

Managing Your Money

Activity:	Duration
Dinner and Fellowship	45 Minutes
Teach the lesson "A Leader and His Money."	60 Minutes
Discussion of " <i>Master Your Money</i> " Application Guide	60 Minutes
30-Day Spending Habits	20 Minutes
Case Studies	25 Minutes
Prayer Time	30 Minutes

Leader Notes:

1. When teaching the **Lesson** "A Leader and His Money," make it personal. Use as many personal stories as is appropriate. Then use stories of others (with permission). Avoid making this a lesson that feels clinical because you emphasize do's, don'ts, and "how to" kinds of material. Teach from the heart.
2. Don't hold back during the discussion of the **Application Guide: *Master Your Money***. Stretch the guys a little, especially on tithing. Remember, it's not about money. It's about their spiritual growth and the integrity of their leadership.
3. The case studies should prove to be interesting! There are no right or wrong answers, but you should prepare some idea of what you think in advance. The idea is to get the leaders to wrestle with the fact that many things we must deal with are neither easy nor black and white. Group the guys in twos and threes. Give them about 15 minutes to work on one case study. Give a different case study to each group. Then bring them back together to read their case study and solutions.
4. Take some time for several of the guys (perhaps all, but don't force them) to share their 30-day spreadsheet on spending habits and patterns. Remember, you don't want them sharing (comparing) numbers, have them present their percentage of spending in each category. Talk about where the pressures and tensions are and how well giving fits into their lifestyle.
5. Focus the prayer time on the specific challenge each man is sensing from God.
6. **Assignment for Special Project in Month 9:** give the guys the task of "**intentional acts of service.**" Ask each man to do several clearly servant-oriented things before the next meeting. The key is that these intentional acts of service must not be part of their regular routine. Example. If they usually wash the dishes, that doesn't count. If, however, they don't even know how to turn the dishwasher on, then it would count.

Emphasize listening for God prompts to serve family, friends, boss, and even strangers. The acts of service can sometimes be creative but, above all, meaningful. Instruct the guys to be prepared to report their acts of service back to the group at the next meeting.

7. Hand out copies of *Spiritual Leadership* by Oswald Sanders and the **Application Guide**.

Lesson

A Leader and His Money

...Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Luke 12:15

...The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

1 Timothy 6:10

Three well-accepted doctrines:



Poverty Theology:

- Rejects materialism, disdain for possessions, presses to give to the poor, (but has little, if any, resources to give), believes you must be poor to be humble and Godly.
- Possessions are a **curse**
- Luke: 18:18–22 Sell everything and give to the poor (rich young ruler)
- Key idea: Self-denial

Prosperity Theology:

- Prosperity is the reward of the righteous, and material blessing is a reward for tithing; if you lack blessing, you lack faith. You give to get. God is obligated to bless financially.
- Possessions are a **right**
- Matthew 7:7–8 (Ask, Seek, Knock)
- Key idea: More is better

Stewardship Theology:

- Possessions are a trust given by God, we are merely the managers, and possessions are to be enjoyed but not coveted. We are to work hard and be industrious but not hold tightly to what we earn. Generosity is key.
- Possessions are a **privilege**
- Matthew 25:14–30 (parable of the talents)
- Key idea: God is the owner

The bottom line

*"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
Luke 16:13*

I. Facing the Truth of Materialism**A. No one escapes the influence of **materialism**.**

No one escapes the impact of the multi-trillion-dollar advertising industry or America's richness.

We are bombarded with a message telling us that getting "stuff" is good. The truth is that "stuff" is not bad, but the problem or tension is created when we are forced to choose between the two forces — the spiritual and the material.

- *Giving to others or spending on ourselves.*

This is very personal and subjective, but if pushed, the issue always becomes sensitive; why is that?

B. We all **struggle with materialism to some degree.**

We all want more, maybe just a little, but definitely more.

Insert illustration

We cannot maintain a good life of extravagance and a good conscience simultaneously. One or the other has to be sacrificed. Either we reduce our affluence by giving generously and helping those in need, or we keep our affluence and smother our conscience. We have to choose between man and God.

John Stott

Stott isn't saying to make yourself poor or destitute by giving everything away. Instead, he is saying we must be generous with what we have in order not to smother our conscience.

Jesus paints a picture of materialism.

