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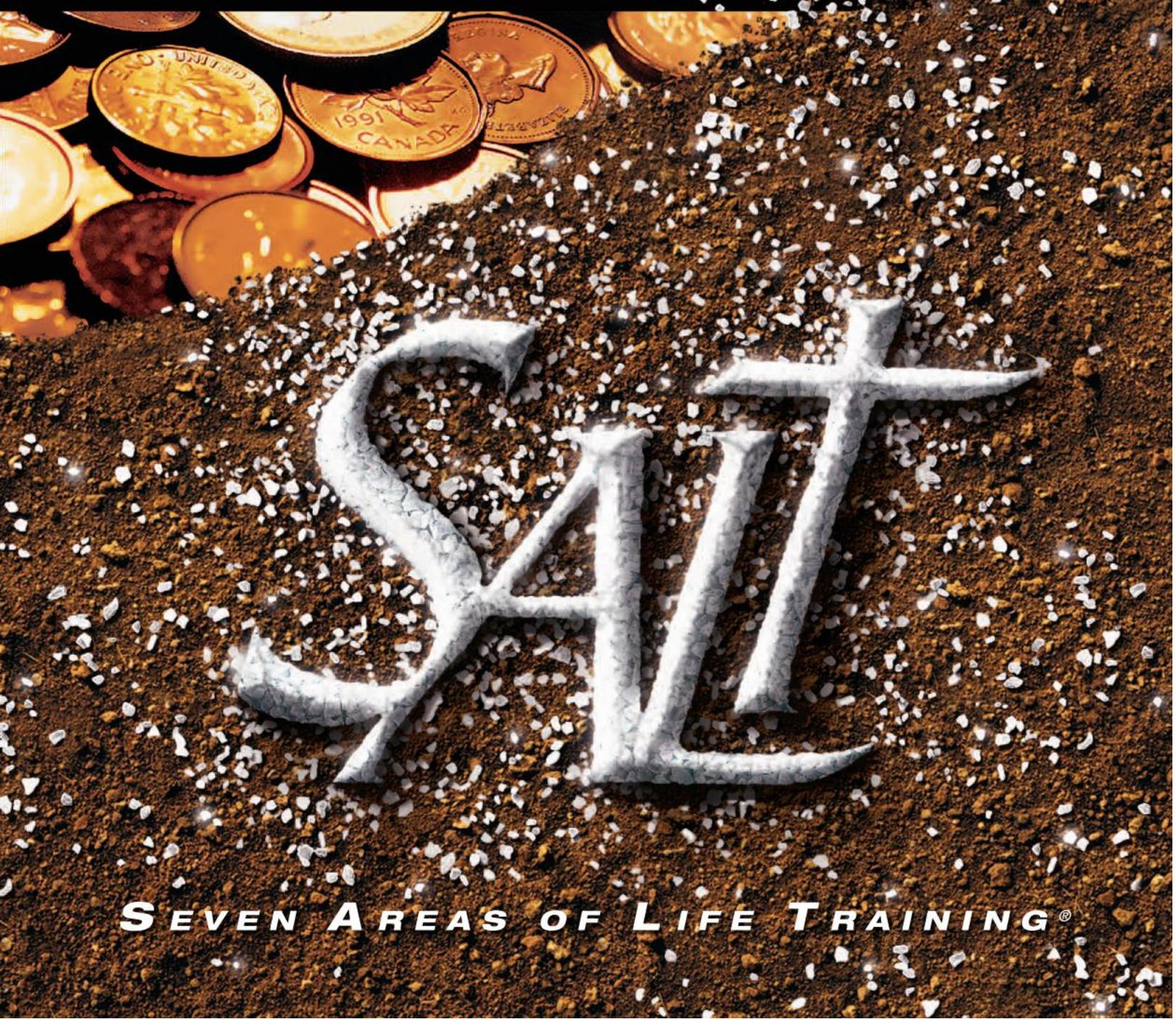
Physical 4

Financial 5

Marital 6

Parental 7

My Money



SEVEN AREAS OF LIFE TRAINING®

My Money

Financial Area of Life

S.A.L.T.

Seven Areas of Life Training[®]

SEVEN AREAS OF LIFE TRAINING (S.A.L.T.) FINANCIAL AREA –
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MONEY, Version 2.0

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Dedication

All of us at VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING INTERNATIONAL give God the praise for these SALT materials and dedicate this series to the discipleship of believers worldwide.

Thank you to all past and present VCLi staff members. You have played a vital role in developing, teaching, and helping others apply these diagrams, concepts, and lessons.

Special thanks go to Rocky Nystrom. Your vision and creativity made this series a reality, your determination brought it to completion; and your heart for people to be free energized us along the way.

About this Series

SEVEN AREAS OF LIFE TRAINING

Learning how to live victoriously in all seven areas of life is the goal of this comprehensive discipleship series.

This small group or self-study book is simple, yet dynamic. Biblical truths are visually illustrated with powerful diagrams.

Solid Biblical truth is taught in each lesson with a challenge to apply that truth to your life. It is when you apply that truth and share it with others that your life will be profoundly changed.

About this Book

The *Financial Area of Life* deals with your management of your money.

In four powerful chapters, you will find challenges to get real with your finances and start enjoying financial freedom.

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Chapter 1

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’”

Matthew 25:21 (NLT)

The financial area of life is about how you relate to money.

Most people in this world think that money is great and the more of it they can get, the better off they will be. King Solomon is a person who had a lot of money but had this to say about it.

“Those who love money will never have enough. How absurd to think that wealth brings true happiness!”

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NLT)

Other people believe that “Money is the root of all evil.” And therefore, the less of it they have the better off they will be. What does the Bible say about money? Is it good or evil?

The truth is that the Bible doesn’t say, “Money is the root of all evil.” It actually says, “The **love of** money is at the root of all kinds of evil.”

“For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)

Money is not evil, money is neutral. However, your attitude about money is usually not neutral, it can be evil.

Knowing the truth about money is the key to being free. We will call that place “Financial Freedom.”

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **John 8:32** (NLT)

God Owns It, You Manage It

The most important truth about money is that it all belongs to God.

“‘The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,’ says the LORD Almighty.” **Haggai 2:8** (NLT)

God owns everything. You are not the true owner of anything. You are merely a manager over the things He allows you to possess.

“Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful.” **1 Corinthians 4:2** (NLT)

If you are a manager over God’s money then you ought to make sure you are doing what He wants you to do with it. The Bible gives clear guidelines or boundaries for being faithful with money. The Bible also makes it clear that God blesses those who are faithful.

“If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I assure you, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns.” **Matthew 24:46–47** (NLT)

Even though God actually owns all the money you possess, He allows you to enjoy it.

“And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it...” **Ecclesiastes 5:19** (NLT)

Four Things

There are really only four things you can do with money. You can:

1. Earn money
2. Give money
3. Spend money
4. Invest money

We will look at what the Bible teaches about each of these four things.

The key to enjoying money and experiencing financial freedom is to do each of these four things in a way that is faithful to God who is the true owner.

Financial freedom comes as a result of financial faithfulness.

Earn Money Honestly

Before there is any spending, giving or investing, you have to **earn money**.

- Q1.** Do you think it matters to God how you earn it?

“Get-Rich-Quick” Schemes

The Bible teaches that “get-rich-quick” schemes are a waste of time.

“Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows.” Proverbs 13:11 (NLT)

- Q2.** Have you ever wished you could win the lottery and have so much money that all your troubles would be over?

Most lottery winners go on to be miserable after they “get-rich-quick.” Of course, most people who play the lottery never win so they have a hard time believing that getting money quickly would be anything but great.

Another way people try to get rich quick is through “pyramid schemes.” These schemes always have one thing in common – the promise of

getting rich quick. People put their trust in them and usually are disappointed with the outcome.

Some people gamble, some people steal, some people buy cheap stocks, and some people pray, all with the hope of getting rich quickly.

The truth about “get-rich-quick” schemes is that most of them don’t work; but even *if* they do, the wealth gained from them usually doesn’t last.

- Q3.** Are you considering a quick way to make money right now? Describe.
- Q4.** Are you praying that God will bless it?
- Q5.** In light of the previous verse (**Proverbs 13:11**), do you think He will?

Ability is from God

The Bible teaches that your ability to earn money is a gift from God.

“...Never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. Always remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you power to become rich...”
Deuteronomy 8:17–18 (NLT)

It is not your own effort that allows you to succeed at earning money, it is God. It comes from God and once you get it, it is still His.

If God gives you the power to get rich, it probably won’t happen overnight.

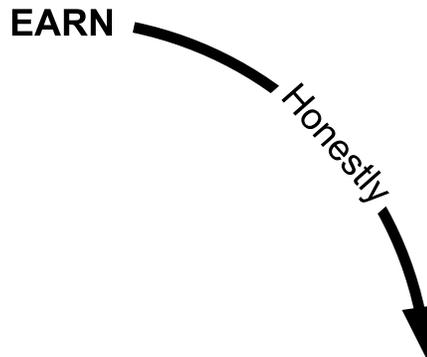
Hard Work

The Bible teaches to earn money through hard work.

