

Leader's Guide



faith *and* FINANCE

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

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Introduction

Welcome to the Small Group Study of *Faith and Finance: Financial Planning with a Faith Factor*. Together we will journey over the next twelve weeks identifying and exploring Biblical principles and how these are pertinent to our handling of money and our attitude about personal finance.

The *Faith and Finance* twelve-lesson study book will guide your learning individually or with a spouse, family member, or friend each week as you study each lesson and complete the daily worksheets and forms.

This *Small Group Facilitator's Guidebook* is designed for the use of the small group discussion leader/facilitator. It is easy to use encouraging group members to take the opportunity to lead on a rotating basis. Thus, peer learning and peer mentoring is maximized offering the benefits of utilizing the small group as a method to glean from both discussion and questions new insights and practical ideas for application.

The format is designed for a sixty or as long as a ninety-minute small group discussion once per week. Please note the following small group discussion goals:

Objectives

An aim of the small group discussion time is to provide an environment where ideally five yet up to eight learners will come together in a guided discussion utilizing the *Leader's Guide* that will allow each group member to participate in the process of synthesizing and clarifying the new information they are learning in *Faith and Finance*.

Therefore, careful reading of all worksheets is expected in preparation for that week's small group discussion.

The small group discussion time is also purposed so that each small group participant may safely and confidentially share the challenges and rewarding life changes as the Biblical principles and financial work sheets are incorporated and integrated into everyday living.

The small group discussion questions have been designed for more than mere review of the lesson study. Necessarily, they include the aspiration that each small group discussion process will provide a forum for sharing spiritual growth alongside one another in the experience of transformation as the Biblical principles provide deeper insights about the Creator and Owner of all.

It is intended that this small group participation will become a greenhouse of growth where each small group member will support and encourage one another as together yet individually each is equipped to manage finances, encouraged to pursue a partnership with God and challenged to make God first in all things.

Getting Started

You may want to study the *Faith and Finance* study book in an informal setting, for example, around a table or a more formal setting that will allow you to make use of the Power Point slides that are included with the book.

Having finished whether individually or in a group setting the reading and worksheets for that week's lesson, you are now ready to participate in a small group discussion. The *Leader's Guide* has been formatted in a systematic outline form so that each group session follows a consistent learning and discussion structure.

Each small group discussion time is planned in the following manner:

The Biblical principle that is applicable to that week's lesson will be provided for review and to anchor it's meaning and connection to the topic.

A short introduction and lesson summary is provided as a focus for that week's lesson.

Objectives are provided as a checklist to ascertain whether individual learning goals are on track with the lesson's focus.

Option: You may read these out loud to the group as a short introduction or you may proceed to the small group discussion questions for that week.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Each week the small group discussion time will begin with *Invite* that introduces Prayer as the first group activity.

This is followed by *Investigate* that utilizes questions that generate a closer look and calls for knowledge of the lesson material.

Interact questions pose personal meaning and interaction with the lesson study within a context of process and group learning.

Finally, *Integrate* is the most important component of the learning process as this is where the application of the week's lesson is incorporated and practiced.

Each week a closing prayer is encouraged in a smaller group of two to three group members with the focus of praying for one another with

encouragement, support and praise for the work that God is doing in each individual life.

Important Guidelines

It is best to keep small groups to no more than eight members. You may have to form three to ten small groups in order to accommodate this vital dynamic for learning and transformation.

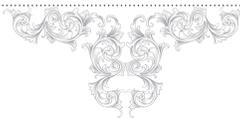
Each question should generate about fifteen minutes of discussion time. Therefore, please note that you will probably not be able to go through all of the questions if you plan for a one-hour session. Remember questions have been provided for those who also want a ninety-minute group discussion. Make sure that you cover at least two questions from each heading.

This is very important in the process of integrating the lesson study to life application.

Please keep small group member discussion sharing from three to five minutes each at a time. This will ensure that each member has opportunity to share during the discussion time.

Finally, please do remember to keep your small group discussion in a context of confidentiality. A group motto should be: "what you hear here, stays here." This should be a reminder each week at the beginning of group time.

It is only in this kind of condition and Christian consideration that life changes that are supported within the small group become transforming life-time practices.





Lesson 1

Why Money Management is Important to the Christian

Biblical Principle:

God and His wisdom and counsel must have first place in your life.

We embarked on this first lesson of *Faith and Finance* by reflecting on the idea that money can compete with the first place that God should hold in our lives.

Thus, this first lesson introduced and drew our attention to view God as Owner of all and to consider our response and attitude in light of this encompassing reality.

We also examined the themes of Lordship and stewardship and how these are related to the theme of salvation and also influence our attitude in regard to sacrifice.

Objectives

In this lesson you will have:

- Considered the implications of God as Owner of all and how these correlate with our views and attitudes about money.

- Reflected on the foundational principles of stewardship and Lordship.
- Thought about and wrote your insights on Lordship and lifestyle.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

First session icebreaker: You may want to ask what a favorite food is and why, followed by asking what each individual hopes to acquire from the study of *Faith and Finance* and also the small group participation.



