

## **10 Biblical Financial Principles about money and wealth**

**Instructor's notes**  
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### **Principle #1: God owns everything and we are his stewards.**

**Instructor's notes**

Slide 1 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** Principle #1: God owns everything and we are his stewards.

Slide 2 **The Bible is our source for understanding Christian stewardship:** The Bible is our primary source for understanding God's sovereignty and Christian stewardship:

a. Although we will use other sources, the Holy Bible is going to be our primary source for understanding the scope and implications of God's ownership of the universe, and for Christian stewardship. Throughout this entire seminar, many of the things we will study are consistent with common sense thinking; but others will be counter-intuitive to our natural mind. Therefore, man's ideas regarding money and wealth are not reliable. We must rely on God's revelation to us to fully understand his will in these important areas of life.

b. Our goal for this seminar is more than just learning a lot of helpful information. Of course, we will learn much and the information we learn will help us please God with our finances. But our goal runs deeper than simply an academic understanding of financial principles from God's perspective. Our primary goal is for the information we learn to migrate from our head to our heart. When we understand God's principles with our heart, we will begin to internalize the mind of Christ. That "mind and heart" perspective will help us make godly decisions regarding money and wealth with pure motives. Purity of heart is something that is very important to God. Of course, we want to do the right thing, but we also want to do the right thing with right motives.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** Our theme verse for this seminar is 1 Timothy 1:5: "The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith." This verse was chosen because it conveys the idea that our heart and our mind work together to provide genuine faith expressed by living a life of love. I believe if our minds and hearts are right with respect to money and wealth, it will be an important factor in living the kind of life God wants us to live.

Slide 4 **Principle #1: God is the owner of everything and we are his stewards:** In this first module, we'll examine four aspects of God's ownership of everything. We will define Christian stewardship, explore the concept of faithful stewardship, and look at some Biblical examples.

Slide 5 **Key Bible passages:** In each seminar module we will identify key Bible passages that represent important concepts regarding that particular principle. They will establish the context for the module. In this module, we will look at a verse that declares God's ownership of the entire universe. We will consider the virtue of faithfulness, a key requirement of Christian stewardship and one that reminds us of our accountability to God above everything else.

Slide 6 **Part 1: Ownership:** Part one is ownership. Just as mankind can own earthly property, we know that God owns the entire universe. God has declared that his ownership supersedes man's. Man's ownership is temporary; God's ownership is eternal. Thus, we should look at what we possess on this earth as temporary and subject to God's will and plan for the duration of our ownership. Everything is his and his alone. He will decide who owns it and how it is to be used.

Slide 7 **The Bible teaches that God owns everything:** There are many verses that declare God's ownership. Let's read four of these together. And remember for each passage that you read, you can give yourself one point on your scorecard. Let's consider four lessons from these passages having to do with ownership.

Slide 8 **1. He retains ownership of everything—even what he has entrusted to us:** Lesson 1. We may have been entrusted with certain material possessions over which God retains ownership and disposition rights. If God gives us possessions, it is by his grace. We should receive it with gratitude and hold it with an open hand. We should be mindful that our possessions are to accomplish his purposes. On the other hand, if he takes away some of our possessions, it is his absolute right to do so. We really have no say in the matter. We know that his judgements are just. This should give us great peace because, once again, God's purposes are just and righteous.

Slide 9 **2. When we give gifts to God, we are only returning what is already His:** Lesson 2. When we give gifts to God, whether it be monetary gifts or gifts of our time and talents, we are only returning to him what he has given us. They are to be looked at as temporary loans to us rather than permanent possessions. Let's read 1 Chronicles 29:14.

Slide 10 **3. When we create or accomplish, that ability comes from God:** lesson 3. the ability to create or accomplish also comes from God. We may think that we have developed certain talents and that may be true. But those talents are gifts. Our abilities, our intellect, our creativity, our determination, our virtues--these are all gifts from God. Let's read Deuteronomy 8:17 and 18.

Slide 11 **4. Whether we live or die, all that we have is the Lord's:** lesson 4. Whether we live or die all that we have is the Lord's. We belong to him, body and soul; mind, will and heart. And as believers, it should be our goal to learn to surrender ourselves to him more fully each day.

Slide 12 **Part 2: Stewardship:** let's now look at the second part of this principle: stewardship. We've made the case that we are completely his. Now, let's consider how we give ourselves back to him, particularly in the financial area of our lives.

Slide 13 **What is Christian stewardship?** first let's define Christian stewardship. Ron Blue defines it this way: "Christian stewardship is using God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given purposes". It acknowledges that our resources are from God and that he has a purpose in mind for them.

Slide 14 **Stewardship vs. Ownership**: one practical aspect of this definition has to do with control. Owners have absolute control of the resources that belong to them. Stewards on the other hand manage someone else's resources rather than their own. Stewards are responsible for implementing the owner's goals for his resources, not their own goals. We are called stewards and as such we manage God's resources and are subject to his will for them.

Slide 15 **What are the responsibilities of Christian stewards?** therefore, as stewards of God's resources, it is our responsibility to discover and implement his purposes for them in all areas of life. This is true whether we are in the ministry, fulltime Christian service, or have a secular occupation. It is also true for our work time and free time.

Slide 16 **Class discussion**: class discussion

Slide 17: class discussion

Slide 18 **A Biblical perspective of Christian stewardship**: let's examine this responsibility of Christian stewardship in more detail. We will consider five responsibilities of good stewards.

Slide 19 **1. Christian stewards realize everything they have comes from God**: first, as we have said before, followers of Christ are stewards who realize everything they have comes from God.

Slide 20 **2. Christian Stewards are accountable to God with everything entrusted to them**: secondly, Christian stewards are accountable to God for everything entrusted to them. In a completely surrendered life, our time, talents and treasures are open to his scrutiny. I must confess that I don't measure up to this high standard. Nevertheless, I believe that it is God's desire that we see ourselves as vessels to be used of the Lord and submit our wills to him.

Slide 21 **3. Christian stewards must faithfully implement the owner's purposes for his resources**: third, as stewards we must faithfully implement God's purposes for the resources he has entrusted to us. We know that his great plan is to redeem mankind. I believe God is pleased when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices and seek to understand how we fit into his great plan.

Slide 22 **4. Christian stewards have several functions**: fourth, Christian stewards have several functions: ambassador, manager, and executive. As Christ's ambassador, we are to bring Glory to him in the way we live our lives. As manager we view our roles as managing the resources God has entrusted to us. And as executives, we carry out his goals through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Slide 23 **Stewards as ambassadors**: let's take a closer look. As ambassadors we practice representing our Lord and everything we do. Let's read Colossians 3:17.

Slide 24 **Stewards as managers**: let's consider an example of stewards fulfilling their role as managers. Joseph was employed in Potifer's household. He was competent, organized, and dedicated to serving him with excellence. And because of his outstanding performance of his

assigned duties, he was well rewarded for it. He was promoted to being in charge of Potifer's entire household. Let's read Genesis 39: 1-6a.

Slide 25 **Stewards as executives**: as executives, we carry out God's plan. And we know that God's plan at the highest level is to win the world for Christ. So it is our goal as Christians to understand our role in that great purpose. We can share Christ with others, we can give to the Lord's work, we can perform many practical helps, and we can pray. We can encourage others to live a godly live. And we can be a testimony of his grace and love to all we contact.

Slide 26 **Steward functioning as executives sometimes spend their Master's resources**: now let's shift gears slightly, let's look at two aspects of managing our master's money. This has to do with the ideas of spending vs. investing. Sometimes stewards spend their master's resources and sometimes they invest their master's resources. First, let's consider the idea of spending our master's resources. We see this in the story of the woman who poured perfume on Jesus' head. Some were critical of the woman's seemingly irresponsible use of money. But Jesus praised her expenditure. That jar of perfume had special significance as a symbol of Jesus upcoming burial. We must be very careful before criticizing how a fellow believer spends his money. We may see it as wasteful, and there are certainly many instances where that is true. But it's also possible that the expenditure was made with God's blessing. Stewards are accountable to their master, not to us.

Slide 27-30 **Stewards functioning as executives sometimes invest their master's resources**: stewards also sometimes invest their master's resources. We all know the story of the 10 talents, but it may be worthwhile reviewing. Let's read Matthew 25:14-30 together.

Slide 28 **Parable of the 10 talents-investing**: let's consider some of the lessons of this parable. We have already seen that God expects us to invest his resources wisely. This applies to our time, talents and treasure. Secondly, it's not a matter of how much we have, but what we do with what we have. If we hide what we have, or put it to selfish uses, God may consider that a form of unfaithfulness. When it comes to money, I believe we should strive for at least some return on the money we don't immediately need. This can be in a physical sense, such as earning interest, or in a spiritual sense, such as producing some result that promotes God's kingdom. Finally, I believe that if we are faithful with worldly goods, God may entrust us with spiritual treasure. The 10<sup>th</sup> principle of this seminar is dedicated to understanding The True Riches.

Slide 29 **10 talents-investing (cont'd)**: Continue reading

Slide 30 **10 talents-investing (cont'd)**: Therefore, whether we spend or invest the resources God has given to us, we are accountable to him. And we must respect another steward's accountability to God and avoid judging him. Let's read Romans 14: 7-10.

Slide 31 **The parable of the 10 talents-Lessons**: **God** expects us to invest the resources he has entrusted to us wisely. This applies to our time, talents, and treasure

- It is not how much we have that is important, but rather what we do with what we have

- If we hide what we have, God may consider it a form of unfaithfulness. We should strive for at least some return on our resources for good, or more specifically, for the kingdom, no matter how modest.
- If we are faithful with worldly goods, God may entrust us with spiritual treasure

#### Slide 32 **Spend or invest?**

- Every steward is accountable to his master for what he does with what he is given.
- Sometimes he spends (consumes) his master's resources and other times he invests (plants for future harvesting) them, according to his understanding of his master's objectives.
- We must respect another steward's accountability to God and avoid judging them
  - *For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead. So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. Romans 14:7-10*

#### Slide 33 **Class discussion**

#### Slide 34 **Class discussion**

#### Slide 35 **Essay**

#### Slide 36 **Class discussion**

Slide 37 **Summary:** let's summarize this module. Our time, talent, and our money are resources that belong to God. He has entrusted them to us as his stewards. Therefore, as his stewards, we are responsible for understanding and accomplishing his purposes for them.