“If you are too lazy to plow in the right season, you will have no food at the harvest.” **Proverbs 20:4** (NLT)

And finally, the Bible teaches that when you earn money, earn it **honestly**.

“Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won’t be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.” **Luke 16:10** (NLT)



Earn money without cheating, lying, or taking advantage of others.

Every time you get money someone has given up money. If you earn money from a job, your employer gives money up each hour that you work. If you get money by selling something, the buyer gives up some money to get what you are selling.

All transactions exchanging money involve one person getting and one person giving. What happens when one of the people in the transaction is not honest? The other person loses. In fact, the other person or the other party gets robbed. Even if that other party is a big company, it is still robbery.

“The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard.” **Proverbs 16:11** (NLT)

- Q6.** Have you ever misrepresented something that you were selling in order to get a better price for it? Describe.

- Q7.** How do you feel when others do that to you?

If you are not honest on your tax return, the money that you keep because of lying you stole from the government.

“Wealth created by lying is a vanishing mist and a deadly trap.” Proverbs 21:6 (NLT)

When you earn money, God expects you to do so honestly.

Earning money, even if you earn a lot of it, does not lead you to financial freedom. Freedom comes only when you earn it within the boundaries of financial faithfulness.

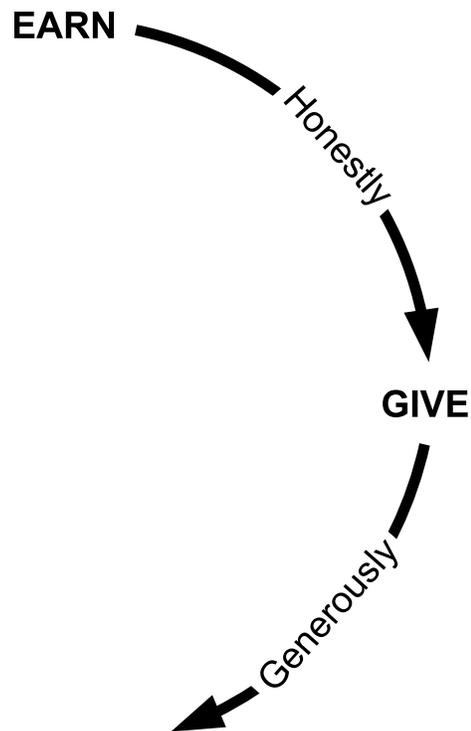
Give Money Generously

After you earn money honestly God challenges you to give generously.

*“Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.”
Proverbs 3:9–10 (NASB)*

Q8. Do you believe in giving? When?

Q9. Do you give before or after you spend money on things you don't need?



When you give generously, instead of running out of money, God multiplies your money.

“If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving—large or small—it will be used to measure what is given back to you.” **Luke 6:38** (NLT)

Spend Money Wisely

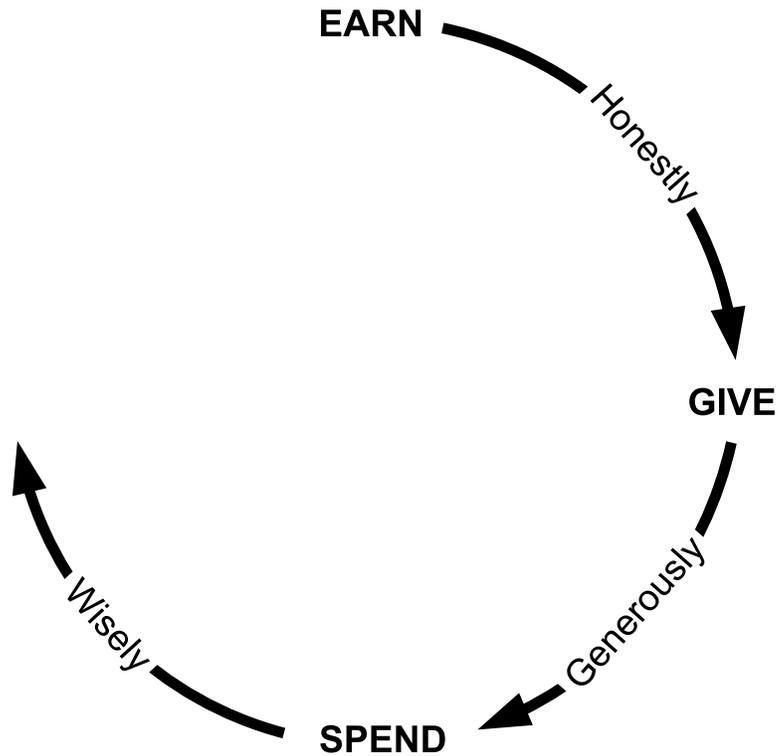
When you earn honestly and give generously, financial faithfulness requires you to spend it wisely. The first priority is to spend it on your family needs.

“Who is a faithful, sensible servant, to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his household and feeding his family?” **Matthew 24:45** (NLT)

Q10. How would you define the difference between a need and a want?

The Bible says that God will supply all your needs.

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” **Philippians 4:19** (NKJ)



Q11. Have you ever spent money on things you didn't need before you paid for all the things you did need?

Q12. If you are in debt, can you trace it back to spending money on things you wanted but didn't need?

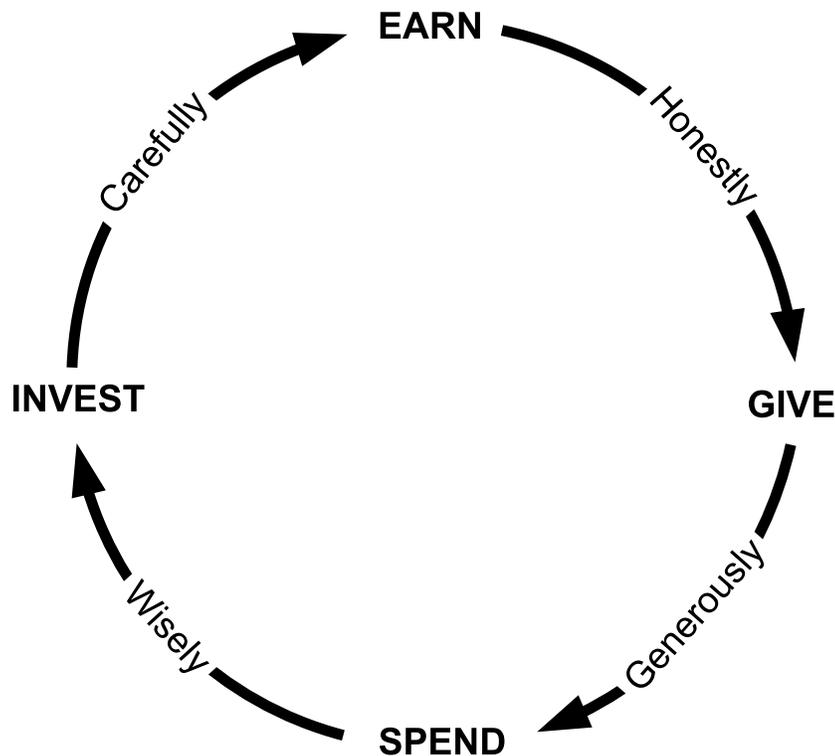
Invest Money Carefully

When you earn money honestly then you can give it generously and spend it wisely. With the remainder, invest it carefully in order to bring an increase.

“The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of gold said, ‘Sir, you gave me five bags of gold to invest, and I have doubled the amount.’ The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” **Matthew 25:20–21** (NLT)

Investing God’s money is another issue of faithfulness. The goal of investing money is to make the money grow. Spending money on something that goes down in value, like a car or a boat, is not investing. Hoarding money in a place where it does not grow is not investing either.

“Well, you should at least have put my money into the bank so I could have some interest.”
Matthew 25:27 (NLT)



Investing is buying something today that can be sold for more money in the future. Investing carefully is another way to earn money honestly. Earning money honestly starts the whole cycle over again.

Eventually, you could have enough money invested that the money you get from your investments could pay for all your giving, spending, and reinvesting.