Lesson 2

Planning for the Cycle of Life

Biblical Principle:

Financial planning is designed to help you obtain the things you need and to enhance your enjoyment of life.

This week we began by learning about money management through the practical tools of the balance sheet and noting how values influence financial goals. However, first we viewed and learned the guidelines, Biblical principles, and perspective that Scripture puts forth for the Christian and planning for the cycle of life.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Examined the cycle of life and the Biblical principles of money management.
- Considered the value of education and career choice.
- Reflected on the seven Biblical principles.
- Created your own Personal/Family Balance Sheet and Financial Goals.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- What are the segments of life?
Answer: (Found in Worksheet-Introduction.)
Learning years, earning years, conserving years and returning years or accumulation, conservation and distribution.
- In what way are the Personal/Family Balance Sheet and Financial goals important to each one of these life cycles?
- What are two of the Seven Biblical Principles that might contribute the most to peace and financial freedom?



Lesson 3

Looking at Giving

Biblical Principle:

God is the Owner of everything.

The tithe is the minimum testimony of our Christian commitment.

The answer to the question, “why do we give?” has been considered in this lesson as we have taken a closer look at tithes and offerings. Learning that our giving is related to the place God holds in our lives has demonstrated the connection between worship and the returning of our tithes and giving our offerings.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Grasped the principle of God’s ownership and our management of God’s resources.
- Learned the difference between returning tithe and giving offerings.
- Reflected on giving as worship.
- Considered the role of attitude in giving.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- What is the foundation principle(s) for Biblical money management?
Answer: (Found in lesson book under the first subtitle ‘Looking at Giving, second paragraph.)
 1. Putting God first.
 2. Acknowledging God created everything.
 3. Acknowledging God owns everything.
 4. Understanding God sustains us.
 5. We manage what He has given us a) tithe b) offerings.



Lesson 4

Debt-free Living

Biblical Principle:
Debt is bad.

This week on the subject of money management we learned about debt management and interacted with our learning by filling out the debt visualization form.

This very significant step has given us a realistic grasp of both the Biblical principles as well as the solutions toward getting out of debt and staying out of the same.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Reflected upon common attitudes about debt and its connection to easy credit.
- Learned the Biblical perspective on debt.
- Become aware of the solutions for getting and staying out of debt.
- Created your personal debt visualization form.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- Is living debt-free counter-cultural? If so, why?
- How is 'peace of mind' related to the Biblical perspective on debt?

Interact:

- How important is Divine help to make the life changes necessary to become debt-free?
- Share in a general way the experience of completing the Debt Visualization Form.
- As you take responsibility for your finances



Lesson 5

Developing a Spending Plan

Biblical Principle:

The main source of financial difficulties is overspending.

Income, expenses, taxes, savings and insurance were the topics and also the components comprising the spending plan also known as the budget. In this lesson we learned that its purpose is two-fold. First, it provides a framework for financial planning. Secondly, creating a spending plan helps us to make choices that will aid us in living well in the present while giving us practice that will influence and help in managing our family finances into the future.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Learned that a budget begins with placing God first in our financial spending plan.
- Acquired the skills to create a spending plan.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- What are spiritual benefits in creating a monthly budget?
- What are practical reasons for including the whole family in the process and implementation of a monthly family budget?

Interact:

- What was the most challenging part in completing the monthly budget/spending plan and why?



Lesson 6

Training Children, Money and Marriage, Money and Singles

Biblical Principle:

It is in the family relationships that stewardship is taught and caught.

This week's lesson portrayed that "it is in the family relationships that stewardship is taught and caught." The importance of the location of the family home as well as the lessons that might be learned from a garden was emphasized. The practicality of student loans and career choices was also given prominence. The significance of the word "contentment" was examined from the perspective of God's gracious care.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Examined money management from the standpoint of the family relationships.
- Reflected on the importance of training children from a young age to manage their own money.

- Learned of options for paying for a college education.
- Considered the spiritual implications of contentment.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- How many group members had heard of a "self-denial box" before? In the present instant self-gratification cultural context that we live in, what language and examples might you



Lesson 7

Making Major Purchases

Biblical Principle:

Everyone must give an account to God of his money management.

Two basic yet major needs were addressed in this lesson: transportation and housing. Options influencing purchase and ultimately ownership were presented. Informative and practical the instruction in this chapter is a great tool of reference for these two major purchases impacting family money management.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Compared the benefits of purchasing a new or used automobile.
- Acquired knowledge to assist you in pricing either a new or used car.
- Learned how to pay a home mortgage early as well as the types of mortgages available.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your small group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- What is a first basic step or accountability measure one should practice before making a large purchase?
Answer: Consult your spouse, relative or friend. Share how you have already put this step into action or how you plan to.
- What are two factors that will influence the purchase price of an automobile?
Answer: Timing and negotiating. Do you have a short illustration confirming these factors?



