

God & Money - A practical workshop on stewarding His modern day minas

(mina - an ancient Near Eastern unit of weight and currency) & talent

Description: In this workshop, we will focus on understanding God’s extensive guidance on money and learning to navigate in the world by using a Biblical GPS:

- G**iving: Unlocking the power and blessing of giving in our walk
- P**lanning: Establishing a budget and effectively managing it for His glory
- S**aving & Debt: Planning for your future while trusting God every step of the way

4 Things I’ve learned

- 1. The money we possess is God’s, not ours. We must serve Him and not let money become an idol *Luke 16:13 & Matthew 6:24*
- 2. We aren’t taking any of His money with us when we leave here, so we should steward His resources toward eternal treasures *1 Timothy 6:6-8*
- 3. We are called to be generous with the resources He has entrusted to us *2 Corinthians 8:14-15*
- 4. We should live humbly in a way that will glorify God *Proverbs 30:7-9*



Giving: Unlocking the power and blessing of giving in our walk

Why should we give? - *1 John 3:17-18*

How much should I give? - *2 Corinthians 9:6-7*

When should we give? - *Proverbs 3:9-10*

It is important to understand that the right question is not “how much should I give?” Rather, the right question to ask is “how much should I keep?” Faithful giving considers assets as well, not just income.

Increasing giving as income increases

To whom should I give?

- 1. Tithing to your Church - *1 Timothy 5:17-18 & Galatians 6:10*
- 2. Family in need - *1 Timothy 5:8*
BUT...only within the context of *1 Timothy 6:8*
- 3. Blessing fund

4. Sacrificial giving
5. Other charitable causes - The questions we want to ask ourselves and pray through are no different than the other items above:
 - Will giving to this cause bring glory to God?
 - Does the organization completely stand for what I believe?
 - How much of my donation is getting to the cause?

Giving – Reflection Questions for Discussion

1. Reflecting on 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, how do you feel right now about your giving?

2. What are some ideas where I can focus on giving in my walk that would be a blessing to others?

Planning: Establishing a budget and effectively managing it for His glory

Why set a budget?

In all things, planning increases our likelihood of success. - Proverbs 21:5 & 19:2

In the same vein, if we do not adhere to a budget that we track closely, then we have to rely on our own judgment, which is not always good. – Jeremiah 17:9

Establishing a budget

Here are the critical steps to establishing a budget

1. Know your take-home income

	Predictable	Unpredictable
Gross monthly pay	Salary or consistent hourly wages that you have consistently seen	Take last 12 months conservative average and multiply by 85%
Less: taxes		
Less: medical payroll deductions		
Less: Other		
Monthly take-home pay		

2. Know your current expenses (dollar amount; essential versus non-essential).
Essential –
Non-essential -
3. Compare your income and expenses – am I at minimum balancing between what I’m bringing in and what I’m spending each month?
4. Develop an appropriate budget.
5. Track spending to remain within budget. – There are a lot of ways to track what you are spending, I use mint.com for example, but it can be as simple as a spreadsheet or a piece of paper.
6. Periodically reassess budget – budgets should be ideally assessed every 2-3 months to ensure what we allocated is appropriate, at minimum once a year but also as major life milestones occur (moving, family expanding, new job, etc.)

Succeeding with a budget

1. Seek accountability and be transparent
2. If married, establish a periodic review where you sit down together to check progress and make adjustments. Start weekly, and adjust from there.
3. Develop budget line items (i.e. car fund) to save now for big ticket items such as cars, so you can avoid debt in the future.
4. Consider using an envelope system for keeping expenses within your planned budget.

Planning – Reflection Questions for Discussion:

1. What are some obstacles that you could personally foresee as you strive to succeed with a budget?

2. How do you overcome those obstacles?

Debt: Breaking free from the bondage of debt

Scripture warns us to use great caution in the use of debt

1. Debt results in bondage (Prov 22:7; Neh 5:15; 1 Cor 7:23)
2. Freedom from debt is a blessing (Duet 15:4-6)
3. Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another (Rom 13:8)

Steps to reduce debt

1. Eliminate all credit cards and incur no new debt
2. List your debts

Creditor	Balance	Rate	Payment	Priority
Card #1	4,400.00	13.00%	75.00	1
Auto Loan #1	22,000.00	5.00%	450.00	4
Auto Loan #2	16,000.00	5.00%	350.00	3
Card #2	9,000.00	13.50%	125.00	2
Student Loan #1	25,000.00	4.00%	300.00	5

3. Adjust your lifestyle/budget to free up funds to rapidly pay down debt
4. Seek counsel regarding your debt reduction plan and budget
5. Pay off highest interest rate debts first. Roll payments to the next debt
6. Communicate with creditors to improve the terms of your debt