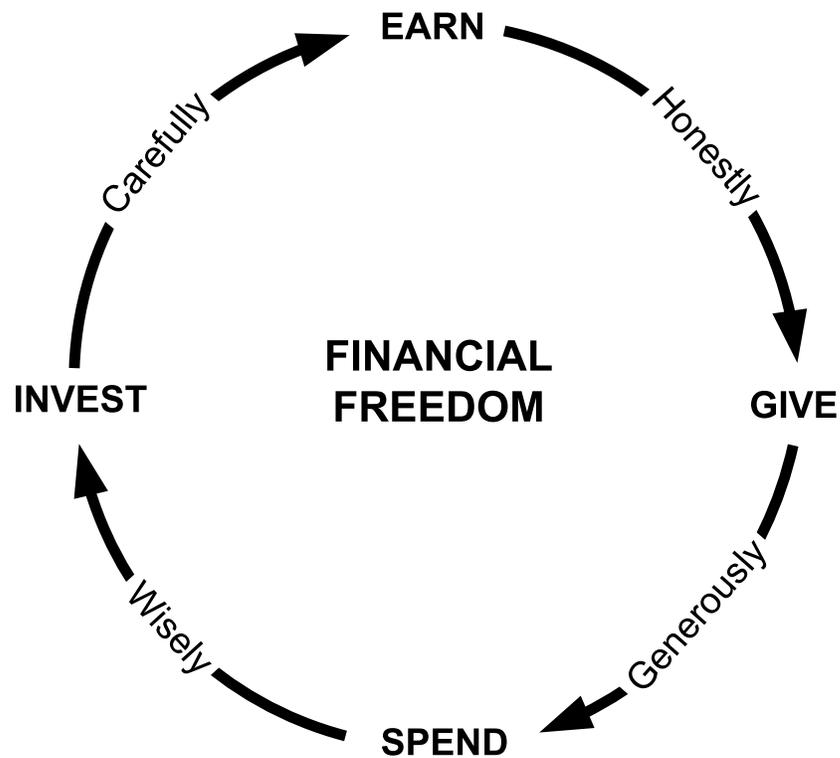
Q13. What benefit would you gain from investing money?

Q14. What would you do with your time if you had financial freedom?

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13 (NASB)

Financial Freedom

Financial freedom actually lies within the boundaries of these four principles.



Though it may seem at times that freedom could come from breaking outside the boundaries defined by financial faithfulness, the truth is that only misery, slavery, and death wait for you on the outside.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5–6 (NLT)

Slavery and loss are on the outside of financial faithfulness.

- If you don't **earn** money *honestly*, you could end up in prison.
- If you don't **give** *generously*, you will miss out on God's blessing.
- If you don't **spend** money *wisely*, you might end up in bankruptcy.
- If you don't **invest** *carefully*, you will never have income from investments to pay for your spending and giving.

Conclusion

Talk to God about your finances. Write what He shows you.

Q15. Are you willing to do whatever He wants you to do with your finances? If so, when will you take action?

Take action on what God has shown you.

Share with someone this week what you have learned from this lesson. Draw the diagram and explain God's plan for financial freedom.

Financial Freedom

Diagram

Notes

Chapter 2

GIVE GENEROUSLY

“If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving – large or small – it will be used to measure what is given back to you.” **Luke 6:38** (NLT)

Giving generously is the second phase in our cycle of financial freedom.

Giving is a supernatural way to bring an increase to your finances. Getting ahead by giving really doesn't make any sense but God says that if you do it He will bless you. In fact, God says that He will prove to you that giving works.

*“If you do,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! **Try it! Let me prove it to you!**”* **Malachi 3:10** (NLT)

First, if you want to initiate God's increase, give.

Receive Increase

Giving is a spiritual matter. It involves you and God. Ask God to show you how much to give, where to give, when to give and even if you should give to something or someone.

God wants your attitude about giving to be cheerful. He wants you to actually enjoy giving.

“You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.” 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NLT)

Q1. Are you a cheerful giver?

Q2. Do you find yourself irritated by giving or pressured into giving?

God wants you to give cheerfully and He wants you to give generously.

The principle of sowing and reaping is seen throughout scripture. If you give generously, it is like sowing seeds and it produces God’s blessing. You reap *God’s increase*.

“Give freely and spontaneously. Don’t have a stingy heart. The way you handle matters like this triggers God, your God’s, blessing in everything you do, all your work and ventures.” Deuteronomy 15:10 (MSG)

God promises that when you give to Him, He will meet your needs through His provision or supply.

“Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9–10 (NASB)

GIVE



**Receive
Increase**

Q3. What do you think experiencing God's increase in your life would be like?

There are three things your giving accomplishes:

1. It acknowledges God.
2. It helps the needy.
3. It spreads the Gospel.

Acknowledge God

Giving starts with God. God owns everything. There is nothing that exists that didn't come from God. Therefore, all that you have comes from God. Your ability to give comes only because you have something and that something that you have came from God.

"The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it." Psalm 24:1 (NASB)

Can you give God anything? No, you really can't. But you can dedicate a portion to God.

By giving a portion of what you have, you acknowledge that God is the owner of all. This passage in Deuteronomy talks about proportional giving.

“...Bring him a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him.”

Deuteronomy 16:10 (NLT)

Q4. Do you give in proportion to what you have received?

Q5. What kind of proportion or percentage do you give?

The Bible often refers to proportional giving as a tithe. The literal translation of the word “tithe” is “tenth.”

*“And concerning the **tithe** of the herd or the flock...the **tenth** one shall be holy to the Lord.”*

Leviticus 27:32 (NKJ)

Instead of bringing animals or crops as a tithe you can bring your finances to the place where God is honored and His work is being done. Giving a tithe reminds you that everything, not only the ten percent, belongs to God.

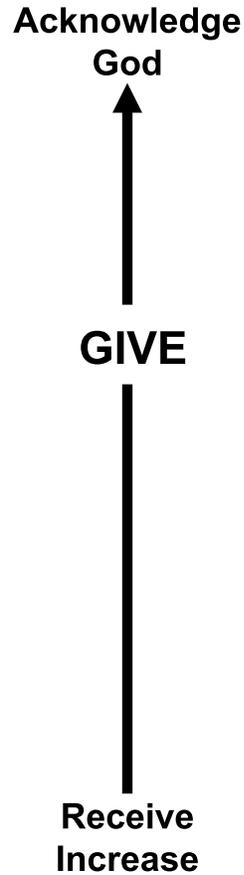
*“Bring this **tithe** to the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored...This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to fear the LORD your God.”*

Deuteronomy 14:23 (NLT)

So, whether you have a lot or a little, in God’s economy we are all giving the same when we give our tithe.

Giving your tithe can be the first thing you do with your money. As you receive a paycheck or increase of assets, give back a tithe of that income.

“On every Lord’s Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering...” **1 Corinthians 16:2** (NLT)



Q6. Is your giving based on a tithe or tenth of all you receive? Explain.

Q7. If not, are you willing to begin tithing?

Consider what God says in the following verse.

“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!’ But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ ‘You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me.’”
Malachi 3:8 (NLT)

The Needy

Taking care of the poor and needy is not a new idea invented by the government. Charity is God's idea. God is compassionate and He wants His people to take care of the poor and needy. The Bible teaches us to give generously to the poor.

“There are always going to be poor and needy people among you. So I command you: Always be generous, open purse and hands, give to your neighbors in trouble, your poor and hurting neighbors.”

Deuteronomy 15:11 (MSG)

- Q8.** What is your attitude toward the poor?
- Q9.** Do you reach out to them through your giving?
- Q10.** Have you experienced God's blessing as a result of giving to the needy?

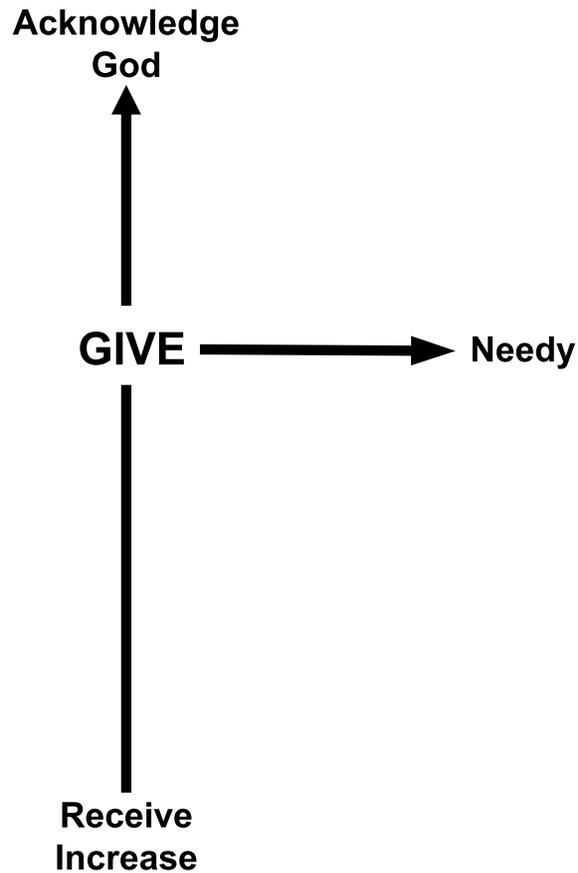
You are giving to God when you give to the poor and needy.

“...Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ...And the King will tell them, ‘I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’”

Matthew 25:37–38, 40 (NLT)

There is a link between our generosity and His blessing.

“Generous hands are blessed hands because they give bread to the poor.” **Proverbs 22:9** (MSG)



Giving initiates God's increase. By giving, you acknowledge that everything belongs to God. When you give to the needy, you are giving to what God cares about.

Q11. What is something of value God is asking you to give?

As important as it is to give to the physical needs of people, God cares most deeply about where individuals will spend eternity – with or without Him.

Spread the Gospel

He cares about their souls. He demonstrated His great love for people, by giving His Son. His giving was generous and sacrificial.