#### Slide 38 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** end of module

### **Principle 2. Worship and Trust God rather than money** **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** Here is the second principle: God wants us to worship and trust Him rather than money. In this module we will discover important Biblical truths about money including the fact that it cannot save us, it cannot extend our lives, it is not reliable as our security, and it can be a snare to those pursue it.

Slide 2 **The Bible teaches us to worship and trust God rather than money:** As was true in our study of principle 1, our purpose for this module is to allow our hearts to be transformed by God's word so that we learn to appreciate His heart. We study his word because his word reveals His nature which serves as a pattern for us.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** Our theme verse is 1 Tim 1:5. We'll read this first together at the beginning of each module to let it sink into our hearts. (Class reads Scripture)

Slide 4 **Principle #2: Worship and trust God rather than money:** in this module, we will look at several aspects of money which can compete with our worship of God. We'll consider what gives our life value and discover the basis for our Joy. Then we'll be reminded that money is neither our true source of security nor is life giving.

Slide 5 **Key Bible passages:** let's read two key verses pertaining to this principle. (Class reads Scripture)

Slide 6 **part 1: Worship God, not money.** Let's examine 6 aspects of what it means to worship God rather than money

Slide 7 **We must choose whom we will love and serve:** First, the Bible makes it clear that we must choose whom we will serve. Let's read Matthew 6:24 together. It appears to be a clear-cut choice between serving God or money. However, sometimes we may think we can have it both ways. What are some of the subtle ways we do this? Do you think it's possible to deceive ourselves into thinking we can serve God and money? Can you give me an example of someone you know that has made this mistake?

Slide 8 **God wants us to have a rich relationship with Himself rather than the world:** Secondly, God wants us to have a rich relationship with himself rather than the world. Let's read Luke 12:15 through 21. We see from this passage that we are to measure the value of our lives based on our material wealth but rather on our spiritual relationship with God.

Slide 9 **God is the One who gives our lives value, not our possessions:** The third point is similar to the second point. Besides God giving our lives meaning he also gives our lives value that transcends this world. Let's read Matthew 16:25 (Class reads Scripture)

Slide 10 **Base our joy on knowing and serving the Lord rather than the pursuing riches and pleasure:** The fourth point is God's Word teaches us that our joy should be based on knowing and serving him rather than pursuing wealth. Isaiah 61:10 and Psalm 128 1 speak to this. (Class reads Scripture)

Slide 11 **If we depend upon our money and possessions for our happiness, we may be disappointed:** The fifth point is this: if we depend upon our money and possessions for our happiness, we may be disappointed. Let's read Ecclesiastes 2: 10 and 11 (Class reads Scripture). We live a hollow and unsatisfying existence if all we pursue is what this world can offer.

Slide 12 **Living for pleasure can be described as living death:** The 6<sup>th</sup> and final thought on this principle of worshiping God rather than money is this: the Bible paints a pretty bleak picture about those who live for pleasure. Let's read 1st Timothy 5:6 (Class reads Scripture). There are many other passages which warn us of the futility of living for pleasure. I don't think any of us want to be dead men walking, but this is the picture Scripture paints for us when our chief pursuit in life is to live for pleasure. In this verse the Bible calls it a living death. I know I want to have the Lord say "Well done thy good and faithful servant" when I face him someday.

These six points are by no means exhaustive but they do give us several snapshots into the overall landscape we are considering.

Slide 13 **3 consequences Christians may experience for pursuing God rather than riches:**

Let's now look at three consequences that Christians may face if they pursue God rather than riches. Our spiritual journey to know God more intimately will eventually be rewarded but not necessarily in this life.

Slide 14 **1. Hatred and disrespect from the world rather than praise:** the first consequence of pursuing an intimate relationship with God above everything else is that we may be despised by the world. We should not expect the world to admire or respect us if our life's main pursuit is spiritual rather than material. Let's read Luke 6:22 (Class reads Scripture).

Slide 15 **2. Oppression and discrimination:** We may face oppression as Moses did. Read Hebrews 11: 24 through 25 (Class reads Scripture).

Slide 16 **3. Suffering and persecution:** We may not only experience unfair treatment but actually suffer for Christ if we choose the things of God rather than man. Let's continue reading the next verse in Hebrews 11. (Class reads Scripture).

Slide 17 **class discussion.**

Slide 18 **Part II: Trust in God rather than money:** This takes us to part 2 of this module: Trust in God rather than money.

Slide 19 **Riches are an unreliable source of security:** We all desire security for ourselves and our families. The world believes that money is the secret to security. But the Bible does not teach this. Rather, the Bible teaches us that money is an unreliable source of security. Read 1st Timothy 6:17a (Class reads Scripture). What was once considered valuable can turn worthless in a very short time. Many of the companies who dominated their market during one period of American history were almost totally replaced by new companies that didn't even exist when they were in their heyday. Examples include trains which were replaced by airplanes, horse buggies which were replaced by automobiles, and land lines which were replaced by cell phones. If you have lived for any length of time, you have witnessed this phenomenon.

Slide 20 **Our wealth won't purchase one minute of life from God:** We must realize that wealth will not extend our life beyond what God has ordained for any given individual. We do know that the Bible talks about lifestyles that can cut our lives short. And it lists some things that actually can extend our life. Let's look at one example given in Scripture. Many of these Life-Giving concepts are found in the book of Proverbs. Let's read Proverbs 11:4.

Slide 21 **Trust God to care and provide for us, not our money:** Trust God to care and provide for us--not our money. Let's read three verses that teach us to trust in God rather than our money. 1 Timothy 6:17, Hebrews 13: 5, Proverbs 11:28.

Slide 22 **Essay.**

Slide 23 **Class discussion.**

Slide 24 **Summary:** Let's summarize principle 2.

- The passion of our hearts, the focus of our energy, and the direction of our will should be to worship and trust God for our needs and wants rather than to pursue material things. Let our focus be to develop a strong and intimate relationship with Christ. Our pursuit should be to know him.
- Let's remember that it is God who gives our lives value and meaning.
- We know that the world may ridicule, despise, or persecute us for our devotion to Christ but he is well worth it.
- Or money cannot give us security or peace. Only God can do that.
- He is our provider; he's our protector; he's our source of security. He preserves and extends our lives.

And if by God's grace he gives us material things, we should receive them with open hands and a humble, thankful heart. Then, by his grace, offer them back to him to use according to his will.

Slide 25 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** end of module

### **Principle 3: Beware falling in love with our money** **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** the third biblical principle regarding money and wealth is to beware of falling in love with them. This is a subject that many people struggle with. So it is the purpose of this module to provide biblical insight into the dangers of loving our money, how to recognize their symptoms, consider the consequences of greed, and the Biblical remedy for these two temptations that are available to us.

Slide 2 **The Bible teaches us to love God, not our money:** The Bible teaches us to love God rather than money. The goal of this module, as with the others, is the transformation of our hearts to make this a reality in our lives.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** let's read our theme verse together: 1st Timothy 1:5

Slide 4 **Principle #3. Beware of the love of money:** in this module we will consider 9 warning signs that money is becoming an object of our affection. We will list 14 consequences of falling in love with money and the related subject of greed. There are many examples of greed in the Bible. Finally, we'll look at the antidote to greed by examining seven Godly attitudes towards money; Finally, we'll make a case for the most important thing regarding this topic.

Slide 5 **Key Bible passages:** here are three passages relating to this topic. Let's read them together: Matthew 13:5, one Timothy 6: 9-10, and Matthew 6:24.

Slide 6 **9 warning signs that we might be falling in love with our money:** to begin, let's look at nine warning signs that we might be falling in love with our money. They are listed in no particular order, and there are undoubtedly others. But this representative list should help us gain a perspective of the lure of money and make us more determined to guard our heart's attitude



towards it.

Slide 7 **1. The desire to get money unjustly:** the first danger sign of loving money is the desire to get it unjustly. I don't think any of us as Christians would intentionally try to get money in this manner but Satan is very subtle in his ways. It's important to remember that that we can be deceived. Let's read these two verses: Habakkuk 2:9 and Proverbs 20:17.

Slide 8 **2. Refusal to help those in need:** another danger sign that we money is beginning to capture our hearts is to refuse to help those in need. Let's read Proverbs 3: 27 and 28. Here we see that if we have the power to help someone in need, we should do it today. Don't put it off. need is urgent and we should respond if we can help.

Slide 9 **3. Discontentment:** discontentment may also be a sign that we're falling in love with our money. The Bible encourages us to be content with what we have knowing that God is the source of are provisions rather than money. We saw that in the last module. Let's read these two verses: Hebrews 13:5 and 2 Corinthians 6:10.

Slide 10 **4. Not wanting to work for our money:** Another sign is laziness. Sometimes we want our needs to be magically met, but in the meantime we have been spending an inordinate amount of time on the couch in front of the television, playing video games on our computer, or "facebooking" with our smartphones for hours on end. Let's read Proverbs 21:25 to 26.

Slide 11 **5. Inordinate preoccupation with money:** the fifth sign on our list the is a preoccupation with money. Here are some questions to ask ourselves: Is money all we think about? Do we passionately want more of it to the exclusion of everything else? Do we crave it? These can be danger signs of object-worship. We may be starting to love money more than God. Let's read 1 Timothy 6:10.

Slide 12 **6. A get-rich-quick attitude:** Here's a sign we see quite often: a get-rich-quick attitude. This craving is a cousin of greed and is very dangerous. We may be on the road to making unwise decisions regarding our money. Luke 12:15.

