

A BIBLICAL PRIMER ON WEALTH

One of the most vexing areas of life is that of finances. Can I trust God to provide for my needs? When is enough, enough? How do I maintain my priorities between seeking God and providing for my family? Perhaps the most poignant passage on this subject is found in Matthew 6:19-34 and summarized in verse 33:

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Following is a brief Biblical primer on wealth:

- **Don't trust in or set your heart on riches.** Ps. 62:10; Deut. 6:10-12; 8:12-14; Job 31:24-28; Lk. 12:15
- **Because wisdom and understanding are superior to wealth, choose the former over the latter.** – Pro. 16:16; Psa. 119:127; Pro. 3:13-18; 4:7; 8:10,11,19; Ecc. 7:12; Matt. 16:26; Luke 12:21
- **Because riches can easily disappear, don't make them your main focus.** Pro. 23:5; 27:24; Ecc. 5:13
- **Those who please God gain wisdom and understanding, while the rebel is relegated to the meaningless task of gathering and storing wealth (only to have his acquisitions to be handed over to the those who please God).** Ecc. 2:26; Pro. 3:13-18; 13:22; 28:8; Isa. 3:10; Job 27:13-23
- **Lovers of money (Ecc. 5:10-14):**
 - **Will never be satisfied with what they possess, because “leaches” will diminish their holdings.** Ecc. 6:7; Hab. 2:5-7
 - **Will live with angst from their financial enslavement, compared to the laboring man who is content with what he has.** Psa. 119:36,37; Josh. 7:21-25; Ecc. 6:9; Jer. 17:11
 - **Hoard their resources to their own detriment.** Gen. 13; Pro. 1:19; 11:24,25; Lk. 12:16-21
- **When God's judgment falls, our wealth cannot save us.** Zeph. 1:18; Psa. 52:5-7; Pro. 11:4; Jer. 9:23,24; Zeph. 1:10-13
- **Hoarding for selfish pleasure is sin.** Lk. 12:13-21; Jms. 5:1-3; Psa. 119:36,37; Mi. 2:2; Hab. 2:9; Col. 3:5; 2 Tim. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:14
- **The rich young ruler illustrates the point that an idolatrous relationship with wealth will cost us our souls.** Lk. 18:18-25; Ezek. 33:31; Lk. 8:14; 19:8; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:8
- **A godly person who is content with life's basics is the truly rich individual.** I Tim. 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5; Matt. 6:34; Phil. 4:11-13; 2 Cor. 9:8-11; 12:9,10
- **The person lusting for wealth will pay a high price for its acquisition.** I Tim 6:9,10; 2 Kin. 5:20-27; Pro. 15:27; 20:21; 21:6; 22:16; 28:20-22; Isa. 5:8; Hos. 12:7,8; Amos 8:4-6; Zech. 11:5; Jude 1:11
- **Those blessed with wealth bear the responsibility of humility over arrogance, trusting God over their vulnerable resources, and exercising generosity in the sharing of their wealth.** I Tim 6:17,18; 1 Jn. 2:15,16; Deut. 15:7-11; Psa. 37:3; Pro. 11:24,25; Ecc. 11:1,2,6; Isa. 58:6,7; Lk. 6:33-36; Act. 9:36; Rom. 12:8,13; 2 Cor. 8:19; 9:6-15; Gal. 6:10; Tit. 2:14; 3:8; Heb. 13:16; 1 Jn. 3:17

Crown Memory Verses Regarding Money:

1) How We Handle Our Money Impacts Our Relationship With The Lord

‘Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of worldly wealth, who will entrust the true riches to your’ Luke 16:11

2) God’s Part... The Lord Is Owner Of All

“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.” I Chronicles 11, 12

3) Our Part... Faithfulness Required

“Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” I Corinthians 4:2

4) Debt... Debt Is Slavery

“Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender.” Proverbs 22:7

5) Counsel... A Wise Person Seeks Advice

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel” Proverbs 12:15

6) Honesty... Absolute Honesty Required

“You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another” Leviticus 19:11