*“For God so loved the world that he **gave** his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” **John 3:16** (NLT)*

Giving financial support to ministries that spread the gospel (the Good News) is another way of giving to what God cares about.

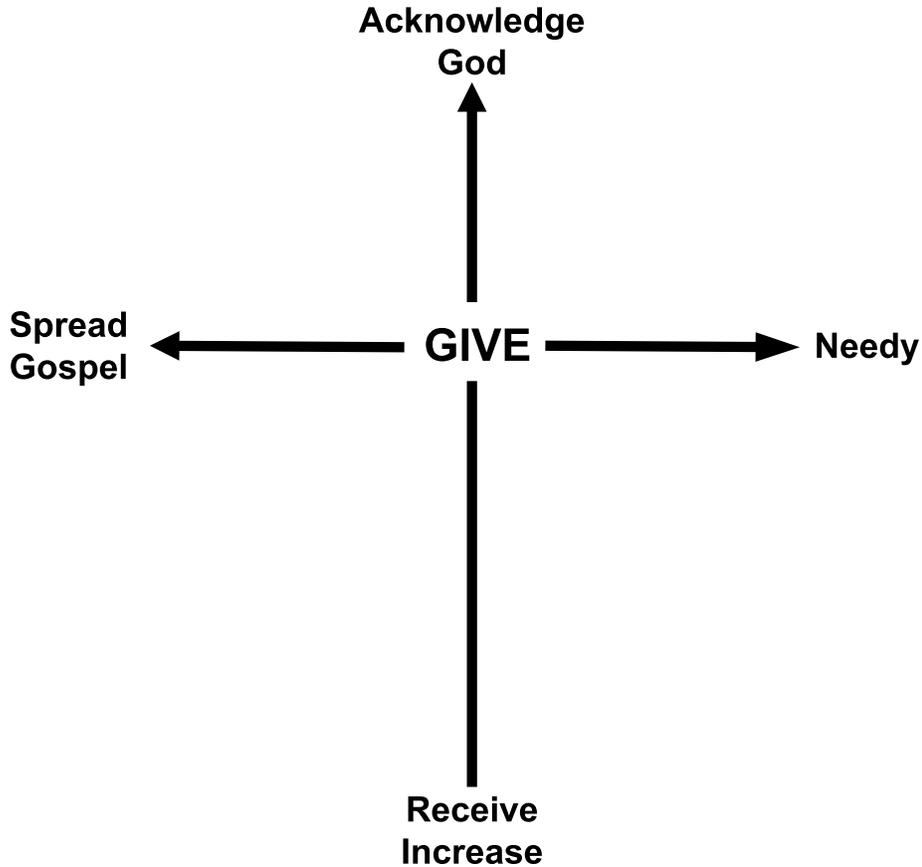
*“...You have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.” **Philippians 1:5** (NLT)*

You can give cheerfully because you are helping people come to know Him.

God has called people to teach others how to live.

*“Those who are taught the word of God should help their teachers by paying them.” **Galatians 6:6** (NLT)*

Q12. Do you support the people who work at teaching the word of God?



Q13. Do you consider yourself a generous giver?

Q14. Would others consider you a generous giver?

If not, examine your motives and beliefs about God and money.

“Speaking to the people, he went on, ‘Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot.’”

Luke 12:15 (MSG)

Your giving is to be generous. Your giving is to be sacrificial. This is because your giving is to reflect the way your Heavenly Father gives to you. God gave His greatest possession, Jesus, for you to have what

you have. Notice the shape of this diagram has formed a cross. Jesus gave His everything.

Conclusion

Q15. What did God show you through this chapter on giving?

Q16. What is God showing you to do in regards to your giving?

Believe God will bring an increase as you give.

Thank Him for the increase.

Do what God is showing you to do in regards to giving.

Giving

Diagram

Notes

Chapter 3

SPEND WISELY

“The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.” Proverbs 21:20 (NLT)

Financial freedom does not require great wealth. Rather, it requires the proper management of whatever assets and funds one possesses. That is financial faithfulness.

The Bible speaks of honest earning, generous giving, wise spending, and careful investing. This chapter will focus on God’s guidelines for spending money and the consequences of not following those guidelines.

Have you noticed how some people who don’t earn much money end up, over time, becoming financially free? While others who have large salaries end up with very little or nothing to show for it? How does this happen?

“You have planted much but harvested little. You have food to eat, but not enough to fill you up. You have wine to drink, but not enough to satisfy your thirst. You have clothing to wear, but not enough to keep you warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!” Haggai 1:6 (NLT)

Starts Out Easy

To go from having much to having little, starts out easy. It is easy to spend money on things you don’t really need.

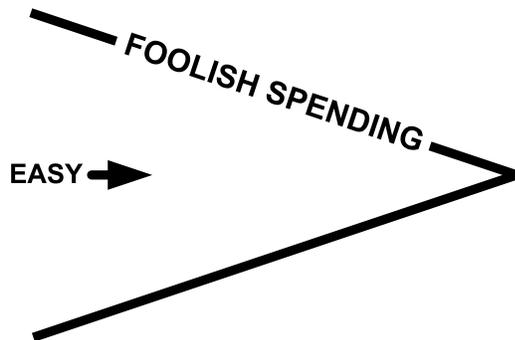
- Q1.** Do you spend money on things you don’t need?

- Q2.** Do you purchase things on credit so you can get them right now instead of waiting until you have the funds to purchase them?
- Q3.** Have you ever spent more than you had because you saw something you wanted?

Believing money is yours to use as you please leads to foolish spending.

The diagram below illustrates how *foolish spending* is like a wide gate. There are many people who go down this path because it is *easy* to get started on it. However, as you will see, it is a dangerous path.

“...**Wide** is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”
Matthew 7:13 (NKJ)



When you go through the wide gate, you are spending more than you have, using credit to get what you want, and buying whatever you want whenever you want it. Although this path starts out easy, it typically leads to unpaid bills and working more jobs or longer hours just to keep up with daily living expenses. This path often leads to strained relationships, headaches, stress, and discontentment.

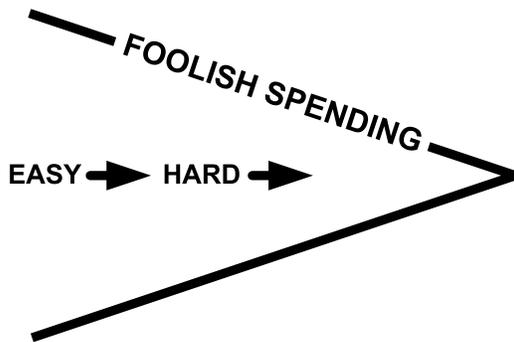
- Q4.** Has there been a strain on your relationships due to wrong spending? Explain.

Q5. Have you experienced any negative emotions (depression, anxiety, and worry) due to your finances? Explain.

Gets Hard

Foolish or unwise spending is the main cause of financial hardship. Notice how the path becomes *hard* and difficult.

“But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills?” **Luke 14:28** (NLT)

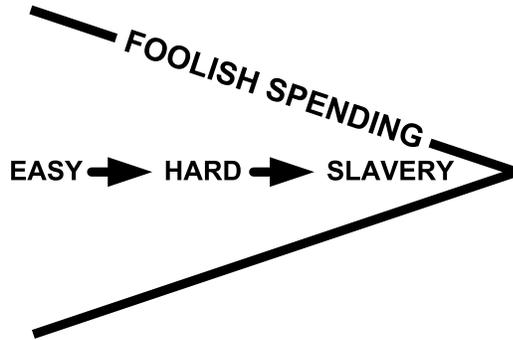


Slavery

The way that once was easy, over time, gets harder and ends in *slavery*. You are a slave to debt, creditors, and possibly even bankruptcy.

*“The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender’s **slave**.”* **Proverbs 22:7** (NASB)

- Q6.** If you are having financial difficulties, mark (X) to show where you are on the following diagram.



- Q7.** Are you a slave to your bills, loans, and creditors? Explain.
- Q8.** In what ways have you been foolish in your spending?
- Q9.** If you find yourself on this diagram, have you believed that God's money is your money?
- Q10.** Do you think the consequences of foolish spending will catch up with you? When?

"But if the servant thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,'...The master will return unannounced and unexpected. He will tear the servant apart and banish him with the unfaithful. The servant will be severely punished, for though he knew his duty, he refused to do it." Luke 12:45–47 (NLT)

God Uses It

God can use your financial slavery to help you make a decision to stop doing things your way. He wants you to go His way because when you obey Him, you will be blessed.