Slide 13 **7. Stinginess:** Number seven on our list is stinginess. At first glance we might think that if we are tightfisted with our money, we will end up with more of it. But it seems that Proverbs 28:22 warns that stinginess leads to poverty. What would this verse suggest would be the antidote?

Slide 14 **8. Entertaining bribes:** Number 8: entertaining bribes. We know that this is the custom in some countries and that it may be social acceptable in some situations. But we as Christians should never be guilty of soliciting or accepting bribes to do our job, or pervert justice in order to gain an advantage. Let's read Job 36:18.

Slide 15 **9. Unwillingness to live on less than we make:** the last danger sign of loving our money in this list is the unwillingness to live on less than we make. This is perhaps the most subtle of all these warning signs. It is so easy to spend everything that we make on our own lifestyle, leaving little if anything to share with others. But the wise man will set a little aside

with each paycheck to meet his own future needs and the needs of others. We will talk more about this in a future module.

Slide 16 **14 Consequences of falling in love with money:** we've considered nine danger signs that we might be falling in love with our money. Undoubtedly there are more. Let's now look at 14 consequences of falling in love with our money, in no particular order.

Slide 17 **first, we may choose the wrong priorities.** When we are inappropriately attached to money, we focus on our material needs and wants. We lose sight of more important things in life including our relationship to God and his desires for our money. In Mark 10:17-22 we see the story of a young man who had a desire to do what was right but the power and pull of his possessions was a stumbling block to him. Let's read this passage.

Slide 18 **2. It leads to all manner of evil:** another consequence of falling in love with our money is that it leads to all manner of evil. We know that the desire to get rich can lead us down many wrong and dangerous paths. The eyes of our desire grow large and we dream of fantasies. This can cause us to make wrong choices and set misguided priorities. Let's read 1 Timothy 6:10.

Slide 19 **3. It suffocates interest in spiritual things:** these next two points are drawn from Luke 8. a desire to get rich can kill our interest in spiritual things. We may have experienced this ourselves during times of spiritual barrenness or we may have observed it in other people. Luke 8:14.

Slide 20 **4. It retards spiritual maturity:** the next point is similar to the previous one: although we may not completely lose interest in spiritual things, we may never fully develop as mature Christians if our constant desire is to have more and more material things. The pursuit of material wealth distracts us from investing in our soul.. Let's read Luke 8: 11-15.

Slide 21 **5. We may be guilty of divided affections:** we may be guilty of divided affections. Here's a familiar passage and one that we saw in the second module. The reality is that we must make a choice between serving God and money.

Slide 22 **6. It is a form of idolatry:** number 6 on our list—loving money is a form of idolatry. I think the point here is that anything that we love can become an idol to us. Love money can become an idol and replace God's rightful place in our hearts.

Slide 23 **7. It is a form of adultery:** loving money is a form of adultery. This may come as a surprise to many of us because we think of adultery as a physical act. But God considers the Love of Money as competition for the rightful place that he should have in our lives. James was pretty direct with his condemnation of this worldly attitude. Let's read this passage: James 4: 4.

Slide 24 **8. The love of the father is not in us:** here is a very sobering passage. In the apostle John's first letter, we are told that if we love the world, the love of the father is not in us. There is not enough room in our hearts for both. Let's read 1 John 2:15 - 16. This is pretty severe language and we should take it to heart lest our love for God be replaced with love for material things.

Slide 25 **9. It can lead to discontentment:** loving our money can lead to discontentment. Here we are admonished to be content with what we have. Let's read Hebrews 13:5.

Slide 26 **10. It will never satisfy us:** money will never satisfy us. If we really believe this it will help guard against giving our hearts to the pursuit of wealth. Why be passionate about something that can never satisfy? Let's read Ecclesiastes 5:10.

Slide 27 **11. It can destroy us:** here is a harsh reality, if money wins our heart, it can turn on us and destroy us. Let's read 1 Timothy 6: 9.

Slide 28 **12. It is a threat to our precious faith:** a love for money is a threat to our precious faith. This is one of the saddest consequences of loving money. Beware of a greedy man who claims to have deep spiritual insight. He may in fact be spiritually barren and only deluding himself. Let's read 1 Timothy 6:10.

Slide 29 **13. Our life may be full of problems:** if we love money, our lives may be full of problems. The passage we just read in 1 Timothy is rich with meaning. Here we see that the Love of Money may result in our lives having many sorrows. Visualize money as an arrow that can pierce our hearts.

Slide 30 **14. It will disqualify one as an elder or deacon:** the man who loves money is disqualified from serving as an elder or deacon. Let's read 1 Timothy 3: 2 - 3. It is good not to be hasty when selecting the leaders in our church. We should get to know them and their character. We should observe the lifestyles of the candidates for church leadership and select people who are devoted to the Lord and whose life is a testimony to Godliness.

Slide 31 **Greed (covetousness):** let's now consider greed, or covetousness.

Slide 32 **The love of money and greed are close relatives:** Greed is a close cousin to the Love of Money. Therefore, this topic is included here for completeness. They are both enemies of our soul and there have been many people that have been ruined by them. Unfortunately, there are many examples throughout Scripture of greedy people and the tragic result.

Slide 33 **6 consequences of greed (covetousness):** this is not an exhaustive list but let's consider 6 consequences of greed or covetousness.

Slide 34 **Greed can plunge us into ruin and destruction:** first, greed can plunge us into ruin and destruction. We saw that in 1 Timothy 6 9 - 10

Slide 35 **God will consider us a fool:** here's a consequence of greed that's rather embarrassing: God may consider us to be fools. This is what happened to the man described in Luke 12:15-21.

Slide 36 **Greed is a form of idolatry and may bring God's wrath on us:** greed, or the love of money, is a form of idolatry. The continual practice of it may bring God's Wrath down upon us. Let's read Colossians 3: 5-6.

Slide 37 **Greed may leave us unprepared to face God's coming judgement:** although greed is not specifically mentioned in this passage, it's possible that a greedy person may be caught unprepared to face God's judgement. The greedy will one day realize that their wealth cannot save them in the day of judgement—but it will be too late. Let's endeavor to live Godly lives and to be ready for Christ's appearing.

Slide 38 **Greed may blind us to heavenly values and cause us to waste our lives in the pursuit of worthless things:** greed may rob us of the opportunity to pursue truly worthwhile things. David in his wisdom saw this as expressed in Psalm 119: 36 and 37.

Slide 39 **Greed may cost us an inheritance in the kingdom of God:** greed may cost us an inheritance in God's Kingdom. The Bible makes it clear that no greedy person has an inheritance in heaven. These are all sobering thoughts. Let's guard ourselves against the love of money and the passionate pursuit of wealth. If God blesses us with a measure of wealth we should not rely upon it for security or for happiness but to consider ourselves as stewards of this token of his grace towards us.

Slide 40-46 **31 Examples of greed and covetousness in the Bible:** here is a list several instances of greed that are recorded in Scripture. These were taken from a website on the internet. They are included here as a reminder that the love of money has been a characteristic of human nature even among the God's people. We won't discuss each one, although most of them will be familiar with you. I will highlight a few of them as we go through the next several slides.

Slide 47 **quiz**

Slide 48 **questions for discussion**

Slide 49 **7 godly attitudes towards money:** how do we combat the tendency towards greed in our own lives. This slide suggests some ways of developing a godly attitude towards money.

- The first way to avoid developing a greedy heart is to make a decision of the will. We can decide that we will not make becoming rich our passion or chief purpose in our lives.
- We can keep in mind that God retains his ownership of everything that we have.
- We can thank God daily for the blessings he has given us.
- We can practice contentment.
- We can learn to live on less than we make
- We can learn to be generous and share some our resources with others.
- If God does bless us financially, we can seek his plan for them.

Which of these practices have you found to be effective in your life?

Slide 50 **The most important thing:** the most important thing that I believe we can do is to maintain an intimate relationship with Christ by submitting ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We can offer ourselves as living sacrifices. As we put to death our fleshly desires, he will use our resources to accomplish his purposes in us.

Slide 51 **summary:**

- I am so thankful that the Scriptures teach us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil
- Greed is an enemy of our souls and many good people have fallen victim to it.
- Above all else we are admonished to pursue a daily, moment by moment, close walk with the Lord Jesus because the Holy Spirit is the only one that can protect us from our fleshly desires.

Slide 52 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** end of module.

### **Principle 4: God cares how we manage our money** **Instructor's notes**

#### **Overview**

Slide 1 **Ten Biblical principles about money and wealth:** this module deals with the management of money. It addresses income, expenses, savings, our investments. This is not an in-depth hands-on budgeting workshop, but rather a high-level overview of these concepts. There are many Christian seminars available which go into some detail about how to establish a budget, how to choose between various types of savings accounts, how to write a will, where to invest your money, and so on. Although we will examine some topics in detail, this module is primarily a survey of Biblical principles concerning the management of money.

Slide 2 **The Bible teaches us how to manage the money God entrusts to us:** the Bible has much to say about managing the resources that God gives us both with respect to acquiring them, expending them, as well as the managing them.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** as with the other principles, our goal is a transformed heart so that we can appreciate and follow God's plan for managing our money.

Slide 4 **Principle #4. God cares how we manage our money:** So let's look at principal #4. Its premise is that God cares how we manage our money. He doesn't want us to be frivolous or irresponsible when it comes to this resource any more than he wants us to be frivolous about the use of our time or talents. So far we've dealt with high-level concepts of God's ownership and our stewardship, the practices of worshipping and trusting God rather than money, and the dangers of greed and the love of money. This module on money management is a blend of high-level principles and practical tools and methods.

