.

Bill and his wife have no savings and are frequently "forced into debt" when an unexpected expenditure arises. As a result, they have accumulated significant debts over the past several years and receiving phone calls from creditors are commonplace in their home.

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Fred and his wife, on the other hand, live a very frugal lifestyle. They are excellent at budgeting, ensure that all bills are paid on time and are very willing to sacrifice a lot in order to accumulate savings. They both "feel good" in knowing that they own a substantial investment portfolio.

By 45 years of age, Fred and his wife have saved more than enough for retirement and their children's education. Nevertheless they still continue to "pinch their pennies" and save even more. They lose a lot of sleep at night, whenever their investment portfolio decreases in value as a result of market volatility.

Both Bill and Fred give sporadically to their church, amounting to about 1% of their income.

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## Questions:

1. Has Bill practiced biblical stewardship? In other words, has Bill acknowledged in his mind and heart that God owns everything and is Bill managing money in accordance with God's principles and God's will?
2. Please explain your answer and provide a reference to scripture if you can.

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1. Has Bill practiced biblical stewardship? In other words, has Bill acknowledged in his mind and heart that God owns everything and is Bill managing money in accordance with God's principles and God's will?

**No, Bill has not acknowledged God's ownership of the money that God has entrusted to him [Haggai 2: 8]. Bill believes that he is the owner and therefore it is his right to spend money as he wishes—generally on selfish desires.**

**Bill does not give "the first fruits" to God's work [Proverbs 3:9,10].**

**He is violating God's financial principles by spending more than he earns and accumulating debt [Proverbs 22:7].**

**He is bad testimony to his creditors [Matthew 5:14–16].**

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## Questions:

2. What biblical financial principles has Bill violated? Please give a reference to Scripture for each point.

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## Questions:

2. What biblical financial principles has Bill violated? Please give a reference to Scripture for each point.
  1. **No financial plan such as a budget [Luke 14:28–30].**
  2. **Too much debt [Proverbs 22:7].**
  3. **Does not pay his creditors on time [Roman's 13:5, Matthew 5:14–16].**
  4. **Bill is very selfish [Philippians 2:3,4].**
  5. **His focus is on material things—i.e. "treasures on earth" rather than things of eternal value—i.e. "treasures in Heaven" [Matthew 6:19–21].**
  6. **Bill spends all of his income and has no savings [Prov 21:20].**
  7. **Bill believes that he is an owner and not steward [1 Chronicles 29:11,12].**
  8. **Bill does not give generously to God's work [2 Cor 9:6–7].**

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## Questions:

3. Discuss the relevance and application of the following verses in respect of Bill's approach to managing money. Write your comments below each verse.

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*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Phil 2:3-4)*

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**Bill is spending money selfishly and ignoring the interest of creditors.**

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## Questions:

4. Has Fred practiced biblical stewardship? In other words, has Fred acknowledged in his mind and heart that God owns everything and is he managing money in accordance with God's principles and God's will?

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- **No, Fred has not acknowledged in his heart and mind that God owns everything [Psalms 24:1, 2] .**

- **Fred is not giving God *"the first fruits"* [Proverbs 3:9,10].**

- **Fred continues to save and accumulate when it is no longer necessary- i.e. Fred is hoarding [Luke 12: 15-21].**

- **Fred is trusting in his investments, not in God [Proverbs 3:5, 6].**

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## Questions:

5. What biblical financial principles has Fred violated? Please give a reference to Scripture for each point.

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## Questions:

5. What biblical financial principles has Fred violated? Please give a reference to Scripture for each point.

1. **Fred has a problem with hoarding and trusting in wealth rather than God, which was demonstrated by *"the rich fool"* [Luke 12: 15-21].**

2. **Fred does not make giving to God's work a priority [Proverbs 3:9, 10].**

3. **Fred likely has a problem with the love of money resulting in a worldly desire to get rich [Timothy 6: 9, 10].**

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## Questions:

6. From a biblical perspective, what things is Fred doing correctly? Please explain and if you are able, give a reference to Scripture.

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6. From a biblical perspective, what is Fred doing correctly? Please explain and if you are able, give a reference to Scripture.

**Fred is doing some things that are consistent with God's financial principles such as:**

1. budgeting [Luke 14:28–30],
2. paying his bills on time (Romans 13:8),
3. paying down debt (Proverbs 22:7), and
4. saving for future needs such as retirement and children's education [Proverbs 6:6–8, 21:5].

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### Questions:

7. If Bill and Fred both witnessed to their creditors, whom do you think the creditors would be more likely to listen to? Consider Matthew 5:14–16 and explain your answer.

▶ *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14–16)*

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### Questions:

7. If Bill and Fred both witnessed to their creditors, whom do you think the creditors would be more likely to listen to? Consider Matthew 5:14–16 and explain your answer.

**The creditors would more likely listen to Fred because he paid his bills on time and therefore exemplified a good testimony as a Christian.**

*"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law" [Romans 13:8].*

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### Questions:

8. Discuss the relevance and application of the following verses in respect of Fred's approach to managing money. Write your comments below each verse.

*"though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them." (Ps 62:10)*

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**God's instruction to Fred is that he should not "set his heart" on his investments. Investments are temporary and accumulating investments beyond one's future needs is of no value from an eternal perspective [Matthew 6:19–21].**

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*"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him." (Jer 17:7)*

38

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**Fred needs to learn to trust in God and not in his investment portfolio. If he does this, he will be much happier and enjoy God's peace [John 14:27].**

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## Case Study #2

Ron and Marion are married. Shortly after they became Christians, they felt led by the Lord to study what God's Word says on finances. To assist in their learning, they also read Christian books written by Larry Burkett and Howard Dayton.