7) Giving... Giving Is Blessed

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, the He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35

8) Work... Work Diligently As Unto The Lord

‘Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.’ Colossians 3:23-24

9) Investing... Consistently Save

“The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.” - Proverbs 21:20

“Steady plodding brings prosperity hasty speculation brings poverty” Proverbs 21:5

10) Children... Parents Are Responsible To Train Their Children To Be Faithful Stewards

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Perspective... Learn To Be Content

“For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11-13

Perspective... Eternal Values Versus Temporal Values

“Fox what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” Mark 8:36

The purpose and intention of Crown Ministries is not to recommend any specific investments. No one is authorized to use their affiliation with Crown Ministries to promote the sale of any investments or financial services. Our objective is simply to draw your attention to the scriptural framework for saving and investing.

Steady Plodding

"Steady plodding brings prosperity, hasty speculation brings poverty" (Proverbs 21:5, LB). The original Hebrew words for "steady plodding" picture a person filling a large barrel one handful at a time. Little by little the barrel is filled to overflowing.

The fundamental principle you need to practice to become a successful investor is to spend less than you earn. Then save and invest the difference over a long period of time.

Examine various investments. Almost all of them are well suited for "steady plodding." Your home mortgage is paid off after years of steady payments.

Savings grow because of compounding interest and your business can increase steadily in value over the years as you develop its potential.

Understanding Compound Interest

The fabulously wealthy Baron Rothschild was once asked if he had seen the seven wonders of the world. It is reported that he responded, "No, but I do know the

advantages of the eighth wonder of the world — compound interest." Understanding compounding is crucial. There are three variables in compounding — the amount you save, the interest rate you earn on your savings and the length of time you save.

■ The Amount

The amount you save will be dictated by your level of income, the cost of your standard of living, how much debt you have and how faithfully you budget. It is our hope that you will be able to increase the amount available for saving as you implement these biblical principles.

■ Interest Rate

The second variable is the rate of interest you earn on an investment. The following table demonstrates how an investment of \$1,000 per year grows at various interest rates:

As you can see, the increase in the rate of return has a remarkable impact on

Interest	Year 5	Year 10	Year 20	Year 30	Year 40
6%	5,975	13,972	38,993	83,802	164,048
8%	6,336	15,645	49,423	122,346	279,781
10%	6,716	17,531	63,003	180,943	486,851
12%	7,115	19,655	80,699	270,293	859,142

the amount accumulated. A two percent increase almost doubles the amount over 40 years. However, be careful not to invest in too risky an investment in order to achieve a high return. Usually the higher the rate, the higher the risk.



Time is an element we cannot control, other than to start saving now. Answer this question: Who do you think would accumulate more by age sixty-five? A person who started to save \$1,000 a year at age 21, saved for eight years and then completely stopped? Or a person who saved \$1,000 a year for 37 years who started at age 29? Both earned ten percent on their savings. Is it the person who saved a total of \$8,000 or the one who saved \$37,000? Study the chart below.

Individual A			Individual B	
Age	Contribution	Year-end Value	Contribution	Year-end Value
21	1,000	1,100	0	0
22	1,000	2,310	0	0
23	1,000	3,641	0	0
24	1,000	5,105	0	0
25	1,000	6,716	0	0
26	1,000	8,487	0	0
27	1,000	10,436	0	0
28	1,000	12,579	0	0
29	0	13,837	1,000	1,100
30	0	15,221	1,000	2,310
31	0	16,743	1,000	3,641
32	0	18,417	1,000	5,105
33	0	20,259	1,000	6,716
34	0	22,284	1,000	8,487
35	0	24,513	1,000	10,436
36	0	26,964	1,000	12,579
37	0	29,661	1,000	14,937
38	0	32,627	1,000	17,531
39	0	35,889	1,000	20,384
40	0	39,478	1,000	23,523
41	0	43,426	1,000	26,975
42	0	47,769	1,000	30,772
43	0	52,546	1,000	34,950
44	0	57,800	1,000	39,545
45	0	63,580	1,000	44,599
46	0	69,938	1,000	50,159
47	0	76,932	1,000	56,275
48	0	84,625	1,000	63,003
49	0	93,088	1,000	70,403
50	0	103,397	1,000	78,543
51	0	112,636	1,000	87,497
52	0	123,898	1,000	97,347
53	0	136,290	1,000	108,182
54	0	149,919	1,000	120,100
55	0	164,911	1,000	133,210
56	0	181,402	1,000	147,631
57	0	199,542	1,000	163,494
58	0	219,496	1,000	180,943
59	0	241,446	1,000	200,138
60	0	265,590	1,000	221,252
61	0	292,149	1,000	244,477
62	0	321,364	1,000	270,024
63	0	353,501	1,000	298,127
64	0	388,851	1,000	329,039
65	0	427,736	1,000	363,043