Slide 5 **Practice Biblical principles of money management:** The module is divided into five segments:

- obtaining money
- dispersing money
- budgeting and creating margin
- saving money
- investing

#### **Part 1: Obtaining money**

Slide 6 **Key Bible verses:** There are many Scriptures that pertain to managing money. For the sake of brevity, I've chosen a few key ones. Let's read the verses on the slide together: the first one pertains to our attitude towards money management: Proverbs 28:20. Here is one on work: Colossians 3:23, Borrowing: Psalm 37:21; Margin and budgeting: Proverbs 21:20; Savings, Proverbs 13:11, and investing: Ecclesiastes 11:2.

Slide 7 **Biblical financial principles vs worldly philosophy:** I do want to acknowledge that not all worldly principles about money are evil or ungodly. God's word tells us how to be successful in life and so not surprisingly there are many worldly principles that are borrowed from Scripture. The main differences are often related to details and motives. The motives of non-Christians are different than Christians even though they might follow the same principles or strategies regarding money management. Therefore, since motives are important, we will also look at attitudes as we go through these practical points on managing money.

Slide 8 **I. Obtaining money:** the first segment is about obtaining money, more commonly called income. We will consider three aspects of income: getting money righteously, getting money unwisely, and obtaining money unrighteously. Since we are Christians the section on obtaining money unrighteously will be quite short. Also, during this principle my intent is for us to have a little fun so buckle your seats and let's go.

Slide 9 **Brotherly love: The underlying universal principle of righteous commerce:** one of the underlying ideas behind righteous income is brotherly love. Here's what I mean by this: when we love other people, we are interested in meeting their needs. In the arena of commerce, we meet the needs of others by offering them a product or service, and if they want it, they are willing to compensate us for that product or service. Similarly, when others meet our needs through a product or service, we gladly compensate them for their time and materials used in meeting our needs. In fact, we compensate them for more than the raw cost of the materials and the value of their labor by reimbursing their overhead and including a profit. So, the basic concept of righteous income is that those who provide something of value to another show "love" to their customers by meeting a need. Those that receive goods or services show "love" or appreciation by compensating their provider appropriately.

Slide 10 **Macro-economics:** It's my belief that one of the tools God uses to limit the exploitation of people in the arena of commercial free enterprise is competition. When there's competition among suppliers of goods or services, the customer usually receives them at the lowest price that the most eager supplier is willing to take. Conversely, when there are many customers bidding for a company's goods or services, the customers bid one another up until the merchant receives the highest price that the most eager customer is willing to pay. The result is equilibrium between supply and demand in the marketplace.

Slide 11 **Types of righteous income:** let's take a closer look at the concept of righteous income. Our goal as Christians should be to obtain money in a way that pleases God. Two categories of income are known as "active" income and "passive" income. Why do we distinguish between active and passive income? Both can be legitimate and honorable. But in the United States and perhaps in other countries, the government taxes active income differently than passive income.

Slide 12 **Obtaining money righteously:** Active income includes income we earn as

- wages and salary,
- profits from a business,
- sales commissions, prizes, awards and fees
- support from our ministry partners.

Passive income includes:

- revenue that we earn from our assets
- the growth in value of our investments
- inheritances, prizes, rewards, and gifts
- royalties from books or other intellectual assets.

Slide 13 **Righteous Income-Active:** let's consider income that we earn from our own labor. This can be a salary at a fixed amount each month, or it can be wages that are paid at some rate-- usually by the hour. The Bible encourages us to work for our income. Let's read Proverbs 10:4 and Ecclesiastes 11:6. As individuals, we earn active income when we are hired by a company which provides a product or service in the marketplace.

Slide 14 **Righteous Income-Active:** Active income also includes profits from a business. Again, there's activity going on in order for a business to be profitable. We recall a woman named Lydia mentioned by Paul in the book of Acts. She was a merchant who earned active income by trading in textiles.

Slide 15 **Righteous Income-Active::** A third type of active income is money that we earn through sales commissions, awards and fees. A realtor sells a house and earns a commission. An architect designs a physical structure and earns a fee for his services. A lawyer represents a client and earns a fee.

Slide 16 **Righteous Income-Active::** in the United States when a person wins a prize or earns a reward it is also considered active income.

Slide 17 **Righteous Income-Active::** The final type of active income that is listed here is support that fulltime Christian workers receive from the supporters of their ministry. Why is it considered active income? Let's take some of the students in this class as an example. I consider your support as active income because you exert effort and engage in activity to perform your studies. You are using your mind to learn, and eventually you will apply that learning for the benefit of other people. You have found people who appreciate your career goal and are willing to compensate you for your studies.

Slide 18 **Types of righteous income:** we have looked at active income, the first category of righteous income. We considered five types of active income. Let's now consider passive income, the second category of earning money righteously. What do we mean by the term passive?

Slide 19 **Righteous income-Passive:** passive income is essentially money that we earn without a 1:1 relationship between expending effort (work) and receiving compensation (income). In other words, we can earn passive income, at least some of the time, while we are engaged in

other activities. The opportunity to earn passive income usually happens when we have put in the work effort previously and now are reaping the benefits of our hard labor and our disciplined management of money. An important point here is that in order to earn passive income we had to invest some money previously earned. And we only have money to invest when we have saved it out of our earnings.

For example, if our savings are sufficient we can buy a house and rent it out to others. During their rental period, 99% of the time we may not even be on the premises or engaged in managing the property. But the renter pays you a certain amount of rent to each month. The rent we receive is the reward that we have earned by providing a place for others to live. In a sense, we are earning income 24/7. We literally earn money while we sleep, are away on vacation, or working at another job.

Another example of passive income is interest that we earn from savings. Again, we set aside a portion of our income and make a deposit into a savings account at a bank. Once again, it's worth noting that we only can save money that we set aside out of previous earnings. Why do we deserve to receive money that we deposit in a bank? It's because the banker uses our money and loans it to others. He receives interest on the loan from the borrower. He then keeps a small portion for himself to cover his expenses and make a profit, and pays us a fair compensation for being able to use our money. It's a wonderful concept. The saver earns interest, the banker earns a profit, and the borrower uses (rents) the money to improve his life or pursue an economic goal. And the interest we earn is called passive because once again we do not have to be actively engaged in producing the income when it is earned.

Slide 20 **Righteous income-Passive**:: another example of passive income is growth in our investments. This is even more fun than some other types of passive income such as renting property because you have to do even less work to earn it. Money that you invest in stocks works for you again constantly whether you're sleeping eating or playing. You are totally disengaged in the process of appreciation (increase in value) of the asset. The second example of an investment is the purchase of a piece of property. It can be vacant land, requiring little maintenance or oversight or it can be improved property such as land with a building on it. In both cases it is your expectation that it's going to appreciate in value.

We've looked at two types of passive income: interest or rent from an asset we own, and appreciation in the value of an asset. The main difference between the two types of passive income is when we receive our money. Normally, we receive interest or rent on a periodic basis, such as monthly or annually. On the other hand, if we are investing for growth, there's no expectation of income during the holding period. We are entirely dependent on the hope that the value of our investment increases subsequent to our purchase. These types of investments are risky because it may take a long time for us to know whether it has been successful or not. It's possible that the value goes down and so we are in the unhappy situation of having invested our hard-earned money over a long period of time only to lose part or all of it. Perhaps the best of both worlds is when we combine both types of passive income. For example, we purchase a property with appreciation potential, but rent it during the holding period.

Slide 21 **Righteous income-Passive**:: another legitimate type of passive income are gifts and



inheritances. Suppose somebody gives you a gift. That means you didn't earn it, you didn't work for it, and you didn't invest any money to get it. It was a gift paid for out of the earnings from someone else but you were the beneficiary. Because you received something of tangible value, it's considered income. The same is true of an inheritance. Somebody else earned the money to purchase the assets in the estate, which you then received as a gift. We're encouraged to leave an inheritance for our children and grandchildren. Leaving an inheritance to our descendants is a righteous activity. An interesting point about these types of investments is that God has a way of re-allocating his resources to accomplish his purposes. Let's read Proverbs 13:22.

- Slide 22: **Questions for discussion:**
- What are some of the characteristics of active and passive forms of income?
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of active vs passive income.

Slide 23 **Obtaining money foolishly and unwisely:** during the last several minutes we have examined several aspects of righteous income. We now turn our attention to foolish or unwise ways that many people try to make. So we're going to look at obtaining money through gambling (foolish) and borrowing (unwise). I believe that obtaining money using unwise methods is not God's best intention for us, and obtaining money foolishly puts our financial health at great risk.

Slide 24 **The folly of gambling:** first, let's look at the folly of gambling. We're going to do this in a way that I hope you will find entertaining as well as instructive.

Slide 25 **Let's play the "Christian" lottery:** we're actually going to try to obtain money by playing the lottery. Now this is a special lottery which I will call the Christian lottery. Yes, we are going to play the Christian lottery right here in this classroom. There may be some lucky person in this room who will win a great deal of money in the next few minutes. Let's play the "Christian" Lottery.

Slide 26 **The "Christian" Lottery:** this lottery is strictly legitimate. The prize is 1000 rupees or approximately \$13 U.S. Now it may surprise you that I am personally going to put up the prize money. I have in my hands 1000 rupees. Would somebody like to come up and examine the money? Yes, it's real. This is a completely honest game. And to demonstrate that it is legitimate, I will give the prize money to our Banker for safekeeping. Now, the agreement we have is that the banker will guard the money and will give whoever wins the Christian lottery the entire amount. If we have multiple winners, he will split the prize money equally among them. However, if there is no winner, the banker will not only return my prize money, but will also give me the money that all the players used to buy their chances (tickets). Fair enough?

Slide 27 **The "Christian" Lottery:** before we play, let's review the rules of the game. If you play the Christian lottery it will only cost you one rupee to play. If you win, you will win 1000 rupees. If you lose, you have only lost one small rupee. This is a completely honest game which is being brokered by completely honest banker.

Slide 28 **Who wants to play?:** OK who wants to play the Christian lottery? Its fun, its easy and everyone can afford to play. You can buy a ticket for just one rupee so don't be a tightwad. And remember if you don't play you can't win. This could be your lucky day so show me your money!