¹⁴Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

¹⁶And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

²⁰"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." Luke 12:14–21

Two important ideas:

- Materialism is not possession but **obsession**.

Owning things, wanting things, and enjoying things are not the issue. Being obsessed with them is. Thinking you deserve them is wrong. The core of the problem is wanting anything more than you want God.

- Materialism is a matter of the **heart**.

Materialism is not determined by how much or how little we have. It's a matter of the heart.

¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 1 Timothy 6:17

Seven warning signs of materialism:

- When you go from managing your money to being **anxious** over it. (worrying)
- When **envy** and jealousy creep into your life.
- When you lose **appreciation** for what God has already given you. (Focus on what you don't have.)
- When you lose the **joy** of cheerful giving.
- When you seek **things** more than God.
- When you think things will make you **happy**.
- When **enough** is never enough.

Albert Schweitzer was a medical missionary who died in 1965 at the age of 90. His standard attire was a white pith helmet, white shirt, pants, and black tie. He had worn one hat for forty years, the tie for twenty. Told one day that some men owned dozens of neckties, Schweitzer remarked, "For one neck?"

II. John Wesley on Money

One of Wesley's most well-known sermons on money was his trilateral sermon, "The Use of Money."

The three legs of this triangle are: Gain all you can, Save all you can, and Give all you can.

A. Gain all you can.

Wesley believed that when it came to making a living, Christians had much in common with unbelievers and could "meet them on their own ground." He believed we ought to make money. It was an argument for industriousness, hard work, and cleverness. (Parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16)

To Wesley, there was nothing wrong with making money. In fact, he argued that Christians had a "bounden duty" to gain all they could.

Wesley himself was one of the highest-earning preachers of all time. By today's standards, he made in his highest year of earning about \$1.5 million. He earned money from donations, speaking, books, and what he called "penny tracts."

Wesley did believe there were ways of gaining money that were wrong.

- We are not to gain money at the expense of life or **health**.
- We should not gain money in any occupation that harms our **minds**.

Occupations where lying, cheating, and avoiding taxes were the norm.

- We are not to gain money by **hurting** a neighbor.
e.g., running gaming enterprises, pawn-broking, usury, or selling goods below market value to run the competition out of business.
- We should stay away from practicing lucrative, improper **medicine**.
He condemned doctors who sometimes "play with the lives or heart of men, to enlarge their own gain." He particularly rejected doctors who lengthened pain or disease to make money or held hostage those who needed care until they could melt down a patient's fortune. Today this could be compared to a therapist with ill motives or a medical insurance company with only money at heart.
- We have no business gaining money at the expense of our **souls**.
Such as running a tavern, play-houses, or other establishments which lower the state of human nature. Today this could be compared to pornography on the Internet.

B. Save all you can.

This might not be what you think. What Wesley meant by saving all you can was to be careful in spending. He wasn't referring to savings accounts — which are *not* wrong or bad or sinful in any way — but Wesley's point was to be frugal.

He taught Christians (warned them) not to spend too much on the sensuous: extravagant foods, gaudy clothing, elaborate homes, and extraordinary decorations.

Bottom line: not a life of austerity but "smart shopping" and not wasting money.

What was the point of this? So you can give more.

C. Give all you can.

Giving was Wesley's motivation for his view on money — the trilateral stands on the giving base.

- Give yourself all that you need for the **basics** of living.
- Then give your **family** and employees their fair share.
- Then give to the "household of faith" — other Christians (the local church.)
- Finally, **all men** in need. Which included the poor and needy.

Wesley was a radical

He lived it. In the year that Wesley earned today's approximate equivalent of \$1.5 million, he lived on 2 percent of his income and gave 98 percent away. Yup, he "tithed" 98 percent. In fact, during Wesley's lifetime, he earned an equivalent of more than \$30 million. Yet, when he died, he left behind only a few miscellaneous coins and a couple of silver spoons. He had given away the rest.

Tithing to Wesley was just the foundation, the most basic level of giving.

III. The Destiny of Your Dollars

Consider how much money you have made in the last 10 to 15 years. Add it up. Are you pleased with what you have accomplished?

Insert illustration

What might God want you to do differently?

"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. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

*"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
Luke 16:10–13*

Application Guide

Master Your Money

Ron Blue

Money is an inescapable part of your life. As a leader, how you think about money and handle what you have will shape the trajectory of your life.