Total Investment **\$8,000**

Total Investment **\$37,000**

Total Amount Accumulated **\$427,736**

Total Amount Accumulated **\$363,043**



He knows exactly how much He can entrust to us at any time without it harming our relationship with Him.

3. The Lord's discipline

Hebrews 12:6,10 tells us that, "He scourges every son whom he receives... for our good that we may share His holiness." Sometimes His discipline is directed toward our possessions. You may have sin in your life or a wrong attitude toward money that the Lord is lovingly but firmly confronting.

4. To help us recognize our dependence

A father was carrying his two-year-old child as he waded in a lake. When they were close to shore, the child was unconcerned because of the apparent safety of the beach, even though the water was deep enough to drown him. He didn't understand his absolute dependence upon his father. However, the farther they moved away from shore, the more the

to cling to our heavenly Father. The Lord sometimes allows us to experience difficult financial times to draw us close to Himself.

5. The Mystery of God's Sovereignty

In Hebrews 11 we find "Faith's Hall of Fame." In verses 1-35 we have a list of people who triumphed miraculously by the exercise of their faith in the living God. But in verse 36 the writer directs our attention abruptly to godly people who lived by faith, gained God's approval yet experienced poverty. The sovereign God ultimately chooses how much to entrust to each person. And sometimes we simply can't understand or explain His decisions.

Let summarize: The Scriptures teach neither the necessity of poverty nor uninterrupted prosperity. What the Bible teaches is the responsibility of being a faithful steward. Please review this diagram, which contrasts the three perspectives.

	Poverty	Stewardship	Prosperity
<i>Possessions are:</i>	Evil	A responsibility	A right
<i>I work to:</i>	Meet only basic needs	Serve Christ	Become rich
<i>Godly people are:</i>	Poor	Faithful	Wealthy
<i>Ungodly people are:</i>	Wealthy	Unfaithful	Poor
<i>I give:</i>	Because I must	Because I love God	To get
<i>My spending is:</i>	Without gratitude to God	Prayerful and responsible	Carefree and consumptive

child held on to the father.