At this point, ask all people who wish to play to give their money to the banker. Ask the banker to write down the name of each player. (In the interest of time, you might want to limit the number of players to the first 10 or 12 who express interest).

Slide 29 **THE "CHRISTIAN" LOTTERY:** this lottery is similar to most national lotteries including the Indian Lotto. It consists of picking six numbers. If you get all six numbers correct, you win 1000 rupees. But, if you get any of the numbers wrong you lose. So those of you who are playing I would like for you to make six rows and label the rows A through F.

- In row A, you must write down a number between one and 70
- In row B, write down a number between one and 1000
- In row C, write down a either one or two
- In row D, write down a number between one and forty
- In row E, write down a number between one and nine
- In row F, write down a number between one and six.

(Allow everyone time to write down their numbers).

Is everybody ready? OK let's turn in your numbers to the banker. Be sure your name is on your piece of paper. (Important: make sure all bets have been placed with the banker, including each player's numbers. Then, have the banker read the numbers out loud so you can write the down on a white board. Do this before you go to the next slide).

Slide 30 **Here are the winning numbers!:** OK here are the winning numbers. Before class began, I selected the six winning numbers using a random number generator on my smart phone. I saved the numbers in my memo app and here they are. I will ask the banker to read the winning combination of numbers.

(There will likely be no winners. It is unusual for anyone to make it past the second round or row B). Note: Slides 31-34 are optional and may be skipped if there is insufficient time to play a second time.

Slide 31 **OK. That was just a warm-up. Now let's play for big money:** OK, that was just a warm-up. Now we will play for some really big money. I'm going to raise the reward by 10 times. This time if you win the prize will be 10,000 rupees.

Slide 32 **OK, let's play for Rs 10,000:** show me your money. Who would like to play for 10,000 rupees?

Slide 33 **THE "CHRISTIAN" LOTTERY:** the game is the same as before. You need to pick six numbers. Remember, the winning numbers have been completely selected at random so they

could be the same numbers that you originally picked; some of them could be the same ones you picked earlier; or they all could be completely different. You have to decide. Once again, turn your bets into the banker with your name on it. (Allow everyone time to write down their numbers)

(Important: make sure all bets have been placed with the banker, including each player's numbers. Then, have the banker read the numbers out loud so you can write the down on a white board. Do this before you go to the next slide).

Slide 34 **Winning numbers for lottery 2:** here are the winning numbers for lottery 2. Let's see if we have a winner. Mr. Banker would you like to come up to the front of the room and read the winning numbers for lottery 2. (Write them on the board as before).

Slide 35 **Deceptiveness of greed:** unfortunately for you, there were no winners of either lottery. And I am happy to report that I earned quite a few rupees this past hour. Thank you very much—you are a very generous class. Did everybody have a good time? OK, good.

Let's step back and look at the practical and spiritual dimensions of our little game. We're going to generalize it so that the principles we learn can apply to any game of chance.

I've entitled this slide the "Deceptiveness of Greed". What was astonishing to me was that no one asked me before they gave away their hard-earned money "what were the chances of winning?" The game you played had about the same chances of winning as the Indian Lotto or roughly 1 in 302,400,000. These odds are extremely unfavorable to the gambler. For example, according to one website, your chances of getting hit by lightning in the US in a given year is one in 300,000 or about a million times greater than your winning this game. Your chances of being killed by a falling meteorite are one in 700,000, or about 0.5 million times greater than winning the game you just played. In other words, you had no realistic chance of winning and you wasted the money that you paid to buy a ticket.

Slide 36 **1 in 300,000,000:** What is one chance in 302,400,000? (We'll make it an even 300,000,000 for simplicity).

Imagine a classroom with 70 Bibles in it. Suppose each Bible has 1000 pages, with 2 columns per page, 40 rows per column, 9 words per row, and 6 letters per word. Now further suppose, at random and without your knowledge, I circled a specific letter in a specific word in a specific row in a specific column on a specific page in a specific Bible. In order to win this lottery, you would need to have guessed the exact location of the circled letter! I submit no rational person would believe he would ever guess the chosen letter.

Slide 37 **How long would 300M Rs100 notes be?:** Here is another way of visualizing your chances of winning the Indian lottery. Further suppose you wrote down a number somewhere between 1 and 300,000,000. Further suppose, 300,000,000 million 100 rupee notes had serial numbers sequentially from 1 to 300,000,000. Suppose they were all mixed up and laid end-end. How long would that line be? Answer: 28,800 miles, or more than enough to circle the earth at the equator. Now imagine walking around the earth at the equator and picking up one of the

notes. Would you expect the serial number on the note to match the number you selected? Of course not. You would be foolish to waste your time doing that.

Here is still a different way of visualizing your chances of winning: Suppose 300,000,000 serialized 100 rupee notes were gathered, shuffled and sent up in a gigantic balloon. At 100,000 ft, the balloon burst, scattering the 300 million notes over an area the size of India. Blind-folded, you are led around the country and somewhere during your journey you randomly pick up one of the notes. Would you expect the number on the note to match the number you selected? The only realistic answer is once again “NO”.

Slide 38 **The alluring deception:** the reason lotteries are successful is because the promoters use clever logic and half-truths to entice millions of people to play. They say somebody will win and it could be you. This is a true statement. Then, when you consider that prospect, you see yourself winning the lottery. Oh, what a glorious day!! So, because the tickets are cheap, you play hoping against hope that yours is the winning ticket.

Well, that’s partially true but you could say, since you might get hit by a falling meteor, you should always wear a helmet. Nobody would do that because they know that the odds are infinitesimal that it would happen to them. But when you buy a ticket, for some strange reason you think that suddenly impossible odds are going to work in your favor.

Or they might say “if you don’t play you can’t win”. Of course, that’s also true. But, because of the low odds in your favor, you might as well not play. My former pastor had a wonderful saying. He said that your chances of winning the lottery are about the same whether you play or don’t play. They are infinitesimal on the one hand and zero on the other hand.

The other thing that promoters of lotteries will say is that the tickets are so cheap that you can’t afford not to apply. What do you have to lose--after all what are a few rupees? But we’ve already seen that the money was wasted, so you might as well have burned it. And no one in his right mind would dare to do that because it would be an insult to all poor people.

Slide 39 **The practical truth:** the practical truth is this, and in my opinion here is a realistic way to look at it: you should say to yourself “somebody will eventually win the lottery but it won’t be me”. OK, lets all say this together as a class: somebody will eventually win the lottery but it won’t be me. And since you are sure you won’t win, you will save your precious rupees for something worthwhile, correct?

From a spiritual perspective I want to trust God that extremely rare events will not happen to me. I want him to guard my life because extremely rare, random events are usually bad. So, I don’t want him to think that I enjoy invoking 300,000,000 to 1 odds in favor of myself. That is just a personal opinion and you might see it differently but I would prefer that extremely rare, random events did not happen to me or my loved ones unless directly by almighty God himself, for he loves me and knows what is best for me. His ways are perfect. The events of my life are in his hands.

Slide 40 **The folly of gambling:** OK let’s summarize what we have learned in this object lesson about greed.

- One of the main ideas of this segment is that playing the lottery is foolish. For all practical purposes you're sure to lose your money--all of it. You might have more fun by just burning it.
- Secondly, we know from experience that the allure of gambling can become addictive and some of you know people who have been ruined by this addiction.
- Thirdly, there's a moral issue with gambling and that is we're trying to enrich ourselves at someone else's expense. You're hoping that you are the winner which means that you are also hoping that everybody else is a loser. This might be OK in a friendly competition but when there's money involved, it's more serious. Studies have shown that it is the poor who tend to play the lottery hoping to get rich. Therefore, if you hope to win, you are by definition hoping that many poor people lose. This is the opposite of the concept of love for the poor.
- Fourthly, a get-rich-quick attitude is discouraged in Scripture.
- Finally, gambling may be a sign of greed, a lack of trust in God's provision, an ungrateful heart, or just plain foolishness.

So let me take a quick poll. How many are convinced that games of chance requiring the expenditure of money is not a practice that a Christian should engage in? Excellent, I think that is unanimous!!

Slide 41 **The folly of gambling:** let's read it a couple of verses in Scripture that address the idea of "get-rich-quick" schemes such as gambling. Let's read Proverbs 13:11 and Proverbs 28:22

At the beginning of this module I said this was a Christian lottery. So it would be quite wrong of me to take advantage of you and keep your money. I knew before we started that no one would win and so I had an unfair advantage. Besides, why would I want to keep gambling proceeds when I've spent the last hour talking about the folly of gambling? So I'm giving all of your money back to the banker who will distribute it to each of you appropriately.

Slide 42: **Quiz**

Slide 43 **Debt—a heavy load to carry:** we've looked at gambling which is a foolish way of trying to get money. Let's now examine the practice of borrowing money, or going into debt, which I believe is an unwise way of getting money. By going into debt, you burden yourself with a heavy load to carry.

Slide 44 **The Bible discourages indebtedness:** the Bible discourages going into debt because it's a form of slavery. By borrowing money from someone, we are volunteering to become his servant. The lender now has some degree of control over our finances. They are no longer ours to do with as we please. The Bible encourages us to be free from all temporal burdens so that we can be slaves to Christ.

Slide 45 **It's best not to owe anything to anyone:** I believe the Bible teaches that it's best not to be obligated to others except to love them. Therefore, I encourage everyone taking this class to try to live a debt-free life. I must confess that I have borrowed money a three times in my life. If I'm honest with myself in retrospect, I believe I know what my motives were at the time of each

loan. Two were because of impatience and the other one was due to greed. Here is what happened.

The first time was when I was in college. I was largely supporting myself through school. When my scholarship ran out, I became short of money for tuition, fees, and other expenses. Instead of leaving school and patiently going to work to save money for the next semester (known as a work-study program), it was convenient to borrow the money I needed to stay in school. When I graduated and began my career, we pay off this student loan in short order.