*“If troubles come upon them and they are **enslaved** and afflicted, he [God] takes the trouble to show them the reason. He shows them their sins, for they have behaved proudly. He gets their attention and says they must turn away from evil. If they listen and obey God, then they will be blessed with prosperity throughout their lives. All their years will be pleasant.” Job 36:8–11 (NLT)*

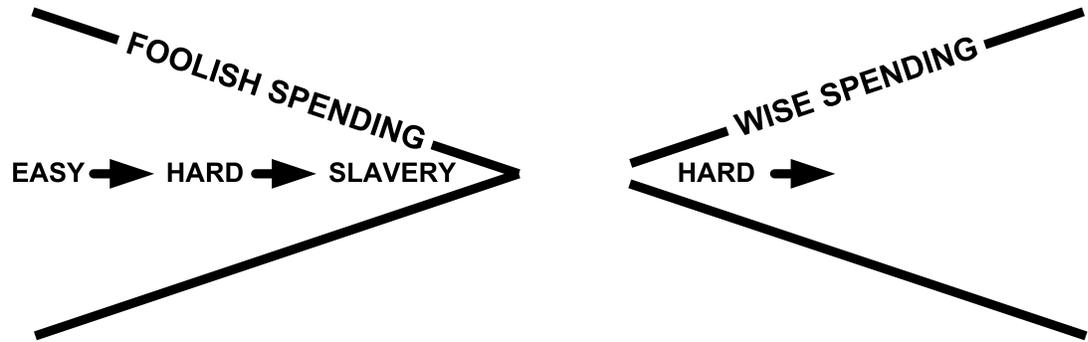
- Q11.** How has God been using what you are going through to get your attention?
- Q12.** Are you ready to give up foolish spending and do things God’s way?

The Bible calls people who manage their money God’s way, good stewards. A good steward is someone that uses money wisely and desires to please God. As a good steward, you need to be faithful whether God has given you much or little to manage.

“Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won’t be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people’s money, why should you be trusted with money of your own?” Luke 16:10–12 (NLT)

In the next diagram, notice the gate to wise spending is *narrow*. It is reached through a commitment to doing things God’s way.

*“...**Narrow** is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:14 (NKJ)*



Q13. Why do you think moving from foolish spending to wise spending starts out hard?

Starts Out Hard

Wise spending might seem hard at first because you are more familiar with doing things your own way instead of God's way. New things always start out difficult and awkward. Secondly, it takes time to make a plan or budget. Finally, it's difficult because you will be putting off immediate gratification as you spend wisely.

God's Guidelines

Consider the following items and scriptures as you prepare your monthly budget.

1. Pay taxes.

*"Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your **taxes** and import duties, and give respect and honor to all to whom it is due."* **Romans 13:7** (NLT)

This verse answers the question about whether God expects you to pay taxes to the government or not. You don't need to pay more than you owe, but do pay what you owe.

Q14. Do you deny the government its money or cheat on your taxes? Explain.

2. Take care of necessities.

“But those who won’t care for their own relatives, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers.” 1 Timothy 5:8 (NLT)

Take care of your family by providing for their necessities. *Necessities are food, clothing, shelter, and basic transportation.* The Bible makes it clear that God considers meeting these needs for your family very important.

Q15. What are your family’s necessities? Are they provided for?

Q16. Do you spend money on wants and then not have enough money to pay for your needs? Describe.

3. Spend less than you earn.

*“There is desirable treasure, and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a **foolish** man squanders it.”*
Proverbs 21:20 (NKJ)

One of God’s principles is to not spend all the money that you have. Spending everything you earn makes it impossible to save or ever have anything to invest carefully.

Q17. Are you living within your income?

4. Practice prompt payments.

“Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,’ When you have it with you.”
Proverbs 3:28 (NKJ)

Another one of God's principles is to practice prompt payments for the things you have promised to pay. Don't use the money that is committed to a lender for other things you want.

Q18. Are you quick to pay your bills and debts? Why or why not?

5. Eliminate debt.

*“Pay all your **debts**, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that!...”* **Romans 13:8** (NLT)

If you have gone into debt, you need to honor your obligation to pay it back.

Foolish spending can involve self-indulgence and poor planning, which are both indications of not following God's plan. These end in financial slavery like overdue bills, debt and bondage to lenders, dissatisfaction, property decay, worry, and family poverty.

Even though doing things God's way may start out hard, financial slavery is much worse.

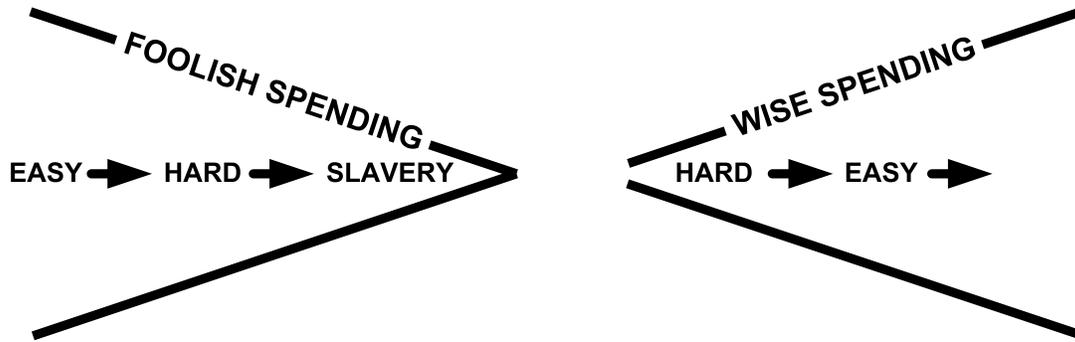
In summary, determine what you owe in taxes and pay them first. Then determine what your family's real necessities are and pay for those next. Then determine what you owe and pay off your debts. Lastly, what is left over can be used for investments.

Q19. Are you using your money the way God desires? Why or why not?

Gets Easier

Although the path of wise spending starts out hard, it does become easier as you consistently follow God's patterns. The benefits of wise spending will be that your needs will be met and you will have extra to give and eventually invest.

“So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.” **Galatians 6:9** (NLT)



Freedom

As you continue on the path of wise spending, not only will it become easier, you ultimately will experience financial *freedom*.

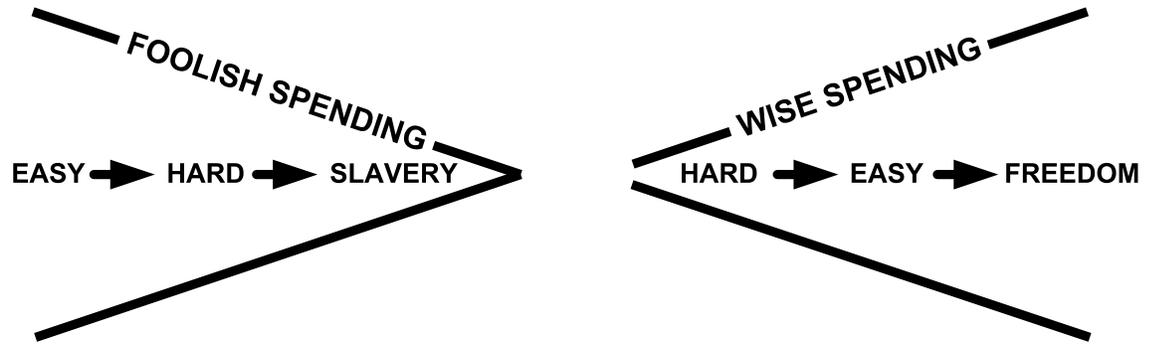
*“God has led you away from danger, giving you **freedom**.
You have prospered in a wide and pleasant valley.”*
Job 36:16 (NLT)

Many people at this point begin to really enjoy the fruit of their wise spending. Some are able to retire and serve in ministries or donate their time and talents to worthy causes.

*“The **wise** have wealth and luxury, but **fools** spend
whatever they get.”* **Proverbs 21:20** (NLT)

Consider this paradox. Foolish spenders think they are free to do whatever they want with their finances, but it leads to slavery and bondage. Wise spenders give up their way to become servants of God and find freedom.

Freedom doesn't come from doing what you want but from doing what God wants.

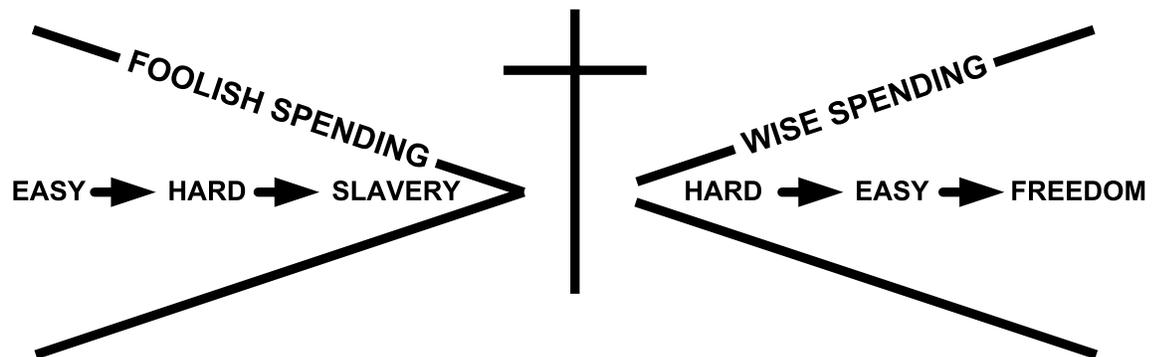


*“I will walk in **freedom**, for I have devoted myself to your commandments.” Psalm 119:45 (NLT)*

Deny Yourself

The power to change from foolish spending to wise spending comes from Jesus. When He is at the center of your life, He enables you to turn from being self-focused, unfaithful, and foolish to being God focused, faithful, and wise.