The first thing they learned, is that they were stewards or managers of the money and material things that God had entrusted to them, God was the owner. This revelation changed their spending habits and as result, before making any major financial decision, they review God's Word and prayerfully seek God's will. Even when they can afford to buy something for cash, they nevertheless, ask God in prayer as to what they should do with His money.

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At that time, even though Ron's business was small, they demonstrated their trust in God by tithing. Ron and Marion came to understand that God warns of the dangers of debt and discourages debt and thus they diligently paid off their business and personal debts ASAP.

Today they are totally debt-free, both corporately and personally. As they continued to learn and apply God's financial principles in managing both corporate and personal finances God continued to bless Ron's business, and today, Ron has a very successful business. Ron and Marion purposely give generously to the Lord's work – usually over 50% of their personal and corporate income.

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▶ In addition, throughout the process, they daily spent quality time with the Lord in prayer resulting in a very close personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They could often sense God's "voice" as described in John 10:27.

▶ Ron acknowledges that God has given him the ability to earn a substantial income as well as the blessings of a very profitable business. Nevertheless, Ron and Marion have felt led by the Lord to continue to live in their typical middle-class home and drive 2 used cars.

▶ It does not bother Ron that most of his business associates drive nicer cars and Marion is happy with her home, because they both believe that they are building up "treasures in heaven" that will last for eternity.

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### Questions:

1. Have Ron and Marion practiced biblical stewardship? In other words, have Ron and Marion acknowledged in their minds and heart that God owns everything and are they managing money in accordance with God's principles and God's will?

Please explain your answer and provide a reference to scripture if you can.

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2. When their income was modest, Ron and Marion had the mindset of a steward, not an owner in managing the money that God had entrusted to them. Do you think this attitude was critical in determining how they would handle a large surplus? Consider Luke 16:10 below.

▶ ***"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much" (Luke 16:10).***

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2. When their income was modest, Ron and Marion had the mindset of a steward, not an owner. Do you think that this attitude was critical in determining how they would handle a large surplus?

- ▶ Absolutely yes—an individual's management of money is determined by their attitude or mindset towards money, which will generally be applied regardless of the amount of income that they have. That's why Jesus said that if you are not trustworthy with a small amount then you will not be trustworthy with a large amount [Luke 16:10].
- ▶ In many ways, one's management of money is a reflection of one's character and priorities, which generally do not change as one's income increases.

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3. How would you describe Ron and Marion's *attitude* in respect of the lifestyle that God has called them to? Is this consistent with biblical principles? Please provide a reference to Scripture.

47

3. How would you describe Ron and Marion's *attitude* in respect of the lifestyle that God has called them to? Is this consistent with biblical principles?

- ▶ Ron and Marion's attitude in respect of their lifestyle is one of contentment.
- ▶ Yes – this is definitely consistent with biblical principles. See [Hebrews 13:5](#), [Philippians 4:11–13](#) and [1 Timothy 6:6–8](#).
- ▶ Contentment may be the most important biblical attitude towards money and material things, as it is the "antidote" to many worldly attitudes such as selfishness, covetousness, envy and greed.

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4. Would it be wrong for another Christian to purchase a bigger home, which they could easily afford?

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- ▶ Generally speaking, it is not wrong for any Christian to own a bigger home, as long as they can afford it and as long as it is consistent with God's specific will for their life.
- ▶ Every Christian must ensure that they are within God's will with respect to their personal lifestyle. They should not buy something just because they have the cash or just because the bank will lend them the money.
- ▶ Ron and Marion were following God's will for their lives (Psalms 32:8).

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5. Ron and Marion diligently developed a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you think that this has any impact on the way they manage money or is the management of money independent of one's relationship with the Lord? Please explain your answer and provide a reference to Scripture.

51

5. Ron and Marion diligently developed a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you think that this has any impact on the way they manage money or is the management of money independent of one's relationship with the Lord?

Ron and Marion's close personal relationship with Jesus Christ, has a tremendous impact on how they manage money. They are doing many things that are contrary to the world and to our natural selfish desires. For example:

1. They are content to live a lifestyle that is much less than what they can afford [1 Timothy 6:6-8].
2. They prayerfully seek God's wisdom [James 1:5] and God's specific direction [Psalms 32:8] in managing money and material things.
3. They acknowledge that they are stewards and not owners of all assets [1 Corinthians 4: 2].
4. They operate with no debt [Deuteronomy 28:1-12].
5. They give generously to God's work [2 Cor 9:6, 7].
6. Their focus is on the eternal, not the temporal [Colossians 3:1, 2].

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6. Discuss the relevance and application of the following verses in respect of Ron and Marion's situation. Write your comments below each verse.

- ▶ *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:19-21)*

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"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:19-21)

- ▶ Ron and Marion are storing up "treasures in heaven" by giving generously to God's work, and by being content with a middle-class lifestyle that is significantly lower than what they can afford. Their management of money in accordance with biblical principles will be a testimony to their friends, relatives, creditors and business associates and an excellent example for their children. All of these result in "treasures in heaven".

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Break up into small groups and go through the case studies and before the end sure some prayer requests and the leaders should close in prayer.

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- ▶ Since we have eight sessions we will not be able to do the entire book. So Be sure to pick up a copy of the schedule. The order is :
- ▶ #2-stewardship,
- ▶ #3-secular versus Biblical steward,
- ▶ #4-God's wisdom on debt and saving,
- ▶ #5-steps to get out of debt,
- ▶ #6-budgeting,
- ▶ #7-obtaining godly counsel,
- ▶ #8 giving generously,
- ▶ #11 financial deceptions.

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