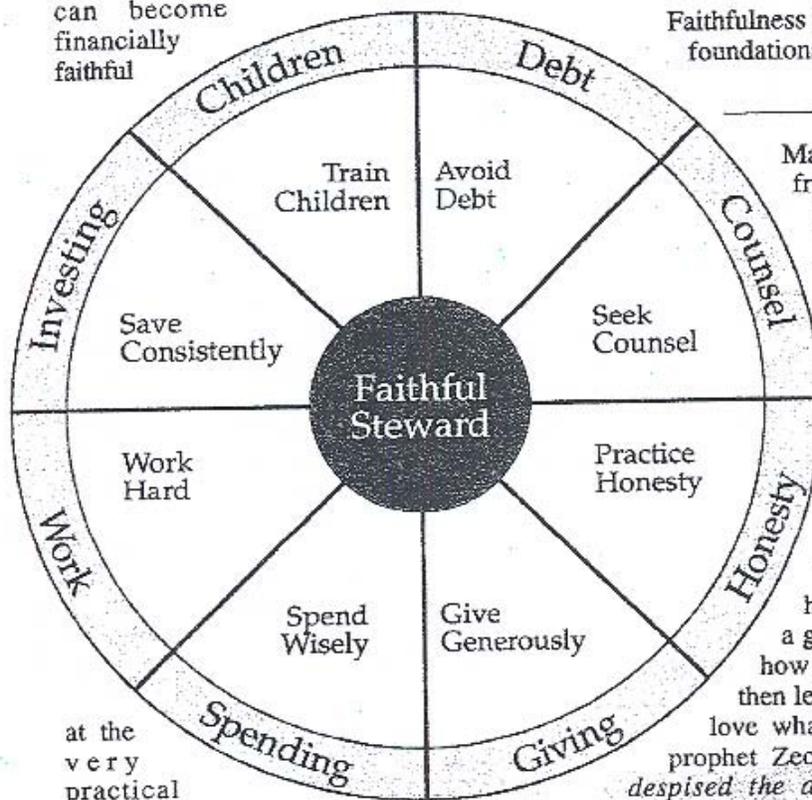
Like the child, we are always completely dependent upon the Lord to provide for us. However, often we don't recognize our dependence when we are "close to shore" experiencing the apparent security of financial prosperity. But when our possessions are few or none, it becomes easier to recognize our need and

The Lord's Perspective of Prosperity

Before we leave the issue of prosperity, it is important for us to understand that the Lord's perspective of prosperity is contrary to man's perspective. The Lord evaluates true riches based on His spiritual value system. This contrast

VI. Let's Review

At the beginning of this study we asked why the Bible said so much about money — in more than 2,350 verses. There are three major spiritual reasons: how we handle money impacts our fellowship with the Lord; money is the primary competitor with Christ for the lordship of our life, and money molds our character. Another reason is that the Lord wants us to have a blueprint for handling money so that we can become financially faithful.



at the very practical levels of life.

Review this diagram of the wheel again. The eight areas of our responsibility, each with its primary thrust, are identified.

Faithfulness is a journey — do not become discouraged!

Applying financial principles of Scripture is a journey that takes time. It's easy to become discouraged when your finances aren't completely under control by the end of this study. It takes the average person at least a year to apply most of these principles. Many have decided to lead the Crown Ministries study because they knew it would be an environment where the new students would help hold them accountable on this journey.

Faithfulness in small matters is foundational — do not become frustrated!

Many people also become frustrated by the inability to solve their financial problems quickly. Remember, simply be faithful with what you have — whether it is little or much.

Some abandon the goal of becoming debt free or saving or giving more, because the task looks impossible. And it may be without the Lord's help. Your job is to make a genuine effort, no matter how small it may appear, and then leave the results to God. I love what the Lord said to the prophet Zechariah, "For who has despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10). Don't be discouraged. Be diligent. Be persistent. Be faithful in even the smallest matters.

VII. Now Is the Time!

We are not economists. However, after analyzing the deteriorating national

Debt List¹

Date: _____

CREDITOR	FOR WHAT	MONTHLY PAYMENT	BALANCE DUE	SCHEDULED PAY-OFF DATE	INTEREST RATE	PAYMENTS PAST DUE
Sears	credit card	\$ 20.00	\$ 400.00	Forever	21%	0
Visa	credit card	25.00	500.00	Forever	18%	1
Mastercard	credit card	30.00	700.00	Forever	19%	0
Friendly Auto Sales	Don's car	250.00	3,000.00	7/08	14%	0
crazy Eddie's car sales	Janet's car	125.00	2,000.00	11/07	16%	1
Parent's Loan	Miscellaneous	?	600.00	NO Date	5%	None
Last National Bank	Boat	225.00	2,100.00	1/09	18%	0
Life Insurance	Investment	150.00/year	3,000.00	None	5%	0
TOTALS		\$ 687.50	\$15,300.00			

*EXCLUDE HOME MORTGAGE, BUSINESS DEBT AND ANY CONTINGENT LIABILITIES FROM THE LIST.

¹ A resource of Crown Financial Ministries