On the next diagram, the cross illustrates Christ’s obedience and your need to deny yourself and follow Him.



“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’” Luke 9:23 (NASB)

Q20. What would denying yourself look like in the financial area?

Personal Application

Make a Plan

Make a plan or budget to accomplish financial freedom. Planning is an issue of faithfulness. It is up to you to make your plans, but up to God to allow you to carry out your plans.

*“We **plan** the way we want to live, but only God makes us able to live it. It Pays to Take Life Seriously.”*

Proverbs 16:9 (MSG)

Even God makes plans.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the LORD. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” **Jeremiah 29:11** (NLT)*

Faithful planning requires paying attention to detail. In ancient times, shepherds were to know exactly what was going on with their work and source of revenue. It is the same for us today.

Some people still have livestock to care and account for. Others have different income sources and amounts. To be faithful requires you to know what is happening in the financial area of your life.

*“**Know well the condition** of your flocks, {And} pay attention to your herds.” **Proverbs 27:23** (NASB)*

Q21. Do you have a financial plan for you and your family?

Q22. Does your plan take into consideration your future and your present situation?

Q23. If you don't have a plan, is there something you are waiting for?

Ask God to help you make a budget and give up whatever is necessary to enter the narrow gate.

“And the Lord replied, ‘I’m talking to any faithful, sensible servant to whom the master gives the responsibility of managing his household and feeding his family. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I assure you, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns.’”

Luke 12:42–44 (NLT)

If you don’t have a plan you already follow, start by filling out the **Budget Planning Form** at the end of this manual.

Ask God to give you the opportunity to share this diagram and the truth you have learned with someone else this week.

With the excess that wise spending creates, you will have money for investing, saving, and debt reduction.

Foolish and Wise Spending

Diagram

Notes

INVEST CAREFULLY

“To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away.” **Matthew 25:29** (NLT)

Investing carefully is the fourth phase in the Financial Freedom Cycle. The cycle begins by earning money honestly, giving money generously, spending money wisely, and then investing money carefully. Running this cycle requires making a plan and following it.

Even though some parts of the cycle may seem more significant or spiritual than investing, the Bible doesn't make that distinction. God wants you to be faithful whether you are earning, giving, spending or investing.

Extra Money

- Q1.** If you were given \$100 right now, what is the first thing that comes to your mind to do with it?

- Q2.** If you were given \$1000 today, what would you do with it?

- Q3.** Imagine being given \$10,000. What would you do with that amount of money?

Q4. One last time, what would you do with \$1,000,000?

If you said you would spend any of that money on things (after tithing) other than getting out of debt or investing, then you are not thinking about financial freedom.

“The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.” **Proverbs 21:20** (NLT)

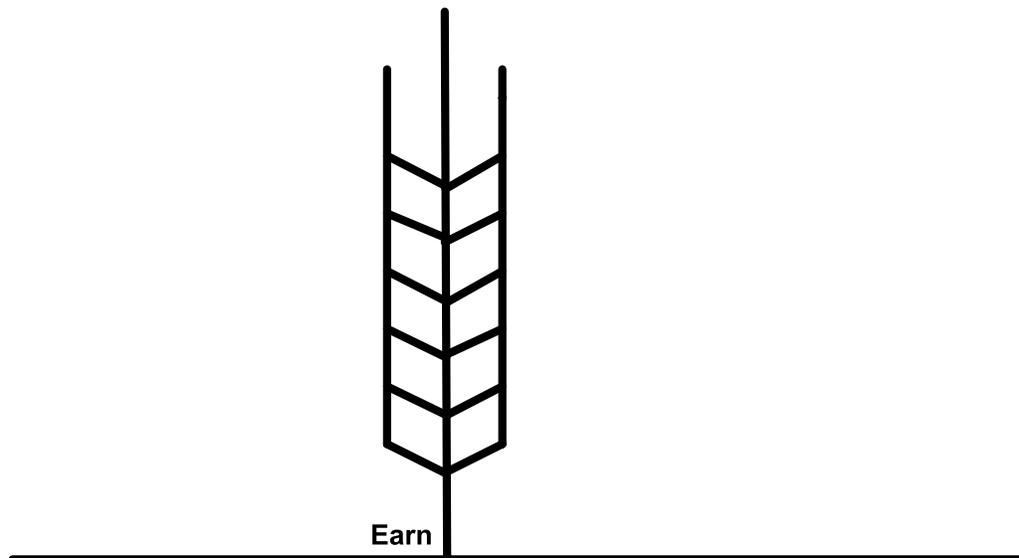
The final phase of financial freedom is having a surplus to invest. If the first thing you do with any amount of surplus is spend it, then you will have nothing to invest. To have money to invest, you begin by considering how much you earn monthly. Before you can give, spend, or invest, you must earn.

Fruit of Your Labor

The Bible refers to the outcome of a person’s labors as fruit. The money that you earn each month is like the crop a farmer harvests.

“Hardworking farmers are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor.” **2 Timothy 2:6** (NLT)

The following diagram illustrates how your monthly earnings are like the grains on a stalk of wheat. There are ten grains on this stalk.



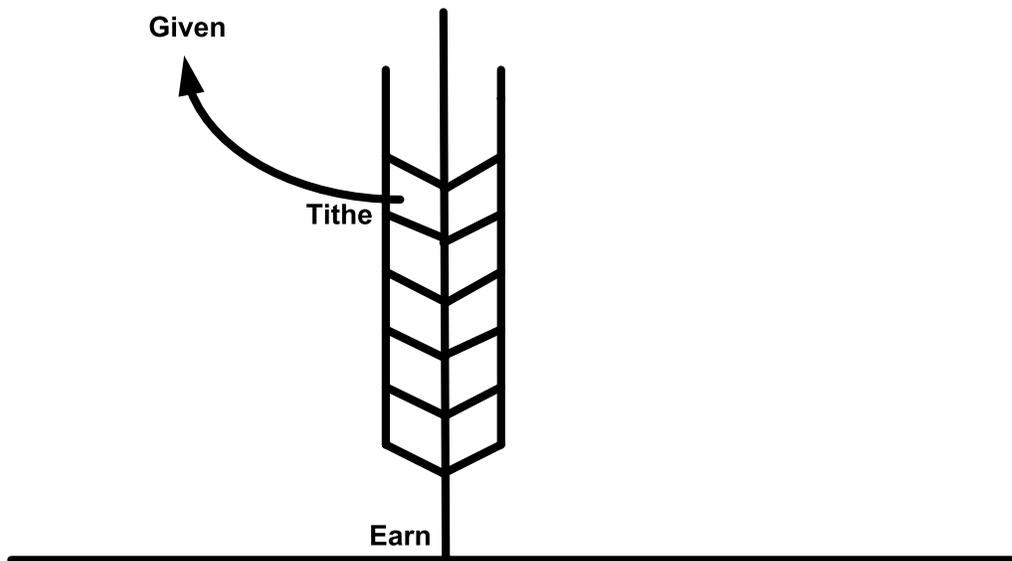
Tithe First

The Bible teaches that you should honor the Lord by giving the first part of your income.

“Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase.” Proverbs 3:9 (NKJ)

Giving a tithe is one tenth of your income. A tithe is the Lord’s portion.

The following diagram shows that you honor the Lord by giving a tithe from what you have earned. Since a *tithe* is a tenth of the total, you have *given* one.



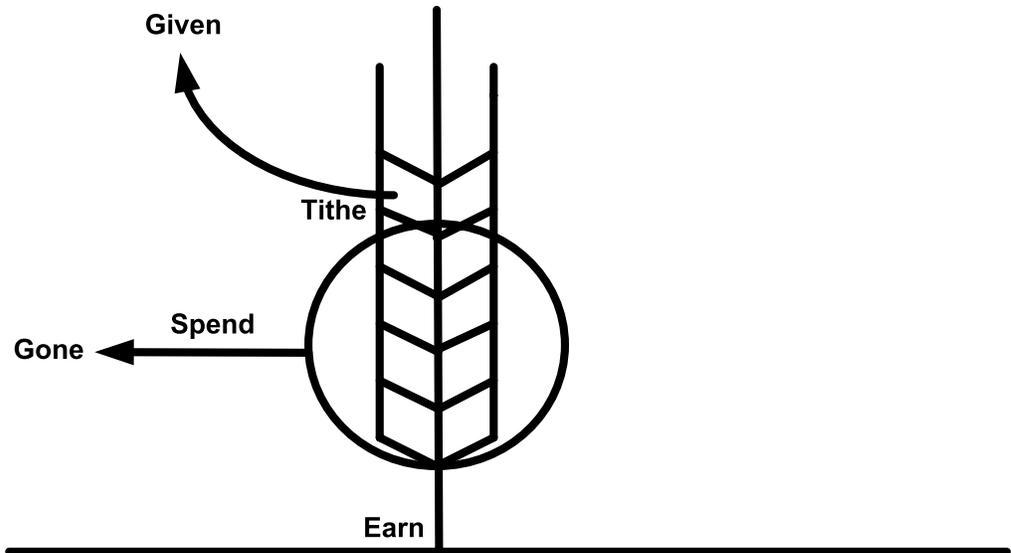
- Q5. As you thought about what you would do if money was given to you, did you consider giving a tithe?