Lesson 8

Honesty, Integrity, Work

Biblical Principle:

Your purpose in life is to glorify God.

This week we established and gave consideration to honesty, integrity, and work and their primary role and significance in character development. We also became aware of the integral role and influence that these hold in stewardship and in the life work.

The blessings found in Deuteronomy as well as the many life management principles found in Proverbs provided a Biblical basis for work that measured beyond income, integrity that includes witness and honesty that reveals character.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Considered that character development has eternal implications.
- Learned that all work has evangelistic possibilities.
- Reflected on the connection between God's plan and work.
- Discovered the two-income family financial considerations.
- Grasped that there is not a sharp dividing line between a sacred and secular calling.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- Referring to the Day One Worksheet, share one honesty text and one dishonesty text that grasped your attention and share why?
- How would you theologically connect the concepts of obedience, blessings and stewardship?
- After studying this lesson how would you define God's plan for your life and what are the guidelines for finding it?

Interact:

- "Because of what Christ has done for me I owe the world the best service I can give with the greatest gift that I have: my life, my character, myself."



Lesson 9

Planning for Retirement

Biblical Principle:

Prosperity is having what you need when you need it.

This informative lesson on planning for retirement revealed the essential building blocks necessary for the preparation of this stage of life, when there is no longer income coming in from full-time employment.

Explanation was given as to possible new sources of income that might replace a full-time salary. In this context we learned about annuities, reverse mortgages, social security retirement benefits, and how to save systematically towards a retirement plan.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Reflected on the preparation necessary for the senior life stage of retirement.
- Learned what resources might be utilized to provide regular income during retirement.
- Acquired knowledge for systematic saving with retirement in view.

- Considered different options to reduce living costs during retirement.
- Prepared a Retirement Budget Estimate Guide.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- From this week's lesson, what are the ideal family circumstances when entering into the retirement stage?

Answer: "In an ideal situation the family has raised their children to become independent adults, the home is debt free, the transportation needs are met with a new car, there are no lingering debts, and there is a good and



Lesson 10

Saving and Investing

Biblical Principle:

The decision to establish an investment plan is an important first step to accomplishing your long-term financial goals.

This lesson highlighted that “savings are absolutely essential to sound money management.” With theological as well as practical implications we learned the difference between saving and hoarding.

Also, of equal import was the information provided in determining investment choices as well as the safeguards to be mindful of in connection to “get rich schemes.” In summary, the investment tips provided critical guidelines to look back on in our spiritual journey of faith and the management of our finances.

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Attained a theological foundation for the roles of savings and investing.
- Learned the definition of heavenly investments.

- Reflected on when to invest and when not to.
- Become equipped to make knowledgeable investments through the investment tips provided.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- How are specific financial goals related to your over-all investment plan?
- What is the fundamental spiritual danger of hoarding?



Lesson 11

Inheritance and Estate Planning

Biblical Principle:

When we are finished with what God has entrusted to us, we should return to Him, the rightful Owner, what is left in our estate once the needs of those who depend on us are met.

Within the context of retirement, this lesson's focus is on inheritance and also estate planning. Viewed from a Biblical perspective that acknowledges God as the Owner of everything, estate planning addresses the return of what has been entrusted to us as stewards.

This lesson has presented the process and considerations to ensure that the handling of our estate will finalize into the 'crowning act of stewardship.'

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Learned the importance of estate distribution.
- Considered the legacies that you may want to contribute to.
- Reflected on the spiritual implications of both inheritance and distribution of your estates.

- Attained knowledge of the process of estate planning, factors relating to wills, and guiding spiritual principles for creating these legal documents.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- What does the term estate planning encompass?
Answer: accumulation, conservation, and distribution of an estate.
- What is the overall purpose of the estate planning process?



Lesson 12

The Rewards of Financial Faithfulness

Biblical Principle:

God has promised to reward those who have honored Him.

This final lesson puts forth the Biblical perspective of rewards in correspondence to faithful stewardship. With the examples of Moses and Paul, our attention has been drawn to view heaven as the place that holds our final reward.

Accounts, principals and interest have been discussed with a spiritual application that assures one that the only safe return is to be found in the treasure one stores in heaven.

With hope and challenge this closing reading summons one to stewardship of the Gospel, and a vision of what faithful stewardship might look like in the local church when faith and finance meet in life and practice.

Not least, the exhortation is given to keep one's eyes on the prize in view of the coming Jesus, with the expectation of hearing him declare, "well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord."

Objectives:

In this lesson you will have:

- Learned the Biblical perspective of rewards.
- Reflected on the account kept in heaven.
- Considered the premise that reward and merit are different from one another.
- Viewed the significance of faithfulness in stewardship.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Invite:

Begin your group time with prayer.

Investigate:

- In this week's daily work what verse brought the most insight to you in terms of 'reward'?
- What does our reading in *Faith and Finance* list as rewards that should influence our motives? What other reward might also be included?