We don't often think of money as something spiritual, but it is intensely integrated into our spiritual lives. God has always known that. He gave us 500 verses on prayer, nearly 500 verses on faith, but over 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

As a Christian leader, your responsibility is to maximize your understanding of how God wants you to relate to your money.

(Questions 1 – 10 correlate to Chapters 1 – 10)

There are no questions for chapters 11-14 but be sure to read those chapters.

1. How do you know when you have enough? How and when do you make that determination?

"If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area of his life." Billy Graham

2. Of the four biblical principles of money management, which one is the most challenging to you and why?
 - a. God owns it all.
 - b. We are in a growth process.
 - c. The amount is not important.
 - d. Faith requires action.

3. There are no independent financial decisions as it relates to long-term financial planning. Jot down 3 examples of how your life priorities do or do not match your financial plan and the execution of that plan.

What is one area that needs immediate improvement? Examples are giving, debt retirement, saving, etc.

"Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." John Wesley

4. The concept of cash-flow margin with the magic of compounded savings is a principle that will serve you well. If you break down money management into its simplest terms, there are only two ways to change your financial future. Either make more or spend less. (Increase income or decrease expenses.) While increasing income is always a good option if possible, decreasing expenses is usually the wisest route. If you considered a new approach to expenses to increase your cash margin each year, where specifically could you cut back on expenses?

5. "Two spiritual dangers of borrowing money exist. First, borrowing always presumes upon the future, and second, borrowing may deny God an opportunity."

"The Bible discourages the use of debt but does not prohibit it. Being in debt is never the real problem; it is only symptomatic of the real problem. The real problem is usually greed, self-indulgence, impatience, fear, a poor self-image or lack of self-discipline."

If debt is a problem for you, take an honest look at what may reside underneath. See the above examples. What do you think it is and why?

- 6.** Before you can work on financial solutions and make progress according to biblical principles, you need to know where you stand. That requires a statement of net worth. Do you have a current statement of net worth? If not, we encourage you to commit to this project within the next 90 days. It's not as complicated as it may first appear. This is an important part of the process.

- 7.** What are your top three financial goals that you and your wife agree on?

- 8.** Which of the most common financial mistakes is your greatest temptation? Jot down a couple of sentences of a plan to resist this mistake.

 - a. A consumptive lifestyle
 - b. No budget
 - c. Driving to the poorhouse

- 9.** Commit to making a financial plan by the end of November of this year. You'll be glad you did!

- 10.** What is the best practical nugget of wisdom you gained from chapter 10, Control the Flow? How will you put this into action?

"Never spend your money before you have it." Thomas Jefferson

Want to be a millionaire? Spend less than you make and do that for a very long time.

A Leader and His Money

Case Study One

Your sister is "down on her luck." The truth is that she has adopted a lifestyle of poor financial decisions and continues a practice of financial irresponsibility. She is very deep in credit card debt and facing bankruptcy. She has a job but is abrupt with her boss and likely to lose it at any time. When she is discouraged, she will spend more money. She is not a Christian and is asking for your help. She is your sister and about two steps away from "the streets." You don't have much money yourself. What will you do?

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Case Study Two

You are coaching a Christian who just finished listening to your pastor's sermon series on finance. The specific message was on tithing. This person loves God and wants to tithe but is resisting this biblical principle. He is also in debt and living beyond his means. One of the pastors told him that he must honor God first if he wants God's help, but he feels he can't. He believes he's in a "catch-22" scenario — meaning the money he would tithe to God's work is the money he needs to get out of debt. How do you coach him?

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Case Study Three

Your best friend quits his job and pursues his entrepreneurial dream by starting his own company. You have some concerns about his business idea and told him so, but you felt it was best to support him.

He has set aside some money for the tough times and does not have a lavish lifestyle. The business starts slow, as expected, but he is still struggling after six months to produce enough to take a paycheck. He is forced to dip into his savings.

He tells you about his financial problems and says he doesn't know what to do. Everything he has is riding on this. He is seeking the Lord daily while working 70-hour weeks. After 10 months, his savings are gone. He believes his business will turn and "make it" real soon, but he is three months away from losing his house. Finally, in desperation, he asks you for a very large sum of money. You have it, but...what will you do?