What You Spend

God has given you money to provide for your needs, so spend it wisely. Whatever you *spend* from the total amount of money you have earned, is now *gone*.

“To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away.” **Matthew 25:29** (NLT)

The following diagram illustrates how eight tenths of what you earn is gone once you spend it.



Q6. Do you spend everything that you earn or do you have any surplus?

Invest Your Surplus

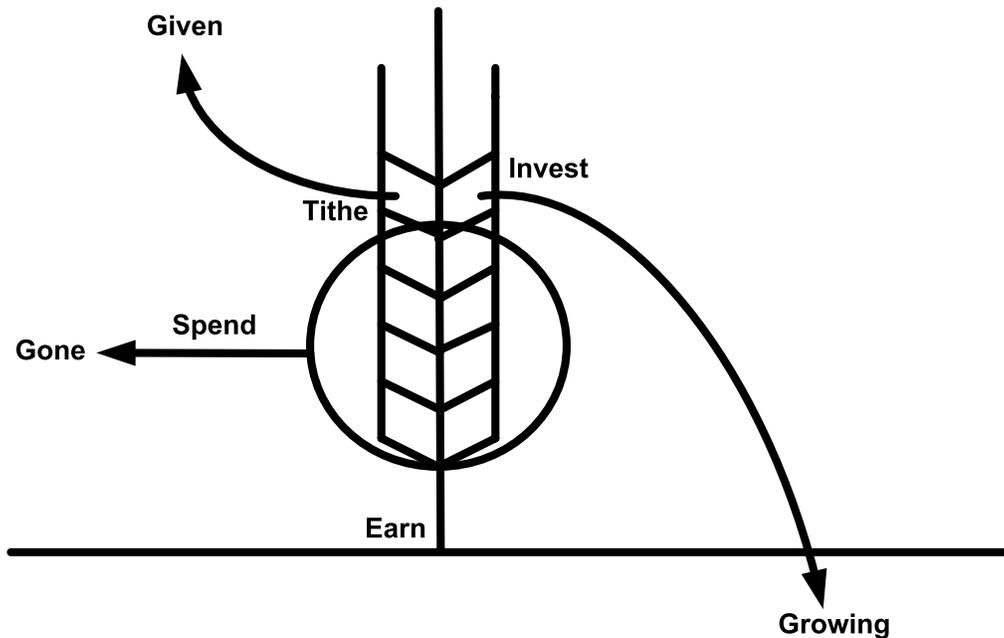
If you have money left over after your monthly expenses, then God has given you more money to manage for Him. If you gave your money to someone to manage, wouldn't you want that manager to give you an increase on your money?

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a trip. He called together his servants and gave them money to invest for him while he was gone. He gave five bags of gold to one, two bags of gold to another, and one bag of gold to the last – dividing it in proportion to their abilities – and then left on his trip.” **Matthew 25:14–15** (NLT)

Do you know how to bring an increase on God's money? This is where faith comes in. You need to believe that you have the ability to manage what God has given you. He didn't give you more than you have the ability to handle.

The way to bring an increase on the money entrusted to you is by investing. Investing is like planting seeds. The money you invest carefully is not gone, it is growing.

The following diagram illustrates the remaining portion of what you have earned being *invested* and it is *growing*.



- Q7. Do you believe God wants you to bring an increase to the money He has given you?

Reasons to Invest

There are two reasons to invest. One is that it is good management of the Master's money. You are being a faithful steward. The second reason is that careful investing can eventually provide all the income you would need to live.

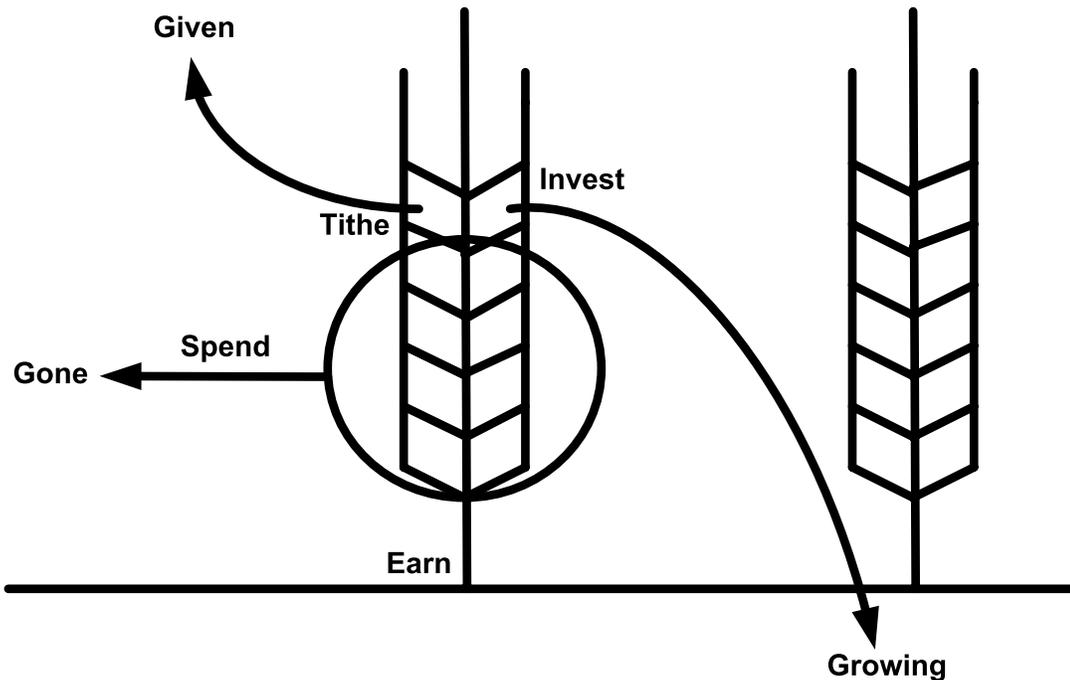
“The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of gold said, ‘Sir, you gave me five bags of gold to invest, and I have doubled the amount.’ The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” **Matthew 25:20–21** (NLT)

- Q8.** How have you been managing the money God has given you?
- Q9.** Are you managing your money in such a way that you could eventually live off of your investments? If not, why?

When you plant a seed, it will grow and eventually produce a harvest. When you invest your surplus, it will grow and eventually become a significant source of income. Just like you plant a seed in one season and harvest in another, an investment takes time (years) to multiply.

The following diagram illustrates a *new* plant grows from the investments you have made.

Bringing an Increase



The more seed you get in the ground the larger the harvest. Likewise the more money you invest, the more your investments will earn. If you want to have an abundant harvest in the future, invest as much as you can today.

Definition of Investment

To invest is to put your money to use in order to gain a financial increase. Buying things today that will sell for a higher price in the future is investing.

For example: A house is considered an investment because as long as it is taken care of, it usually goes up in value. Other investments might be land, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, and rental property.

A car is usually not a good investment because the longer you own it; the more it goes down in value. A car is an expense, not an investment.

If you keep your money invested, it will continue to grow.

Doubling

The value of your investment will double over time. The greater the percentage return on the investment, the faster the investment will double.

The following formula can be used to calculate the number of years it will take to double the value of an investment.

$$72 \div \text{interest rate} = \text{years it takes to double}$$

Example: $72 \div 8 = 9$ years (investment doubles in 9 years at 8%)

There is another economic rule that tends to be true when it comes to investing. As a rule, the higher the percent return on an investment the riskier that investment may be. Risky investments may result in the loss of your money.

Higher Return = Greater Risk

Q10. Is a high return worth the risk of losing your money?

Obviously, you don't want to lose your money but investing money will always involve some risk.

“But the servant who received the one bag of gold dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money for safekeeping. But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant...You should at least have put my money into the bank so I could have some interest.’”

Matthew 25:18, 26–27 (NLT)

The right motive for investing is faithfulness. If fear is your motive, you may do nothing. If greed is your motive, you may invest carelessly (with too much risk). If faithfulness is your motive, you remember it is God's money and He expects an increase.

Warning

Any percentage of annual increase that sounds too good to be true probably is too good to be true.

“Only simpletons believe everything they are told! The prudent carefully consider their steps.”

Proverbs 14:15 (NLT)

Diversify

One way to reduce the risk of losing everything, if an investment goes bad, is to divide your money into several different investments.

“Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.”

Ecclesiastes 11:2 (NASB)

Investment Benefits in Retirement

Eventually, your careful investing will create a sizeable reserve. That reserve can be large enough to produce a yearly increase that pays for your annual giving and spending. At that point, you could live off the income from your investment.

When you have this source of income from your investments, you could retire. Since you don't have to earn money at a job, your *financial* freedom has brought you *time* freedom.

You could spend this time God has blessed you with helping your family, church or community.