Consider the following prior to eliminating or reducing giving in order to pay down debt

- Have you removed all non-essential expenses? See 1 Tim 6:8
- Does this decision glorify God and further the cause of Christ?
- Recognizing that all you have is God's, why do you feel not giving is what He would have you do with His resources?
- How will this decision benefit you spiritually?
- Are you trusting that God can provide or trying to control the situation?
- Are you missing an opportunity to strip away idols in your life?
- Are your circumstances worse than the poor widow in Mark 12 or the Macedonian Christians in 2 Cor 8?
- Are you setting a Christ-like example for your children?

Debt – Reflection Questions for Discussion

- How does debt prohibit our ability to give generously?
- In what ways is freedom from debt a blessing?

Saving: Setting aside resources to meet God-honoring future needs

Ecclesiastes 5:10 “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.”

Is saving a biblical concept?

1. Scripture encourages saving for a season. See Proverbs 6:6-8.
2. On the other hand, the man who builds towers to store grain for many years is rebuked as a fool (Luke 12:16-21)

So what is a proper balance?

1. Don't be distracted by the accumulation of money or wealth; the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:6-10)
2. Recognize that God can use all things for our good and his glory (Rom 8:28-30)
3. Consider how to use excess funds to bless others and expand the Kingdom.
 - a. Acts 11:29 – The disciples decided to help the brothers and sisters in Judea.
 - b. Acts 2:25-25 – The believers sold property and possessions to meet needs

Practical Steps

1. Prepare a balance sheet listing all of your assets and liabilities.
2. Meditate on the scriptures listed in this outline and consider how money may be distracting you from God's purposes.
3. Develop and prioritize a list of significant areas (house, retirement, school tuition, etc.) you are currently saving for or hope to be saving for.
4. Reassess all savings in light of your list, and develop a plan to release assets that aren't being held onto for God-honoring purposes.
5. Be sure to consider each of your assets and your reasoning for each decision.
6. Seek insight/counsel from others who you are in fellowship with and trust to speak into your plan – affirming or helping expose potential blind spots.
7. Revisit your budget and adjust as necessary.

Saving – Reflection Questions for Discussion

What are you saving for – a rainy day (i.e., a season) or a rainy lifetime?

Are you trusting Him, trusting your resources, or trying to trust both?

Resources

Email us with questions: KMIfinancetalk@att.net

A great, free budget management tool: www.mint.com

A resource to understand more about a charity's finances: www.charitynavigator.org

A link to budget templates, sample budgets, and an indepth curriculum on financial stewardship:
<http://www.watermark.org/dallas/ministries/moneywise/resources>

19 questions to use in assessing a ministry before giving to the organization (Alcorn).

1. Are you fulfilling your primary giving responsibility to your local church?
2. What things about this ministry make it uniquely worth investing in?
3. In addition to reading the literature from this ministry, who have you talked with who knows it close up but have no vested interests in it?
4. Have you considered a ministry or vision trip to see and participate in what this ministry is actually doing on field?
5. How does the ministry's staff demonstrate a servant-hearted concern for those to whom they minister?
6. How do the organization's workers demonstrate a sense of unity, camaraderie and mutual respect? (Ask employees, "For what reasons have people left this organization in the last few years?")
7. Whom have you talked directly with at the lower levels of this ministry, not just executives and PR people? How do they feel about the ministry?
8. Is this ministry biblically sound and Christ-centered? Do people call upon the Lord to ask His guidance and the Holy Spirit's empowerment to do their work?
9. What kind of character, integrity, purity and humility is demonstrated by the ministry leaders?
10. What kind of accountability structures (just using the word accountability isn't enough) does the organization have?
11. If this is a secular or semi-Christian organization rather than a distinctively Christian one, why would you give to it rather than to another?
12. How clear are this organization's goals and objectives, strategies, and tactics, and how effective are they in carrying them out?
13. Is this organization teachable and open to improvement to become more strategic? What examples have you seen?
14. Are you certain you've gotten an objective view of this ministry, or have you seen only the positives without the negatives? (Ask them, "What are your weaknesses?")
15. What ethics and what view of God and people are demonstrated in this organization's fundraising techniques?
16. How much money does the organization spend on overhead expenses and fundraising, and how much in actual ministry to people?
17. Does this ministry show a clear understanding of cross-cultural ministry factors & local conditions and how the flow of money may affect them?
18. What examples do you have that this organization speaks well of others and cooperates with them?
19. How do you know this ministry is pervaded by a distinctly eternal perspective?