When I first began my career at Hewlett Packard, I started getting good-sized paychecks and the eyes of my desire began to grow big. My wife and I had a car but it was old and needed repairs. I learned that because of my salary I could buy a new car with a small down payment. I went ahead and borrow the money needed to buy the car but because of my upbringing I really had no peace. So, once again we used every spare dollar to pay off the loan and by God's grace we did it in very short order. That was the last time I borrowed money on an automobile purchase. The third. I borrowed money to buy a house as an investment, violating another one of the fundamental rules of Christian financial counselling. By God's grace all the loans were paid off without serious consequences, but the situation could have been very different. As you know, economic conditions and our personal situation can change very quickly, and I could have been in real financial trouble. Let's read Romans 13:8 together. It says that our obligation to love others is the only debt that we should owe.

Slide 46 **Borrowing money is like skating on thin ice:** the trouble I could have gotten into by borrowing money is illustrated by the cartoon on the slide. I think as a general rule borrowing money is like skating on thin ice. One problem is that when we borrow money we run the risk of not being able to repay it. If we don't repay what we have borrowed, it's like stealing from the lender and that is a form of wickedness. When we declare bankruptcy, the bank is not the only one who gets hurt but it is the people who put their money into a savings account which was used as the means of lending us the money. And just because the bank may have insurance to cover those who default on their loan doesn't really let us off the hook. The insurance premiums that the bank pays to cover people who default must be passed on to its customers.

Slide 47 **Debt is dangerous and discouraged in Scripture:** These next two slides summarize some of the issues with going into debt.

- though the Bible discourages going into debt, I don't believe Scriptures teach that borrowing money is evil. But I do believe that it is unwise if at all avoidable and can even be dangerous and lead to sin if we don't repay it.
- Perhaps the biggest problem we face when we borrow money is the risk that we might not be able to repay. After all we borrow because we are short of money. But now we have to repay the loan and we soon find that we're in worse trouble than before. We still don't have enough money to meet our needs, but now we also have to pay back the debt. So as we read in Psalm 37:21, we are in danger of committing the sin of not repaying our loan.
- when we borrow, we must realize that instead of making us prosperous and more secure, it actually puts us on more dangerous footing which could lead to bankruptcy.

- the spiritual problem with borrowing money is that it presumes upon the future because now we are expecting God to provide the money to repay it.
- It could be that the need to borrow could be a sign that God is saying “no” or possibly “wait”.

Slide 48: **The dangers of debt (cont’d)**

- sometimes the need to borrow is a reflection of poor planning, impatience or greed.
- It may rob us of experiencing God’s miraculous provision of our needs. A former pastor of mine named Don Leigh said that if we are too quick to borrow our way out of trouble or when we are short of funds, we deprive God of providing for us in amazing ways.
- If we have to borrow especially for items that we need it may mean that we are living beyond our means. The only viable solution is to increase our income or to reduce our standard of living.
- The last point is one of the most damaging aspects of borrowing money. Ron Blue said that by going into debt today we are always punished with a lower standard of living in the future. Though we may have the specific object we wanted, our overall lifestyle will suffer. I can explain this with a simple illustration.

Slide 49 **Debt inflicts punishment on the borrower:** consider Isaac. Isaac earns RS 4000 rupees per month and has not saved any money, even though he could have with a little foresight, planning and discipline. Every month his income and his outgo are equal. Tony may think that he is living the good life but in fact he is living on the edge of impending hardship. Any sudden crisis that may visit him is going to cause financial havoc. We empathize with the poor family who barely gets by in spite of working hard and spending money frugally. But it is frustrating when people like Tony who could save don’t. They are practicing what Ron Blue calls a “consumptive lifestyle”. If they have a little left over at the end of the month, instead of saving it for future needs, they spend it, often for poor reasons. So our friend Tony sees a bicycle that he would like to have and it’s a good value at 14400 rupees. He can’t resist its beauty, so he borrows the money and signs papers obligating him to repay the loan at Rs400.00 per month for 36 months (we are ignoring interest he must pay, which could be sizable). Not fully realizing the consequences of his decision, Isaac rides away on his shiny new bicycle with pride in his heart and a smile on his face.

The harsh reality is that Isaac has been spending 4000 rupees a month on his lifestyle and suddenly he now has to immediately reduce his spending by Rs400.00/month in order to service the debt that he just incurred--not for just a few months but for the next three years! He must reduce his standard of living in order to repay the loan. And he will likely have to reduce his lifestyle by more than Rs400/mo because he will undoubtedly need tires, maintenance, and repairs during the next three years. These additional expenses are all new and in addition to what he has been spending.

Slide 50: **Question for discussion:** what would be a better way for Isaac to acquire the motor scooter?

Slide 51 **Question for discussion:** of course, the answer is that it would be better for him to avoid foolishly spending all of his salary and instead create some surplus each month and save it,

building up his nest-egg. When he has enough in savings to purchase the bicycler, he can buy it with cash. His standard of living will remain the same, he is spending his money wisely, he has no debt, and now he has some really cool transportation. He is reaping the benefits of the small sacrifices he made each month by denying himself some unneeded, frivolous things or transitory pleasures.

Slide 52 **Debt sometimes may be necessary or justified:** If someone has not practiced saving money, situations may arise which require borrowing money.

- As I mentioned earlier, we all have unforeseen emergencies in our lives. Suppose we have a medical emergency where the choice is to either forego medical treatment or borrow money to pay for it. Even for people who use their income wisely and save their money, circumstances can easily arise that consume all of their savings, and more. I think as compassionate people we would all be sympathetic to someone who found themselves in this situation.
- Another possible reason for going into debt would be to intentionally give to the Lord's work sacrificially. This should be done only after considerable prayer and a sober understanding of what the consequences of taking out such a loan would be. Over 50 years ago, there were six families who comprised the group of people that established my home church in Colorado Springs. They were given a parcel of land for a new church. Each family made the decision to borrow against their home equity in order to raise the money to construct the first phase of the building. I am not recommending that this is a good idea but they felt led to do it that way. Of course, their decision meant reducing their standard of living so they could repay their loans. Or perhaps they diverted money they were regularly saving to pay off their new mortgage.
- In the U.S. another common reason for borrowing money is for the purchase of a home. Most Christian financial advisers that I am aware of condone this type of borrowing because one's home is typically an appreciating asset. In normal times home values increase over time. When a home is mortgaged, the value of the home itself becomes assurance that the loan can be repaid. In the example given of church families mortgaging their homes to build the church, all parties are in a reasonably sound position. The bank that made the loan is protected by the house itself as collateral, the family who took out the loan has a reasonable assurance of repaying the loan, and in the process, the church is blessed.
- There are many financial advisers who condone debt as a way of gaining financial leverage. It's quite possible, and it happens all the time, that businesses borrow money in order to achieve a higher growth rate. It can be shown pragmatically that high growth rates are possible using this strategy. But I believe God's best is for his people to finance their own growth, rather than use someone else's money to achieve that goal. Nevertheless, going into debt is a way to be successful financially provided all of the circumstances surrounding that activity remains favorable until the debt is repaid.

Slide 53 **Compassion for the poor:** One of the most heart-wrenching reasons to borrow is when the poor have emergencies. We empathize with a poor person who has little opportunity to save. They live hand-to-mouth and trust God for their daily bread. When emergencies arise, they often have no recourse but to borrow to pay their bills. This of course puts them into a worse situation



than before, and their struggle continues. We'll see in a future module the blessings that we can have when we help the poor.

Slide 54 **Debt repayment:** If someone decides to borrow, there are three principles to follow:

- Borrow as little as possible, limiting the amount of the loan to cover the emergency
- Secondly, negotiate as low an interest rate as possible in order to minimize the extra charges caused by the interest
- Thirdly, pay off the debt as quickly as possible, again to minimize the interest charges and to get your life back to an even keel.

Above all, don't use the need to borrow as an excuse to over-borrow in order to have a little extra cash to increase your lifestyle.

Slide 55 **If borrowing money is not God's preference for us, what is his preference?:**

Slide 56 **God wants us to be lenders, not borrowers:** God wanted his chosen people to be lenders, not borrowers. While they were living obediently within his laws, he prospered them and they were able to loan money to outsiders. When they were disobedient their economic situation reversed and they became borrowers. And we've already seen that the borrower becomes a slave to the lender. I hope it's clear that it is much better if we can save a little of our earnings so that we can loan money to ourselves first, and to banks second.

Slide 57 **Lending money can be good or it can be costly:** let's look at two forms of lending money to others. We can lend money to a business or bank. This is a righteous and good way to earn money. We can also lend money to an individual. This is not necessarily unwise, but it can be a dangerous thing to do.

Slide 58 **Charging rent on money loaned to a bank or business is righteous:** when we have a surplus of money, we can choose to save that money by depositing it in a bank or lending it to a business.

- In both cases, if the entity borrowing to our money has a reasonable expectation of earning a profit from that in addition to repaying us, the lender.
- When we lend money to a bank, it is called a savings account. The bank pays us interest on our loan to them, and in turn they lend our money to their borrowers and charge them even more interest to repay us, cover their expenses and make a profit.
- When we lend money to a commercial business it's called purchasing a bond. The business uses the loan to expand their company and increase their profits.

Slide 59 **If we lend money to the bank, reasonable rent on the money (interest rate) is expected and justified:** everyone is familiar with the concept of rental property. If we have a house we can loan it to others and charge them rent to use it. In the same way, if we have money and loan it to the bank, we charge the bank rent for their use of it. It's called "earning interest" but it's really renting out our money. When we deposit money, it becomes a business transaction between ourselves as lenders and the bank as borrowers. The borrower (renter) expects to pay for

the benefits he receives, and the lender is justified in charging for the use of his assets. Matthew 25 tells of the worthless servant who put the master's money in the ground. You'll recall that the master said to that lazy servant that at least he should have put his money in the banks so that it would have earned some interest. It is my belief that lending our assets and charging rent for their use is a righteous principle of commerce.