Financial freedom might allow you to help with raising your grandchildren.

Finally, financial freedom protects you during seasons of your life when you are not able to work or earn money from your labors.

“Ants – they aren't strong, but they store up food for the winter.” **Proverbs 30:25** (NLT)

Q11. What would you do if you had enough money that you could retire?

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” **Galatians 5:13** (NASB)

Financial freedom not only provides for your ongoing giving and spending, but it also provides for life's emergencies and leaving an inheritance.

Emergencies

Unexpected financial emergencies happen. Having money to handle them comes from careful investing. If you don't have an emergency,

then your investment is growing. If you do have an emergency, you can pull money out to pay for it.

Inheritance

“Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren...” **Proverbs 13:22** (NLT)

Many people think of an inheritance being distributed to their children upon their death. However, think of how much more enjoyment you would get from financially blessing your grandchildren while you are still living. With careful investing, it's possible.

Financial freedom requires planning and a budget that you follow.

- Q12.** How much money would you need per year if you were to quit working? *Assume that your home is paid off and your children are not living with you.*

The only way to save enough for the future is to start investing today. Any expenses that can be eliminated from your spending will increase the amount you have to invest.

The potential to multiply the money entrusted to you becomes an exciting motivation for following a monthly budget and eliminating unnecessary spending.

- Q13.** Have you considered that you may have unnecessary expenses? If so, what are they?
- Q14.** Is it motivating to you to sacrifice some things you want now for the *future* benefit of financial freedom?
- Q15.** If being financially free were your goal, would it be worth following a monthly budget?

You may be thinking that you do not have anything close to what you will need to live on at retirement. Yet, the only way to obtain any kind of reserve is to start with what you have and then consistently add to it every year.

Making a Plan

Write how much you earn each month in the first blank of the following formula and how much you tithe or give in the second blank, then subtract. The remaining amount is your available income.

\$ _____ - \$ _____ = \$ _____

Earn – Give = Available Income

Write the amount of your available income on the first blank of the next formula and subtract your monthly expenses. This is your surplus.

\$ _____ - \$ _____ = \$ _____

Available Income – Monthly Expenses = Surplus

If you do not know how much your monthly expenses are, use the **Budget Planning Form** to determine that amount.

If you are spending more than you are earning, then you need to eliminate some of your expenses. Otherwise, you are headed for financial *bondage* not financial *freedom*. Financial freedom requires that you spend less than you earn so that you have a surplus.

If you are in debt, getting out of debt is the first thing to do with surplus funds. Getting out of debt is investing in your *future* financial freedom.

Get Out of Debt

If you are *in* debt, the following steps will help you get *out*:

1. Complete the **Budget Planning Form**.
2. Mark the non-essential items.
3. List them on form A **Available Funds Work Sheet**.
4. Make these funds available for debt reduction by cutting expenses and/or selling the items.
5. List everyone you owe money to (creditors) on form B **Debt Work Sheet**. Follow the directions on the form.
6. Use form C **Debt Elimination** and apply half of the available funds to pay off your smallest debts and divide the other half evenly among your remaining creditors, paying each one an equal amount.

As your smaller debts are paid off, the amount of money you can pay each remaining creditor may increase if you have been making interest only payments on some credit cards. There are no shortcuts to getting out of debt or gaining prosperity, but this plan will allow you to see progress quickly.

Getting out of debt requires a diligent commitment to paying back your creditors.

“Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.” Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)

- Q16.** Are you willing to take the steps necessary to get out of debt? What steps will you take and when?

If you are out of debt, the rest of your surplus can be invested so that it can grow into a sizeable reserve.

Ask God for an investment plan that will increase what God has given you to manage. What did He show you? Write it down.

- Q17.** When will you **start doing** what God has shown you?

Bringing an Increase

Diagram

Notes

FINANCIAL FORMS

HOW TO MAKE A BUDGET

- BUDGET PLANNING FORM

FORMS FOR GETTING OUT OF DEBT

- FORM A AVAILABLE FUNDS WORK SHEET
- FORM B DEBT WORK SHEET
- FORM C DEBT ELIMINATION

FORM A AVAILABLE FUNDS WORK SHEET

1. List total from box E of Budget Planning Form (Investment Potential) on **Line A** below.
2. List all Non-Essential Items using the table below. Non-Essential Items are those items you determine to cut from your monthly expenses to gain surplus dollars for debt reduction or investment.
3. Add the total Non-Essential dollar amount to the Debt Reduction Funds amount. (**Line A + Line B = Line C**)
4. Take 50% of your new Debt Reduction Funds total and apply it to your smallest debts. Take the remaining 50% and split it evenly among remaining creditors. (see Form C)

Non-essential Items	Dollar Amount
TOTAL NON-ESSENTIAL DOLLARS	\$ _____

Debt Reduction Funds (Budget Planning Form)	\$ _____	Line A
+ Total Non-Essential Dollars	+ \$ _____	Line B
= TOTAL DEBT REDUCTION FUNDS	= \$ _____	Line C

50% applied to smallest debts = \$ _____

50% split evenly among remaining debts = \$ _____

FORM C DEBT ELIMINATION

1. List funds available to reduce the number of CREDITORS and DOLLARS owed in **Table A**. (get these numbers from Form A)
2. List all creditors and dollars owed in order from least to greatest in first two columns in **Table B**. (You first did this randomly in Form B)
3. Use 50% to pay off the smallest debt(s).
4. Use the remaining 50% to pay each remaining creditor an equal amount.
5. List adjusted amounts owed in the monthly columns.
6. Continue paying smallest debts with half your surplus and reducing the dollars owed on remaining debts with the other half until all debts are paid.

Example: Calculations based on 5 debts with \$120 total dollars in debt reduction funds, \$60 for paying off smallest debts and \$60 split evenly among remaining creditors. In the first month, the \$45 debt is paid in full and \$15 of the Texaco bill is paid. Plus, the second \$60 is split three ways between the remaining creditors, paying them \$20 each. Notice that with only \$120 applied over 3 months, three debts are completely paid off and significant progress is made on the remaining two. In six more months all debts are paid and surplus can now be applied to investing or savings!

E X A M P L E	Creditors in order—Smallest FIRST (EXAMPLE)	Amount Owed	After 1 Month	After 2 Months	After 3 Months
	1 parents	\$45	--	--	--
	2 Texaco	\$65	\$50	--	--
	3 Doctor	\$90	\$70	\$60	--
	4 Electronics store	\$350	\$330	\$300	\$270
	5 Credit card	\$510	\$490	\$460	\$430

Table A Funds to pay off smallest debts (50% - to reduce number of creditors) \$	Funds split evenly among remaining creditors (50% - to reduce number of dollars owed) \$
---	--

Table B Creditors in order—Smallest FIRST	Amount Owed	After 1 Month	After 2 Months	After 3 Months
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Sharing S.A.L.T. with a Friend

“...And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.” **1 Peter 3:15** (NLT)

Meet in a location where your friend feels comfortable sharing.

The Purpose: Encouragement

How do you encourage your friend? By sharing Biblical truths that have impacted you.

Ask “Could I share some things with you?”

Sharing with a friend (an informal meeting)

- Ask, “What’s going on in your life?” or “How are you doing?”
- Listen.
- If necessary, ask questions that help you better understand your friend and his or her situation. For example: “How are you feeling about that?”
- Then share what God has been teaching you as it relates to your friend’s situation.
- If the opportunity allows, draw and explain the S.A.L.T. diagram that is relevant. *This can even be done on a napkin.*
- Encourage your friend and offer to pray.

Share with an attitude of humility and kindness.

Sharing with a friend (on a regular basis)

- Make sure your friend has a book.
- Read, study, and answer all questions individually.
- Share your answers with each other and talk about the lesson.
- Draw and explain the diagram for each other.
- Encourage each other to personally apply the lessons.
- Pray together.

Be sensitive about when to share and the length of your sharing.

Helpful suggestions:

Be transparent. Share your own story. When you are real, other people realize they can be honest too.

Be a “safe place.” Information your friend tells you should be kept confidential. Don’t condemn, instead encourage.

Be a good listener. Give your friend your full attention. Make eye contact, and, at appropriate times, repeat back what you hear your friend saying. Ask good questions that encourage your friend to talk.

Be a true friend. Speak the truth in love.

Books in the Seven Areas of Life Training (S.A.L.T.) Series

Titles in the S.A.L.T. Series:

- Spiritual – My Relationship with God
- Psychological – My Mind, Will, and Emotions
- Social – My Relationship with Others
- Physical – My Body
- Financial – My Money
- Marital – My Relationship with my Spouse
- Parental – My Relationship with my Children
- SALT Instructor's Guide with PowerPoint CD of Diagrams
- SALT Training DVD for Group Leaders

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A team of authors at Victorious Christian Living International (VCLi) wrote this book.

For over 25 years, VCLi has been helping believers grow and be successful in all seven areas of life. VCLi trains people and provides materials for effectively ministering to others, including comprehensive church discipleship programs, prison and inner-city ministries, and family ministries. We are headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona with offices in Alabama, Illinois, Guatemala, and Cuba.

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