Slide 60 **Lending money to others can be costly**: let's turn our attention to lending money to other individuals. We have already seen that it is dangerous and usually unwise for an individual to borrow money. Therefore, we must be extremely careful when someone asks us for a loan. But if you want to play the role of a bank, that is your privilege. In that case, you should use the same process to qualify the borrower as a bank would. This suggestion is probably impractical to actually do, because oftentimes the borrower is a friend or relative. We would be reluctant to ask them to go through the same loan qualifying process that a bank would require. It's also likely that they would not qualify for a loan from the bank, or they would have already done so.

Here are four recommendations if you're considering loaning money to a friend or relative:

- first, my personal recommendation is that when someone asks to borrow your money, refer them right back to the bank. Politely say that you have already loaned your spare money to the bank, but they are welcome to go to the bank and borrow your savings from them. It is then the bank's responsibility to take reasonable precautions to make sure that the borrower can repay the loan. They are professionals at it. Let them do it. If your friend cannot qualify for a loan from the bank then why would you want to override the bank's denial and approve him for a loan?
- secondly, if you do decide to loan money to someone whom you honestly believe will repay you, make sure the terms are in writing and have them sign an IOU which may give you some legal protection should they fail to repay.
- Thirdly, understand that if you lend money to a friend, you may lose that friendship sometime during the repayment period. My father's best friend from childhood went into business with my father but they eventually became estranged from each other over money issues.
- Fourthly, my recommendation is that if you loan money to a friend, make sure it is money that you can do without—permanently. The next slide explains the reasoning for this recommendation.

Slide 61 **What if the borrower later becomes destitute and unable to repay?:** let's now consider the case where you, in good faith, make a personal loan to someone who was unable to qualify at a bank so they came to you. Later, he becomes even worse off than before and is therefore unable to repay you. What course of action should you take?

Remember in the previous slide I recommended that you not loan money that you could not afford to lose. And now the situation has arisen where the borrower cannot repay and you may indeed lose your money. What are your options in this case? One option is that you can take legal action against the borrower. But that is not a good option if the borrower is a friend, because you may lose that friendship. If the borrower is a Christian brother, your hands are tied because we know we are not to take our brother to court. Perhaps you could take the matter to

the church and see if they will render a decision. But another option is to forgive the debtor, especially if it is a Christian brother. Remember, it was money that you could afford to lose.

Slide 62-63 **Forgiving our debtors:** Rather than lose a friend, and make his life even more difficult by insisting on repayment, why not follow the example that Jesus gave in Matthew 18. Let's read this story together.

Slide 64 **Forgiving our debtors:** the lessons from this passage are very clear. Out of gratitude for the impossible debt we owed to God but who through Christ has forgiven us, we should forgive those who are indebted to us and who cannot repay. There may be those who will be able to repay in the future. If that's the case we should make accommodation for them to help them get on their feet. We could let them know there is no fixed due date but whenever they have the extra resources to repay us then that will be fine. Or you could set up some deferred repayment plan with them. But I believe God is pleased when we forgive the debts of our debtors, especially those are poor.

If you loaned money that you knew you would eventually need, then when you forgive your debtor I believe it is a sacrifice pleasing to God.

Slide 65 **Lend money without interest to Christian brothers or poor people who are in need:** that leads to the next principle. If you do lend money to your Christian brothers or poor people who are in need, consider charging them no interest. The scriptural basis behind this practice is found in several places: let's read exodus 22:25, Nehemiah 5:6-7, and psalm 15: 5.

Slide 66 **Better than making a loan to the poor is to happily give them the money to meet their need:** here is a suggestion that I feel is the best course of action when we are talking about making loans to our Christian brothers, especially if they are poor: it may be better to happily give them the money than to make a loan to them. And if they do wish to repay, consider putting the money into a blessings fund to meet a future need. We will be discussing the concept of a blessings fund later.

Slide 67: **questions for discussion**

- A. Give an example of justifiable borrowing of money
- B. What would have been required to make the borrowing unnecessary?
- C. What was given up in order to repay the loan?
- D. Looking back, was going into debt worth it?

What advice would you give your son or daughter who is considering debt? Your friend?

Slide 68 **The Bible warns against co-signing for a loan:** let's talk about cosigning. Cosigning is the act of acquiring the financial obligation of another person. A person who co-signs a loan is guaranteeing that he will repay the loan if the borrower is unable or unwilling to repay or defaults for some reason. The cosigner has the same obligation of repayment as the borrower. The implication of cosigning is clear: don't cosign unless you are willing to pay back the loan yourself.

Co-signing may be unadvisable for another reason. Apparently, the borrower had difficulty qualifying for a loan. An institutional lender such as a bank decided that the borrower was unqualified on his own merits. So why would you want to override the judgment of the bank and approve the borrower for a loan yourself? It is asking for trouble. I believe cosigning for a loan is not recommended, even for family members. Encourage the family member to either save for the purchase or to qualify for the loan himself. That would encourage personal responsibility and avoid the types of problems that family members can get into when there are disputes about money.

If you really want to cosign for somebody who cannot qualify for a loan on their own merits, why not just give them the money or loan it to them and ask them to repay you when it is convenient for them?

Slide 69 **Obtaining money**: We have looked at two of the three ways of obtaining money. We first looked at righteous ways of obtaining money, both actively and passively. Next, we looked at foolish and unwise ways of obtaining money through gambling and borrowing, respectively. Now we will briefly consider the third way of obtaining money and that is by unrighteous means. We do this only for completeness because for Christians this method of obtaining money is not an option.

Slide 70 **Obtaining money by evil means**: we will briefly consider obtaining money by evil means.

Slide 71 **Evil ways of obtaining money**: here is a partial list of ways of acquiring money that Christians should never be found doing. The first three—stealing, violence and dishonesty--are non-controversial and generally agreed upon by everyone. But the last two-- that is greed and religious deception--are more subtle. We need to be aware of these methods in order to protect ourselves. And we need to guard against being caught up in these practices.

Slide 72-74: **Quiz**

## **Part II. Disbursing money**

Slide 75 **Practice Biblical principles of money management**: that concludes our examination of the various ways of obtaining money. We will now consider Part II: disbursing money.

Slide 76 **Money talks**: our former Pastor, Brian Kluth, had a saying that money talks-- it says bye-bye. We've all experienced how quickly money can disappear. It should be our desire to manage our hard-earned money in such a way that we get the most benefit from it. If after all, it really is God's money and we have a responsibility to steward it properly So, let's look at Biblical wisdom concerning the disbursement of money.

Slide 77 **Methods of disbursing money**: there are several methods of disbursing money.

- The most common way is to spend it. Spending money falls into two categories: we can spend it responsibly or irresponsibly.
- We can waste it
- give it away

- lose or destroy it
- have it stolen.
- One of the most subtle ways of disbursing our money with no benefit to us is through inflation. Inflation may be simply defined as the loss of purchasing power of our money over time. It costs a certain amount of money to buy a loaf of bread today. But because of inflation, that same loaf of bread will cost more in the future. There's no benefit to us; it's the same loaf of bread. But because of inflation it will cost more than it did before. Inflation has reduced the purchasing power of our money.
- We can also set aside our money for a future need by investing it or depositing it in a savings account

Slide 78 **Disbursing money in a controlled manner may require establishing a budget:** let's first look at dispersing our money responsibly. To do so may require a budget. The budget is necessary because first of all we don't want to waste our money and secondly, for most people, money is a scarce commodity. There are more things that we need or want than we have the money for. We must prioritize. The tool for prioritizing or controlling our spending is called a budget.

### **Part III: Budgeting and creating margin**

Slide 79 **Practice Biblical principles of money management:** let's spend a few minutes talking about a budget and the concept of creating margin. We won't spend too much time on margin now because we will cover this subject in greater detail in a later module.

Slide 80 **The budget:** a budget is a plan for controlling our spending. It usually is done in writing. The budget is a document that is developed between a husband and wife. It usually consists of broad spending categories (with some of them in great detail) and specifies how their income will be disbursed from the time they receive a paycheck until they receive their next paycheck.

Slide 81 **The Biblical basis for budgeting:** because a budget is a planning tool for managing our money and our premise is that God cares how we manage our money, then it is my assertion that the concept of budgeting has a Biblical basis. I will defend this assertion in the next few slides.

Slide 82: **God is a planner:** He has a plan for us that he put in place before the creation of the world. It's clear from his nature that he is a planner. He prepares for future droughts by storing up moisture. He prepares our food supply for the winter by sending us the harvest.

Slide 83 **God is a planner:** God also demonstrates that he is a planner by managing his property well. We see that in nature. Everything is in balance and left untouched by man, nature regains its balance when perturbations occur. Let's read first Chronicles 29:11-12.

Slide 84 **Godly (wise) men plan:** the Bible encourages us to plan. Consider the passage in Luke 14 vs. 28-30. Let's read them together. We also have the promise of Proverbs 16:3. So we see that God is a planner, that he has designed nature to prepare for the future, and he encourages us as humans to plan. Of course the most important thing we can plan for is our eternal future.

Another cut a of the most important areas that we humans need to plan for is in the area of our finances.

Slide 85 **Budget basics:** So let's get back to the planning tool for our finances, the budget--and take a closer look. A budget can be segmented into five categories.

- The first is taxes; that is, that portion of our income confiscated by the Federal gov't. Since we have no choice in the matter, we must humbly realize that we do not really get to keep all that we earn if we are subject to government taxes.
- Secondly, there is that portion of our finances that we give to the Lord's work. We will look it that more closely in the next module.
- Thirdly, there is the category of debt repayment. We already looked at that subject and suggested that borrowing is an unwise way of acquiring money. Nevertheless, we realize that there are some who go into debt. Debt repayment is an obligation that must be discharged. That is why it is high on the list. As Christians we must repay our debts or we emulate the wicked.
- Fourthly, there are our monthly living expenses. This is what we normally think of when we think of a budget. We are identifying the various monthly living expenses that we have and how to allocate our scarce resources among them.
- Last but not least there is what we call margin. That is the amount left over after we have taken care of the first four categories. It is extremely important to create because it is the vehicle that provides for future needs and opportunities.

Slide 86 **6 characteristics of a successful budget:** let's consider six characteristics of a successful budget.

- First, we've already seen that it's a tool for the steward to manage God's resources responsibly.
- Secondly, it requires us to balance present and future possible expenditures.
- Thirdly, a budget requires Godly wisdom. As stewards we want to know God's plan for the resources that he has entrusted to us. We should make establishing our budget a matter of prayer.
- Because it is a management tool for controlling our spending, it brings order into our lives.
- As all of us who have tried to live on a budget can attest that it takes discipline to maintain.
- Finally, successful budgeting requires that it be relevant to our lives on a real time basis. Therefore, it should be periodically reviewed and changed if our circumstances warrant it.

Slide 87 **Three realities of a budget:** let's look at three realities of a budget.

- Ron Blue states that there are no independent financial decisions. Every dollar spent on one thing eliminates it for all other options. That dollar is gone forever.
- And because the dollar is gone forever, we need to have a long-range perspective when we establish a budget. The longer the horizon, the better the decision.

- Said another way, spending decisions today have lifetime implications.

A budget is really about controlling our cash flow. It's establishing a plan to get the greatest value out of our money. And it implies that we need to have a long-term perspective when we go about establishing a budget.

Slide 88 **A secret to successful budgeting:** let's review. A successful budget is a plan to control our cash flow.

- it requires a non-consumptive attitude, knowledge, discipline and planning.
- In order to have a successful budget, we must avoid making impulsive decisions that deviate from it. If we need to change our budget, do it thoughtfully and carefully.
- The husband and wife share the responsibility of developing and abiding by a budget.
- Many Christian advisers suggest using a control system of some type such as ledgers, an envelope system, etc.
- Here's an important point: if you're having trouble sticking to a budget and the problem area is unwise use of credit cards, get rid of them and go to a cash basis. Ron Blue states that on average those who don't use credit cards spend 30% less than those who do. Regardless of the exact percentage, credit cards can be a danger to overspend, or to spend on things that are not in the budget. Therefore, they need to be managed very carefully. If you do use credit cards, pay off the balance each month to avoid interest charges and having the balance get out of control.

Slide to 89 **Controlling our cash flow:** this next point is a secret to long-term financial success:

- consider maintaining your present standard of living even if your income increases. It is something my wife and I began practicing early in our marriage. Let me illustrate this concept. When you are young or recently married, it's likely that your income is modest and that even with a budget you will not be able to save very much each month. And that was true of my wife and I during the early years of our marriage. The demands of setting up a household, caring for children, and the concerns of life used up most of our income. We usually were able to create margin, but in the early years it was small. Then as my experience increased, my value to my employer also rose and so did my income. Now the tendency with most young families is that as their income increases, their desire to increase their standard of living also increases. Consequently, so does their budget. As in the early years, their ability to save money at the end of each month by creating margin is minimal. The years fly by and because they chose to live the good life they never develop a substantial savings account or have an investment portfolio.

Julie and I decided to maintain our standard of living as our income increased. We ate the same food, wore the same clothes, lived in the same type of housing, and spent about the same money on recreation and entertainment. Thus, our expenses remained fairly stable even though our income rose. We did experience some improvements to our lifestyle and we had children to raise. So our expenses did go up but much more slowly than our income. That allowed us to have increasingly greater margin which we saved. Over the years our savings account grew into a nice nest egg, allowing us to take advantage of opportunities for increasing our lifestyle, investing in a business, and giving

special gifts to the Lord's work. My dad encouraged me when I was young to try to live on half of my income and save the rest. That was good advice, although I probably did not achieve it exactly. But I did try to follow that principle of spending less than I made. And the Lord has blessed our finances along the way.

- If for some reason our income decreases we must be willing to lower our standard of living. The trap that many people fall into is that when their income goes down, they have a hard time lowering their standard of living and therefore they have to borrow the money to make up the shortfall. This can be a vicious cycle leading to dangerous debt and major financial problems.
- Finally realize that the budget is not our master but is just a plan. A well thought out budget is a good plan for financial health, so it should be observed and followed. But if God presents you with a different plan for your life, be willing to adjust your budget accordingly.

The slide 90 **Budgeted expenses: four time periods to consider**: budgets need to do more than allocate expenses for the current month. A large portion of the budget needs to be set aside for future expenses. In this seminar, we call that surplus "margin". Margin is something we will discuss in more detail later. For the purposes of this slide please realize that a budget really must consider four time periods.

- First of course you need to provide for your monthly living expenses.
- But there are occasional short term expenses such as the holiday;
- Occasional mid term expenses such as replacing worn out shoes
- and occasional long-term expenses such as providing for your children's education

These four time periods need to be provided for out of your monthly income. The relative amounts you need to allocate for each time period depends on your stage in life, your particular values and interests, and other factors.

Slide 91 **5 steps to follow in managing our budget**: it's human nature to deal with our own immediate needs and concerns rather than outside obligations and future needs. So, here's a suggestion for successful budget management. Administer it in reverse order from what may seem intuitive, providing for your monthly needs last, after you have provided for the other four elements of a budget. That is,

- First, set aside money out of your income that belongs to the government. We all must pay our taxes. That portion of our income does not belong to us, it has been confiscated by the Federal government. We don't want to set aside this money last but rather first.
- Secondly, set aside money that you have committed to giving to the Lord's work. We call that our tithe, our charitable contribution, or our giving commitment. But again we don't want to wait until the end of the month to set that money aside or we may find that it is not there.
- Thirdly, set aside money needed to repay your loans if you have any. This is listed after setting aside money for our giving because we should not let the borrowing the money in our fair with our commitment to God.



- Fourthly, set aside your margin; money from your paycheck that you have decided to save for future needs. If you save for the future before you spend on the present, you'll build a nest-egg, you will experience future financial rewards, but and your need to borrow will be minimized.
- Finally, after you have set aside money needed for the first four categories, you start your spending for the month.

Here's another suggestion: if the thought of designing and administering a budget is too cumbersome for you, try to live on 50 to 90% of your net income, which is the amount you have after setting aside money for your taxes, contributions, debt repayment, in margin. That is what Julie and I have done over most of our lives. It is another way to provide for future needs and opportunities without the discipline or inconvenience of accounting for every rupee. The danger is that without a budget you will spend money needlessly, so developing and living by a budget is a much better method for managing your money. But this could be an alternative practice for those of you that are "administratively challenged".

Slide 92 **Avoid becoming obsessed with money:** Living by a budget, honoring the Lord with our tithes, paying our taxes, repaying our debt, and saving for future needs and obligations are all good things. But we must be careful to avoid becoming obsessed with money. It is not money that saves us or preserves our lives. It is not money that provides for us. Money is only a tool and it must be placed in the hands of our Lord. God is our provider, not our banker. God wants us to trust him for our future needs. If he allows us to save for future obligations that we know will be coming our way, then that is a blessing. If he allows us to save some of our income to bless others, then we will thank him. But realize there are many people in this world who barely gets by despite discipline and frugality. They have to trust the Lord to provide for them and so should every believer, even those who don't need all of their income to live on a daily basis.

Slide 93: **Discussion questions**

Slide 94: **Team assignment**

#### **Part IV: Saving money**

Slide 95 **Practice Biblical principles of money management:** so far in this module we have looked at the topics of a obtaining money, dispersing money, and budgeting. Let's not take a closer look at saving money.

Slide 96 **Saving money:** saving money can be defined as the process of storing up margin on a regular basis for the purpose of meeting future needs and providing for future opportunities.

Slide 97 **Saving money: A brief overview:** let's look at the idea of saving money from a conceptual level.

- Saving money requires the creation of margin through the budgeting process.
- Conceptually, in order to create margin we must spend less than we receive.
- It means sacrificing short term pleasure and perhaps redefining what we mean by our current needs for the sake of providing for our future.

- Creating margin requires living below our means.
- When we create margin on a regular basis, we build a savings account.

Slide 98 – 103: **Examples of savings in nature**

Slide 104 **Biblical examples:** let's look at three examples from Scripture of saving for the future.

Slide 105 **Building a tower:** The Scripture clearly states that before we embark on a venture that requires considerable financial resources, we should have them in place before we begin. Let's read Luke 14:28 – 30.

Slide 106 **The widow's oil:** the story of Elisha and the poor widow illustrates the value of saving. After she demonstrated faith and obedience, God supplied a surplus of oil which she then sold to meet her current needs as well as future needs.

Slide 107 **Joseph:** perhaps the most well-known example of saving for the future is found in Genesis 37 to 50. We will not read this account in class because you know it well. This is the story of Joseph being called by God to save both Egypt and Israel during an extended period of severe famine.

Slide 108 **Uses of a savings account:** there are many important and even wonderful uses of accumulated margin (savings). Here is a partial list.

- Significant gifts to the Lord's work is intentionally at the top of the list. It may not be the first thing you do with your savings, but it might be one of the most important things. So, a savings account can be used to fund kingdom projects.
- Secondly, a savings account is a kind of defense against job losses, major illnesses, accidents, and other emergencies.
- Thirdly, it is also a mechanism for funding large purchases, future education, starting a business, or replacements of worn out, lost, or stolen merchandise. Things wear out and unless you have saved for their replacement, you may not be able to do it in a timely fashion or without going into debt.

Slide 109 **Saving is different from hoarding:** when we talk about building a savings account, we're not talking about doing it to excess. Saving money for future needs and opportunities is different than hoarding money. Hoarding is discouraged in Scripture. It is defined here as excessive accumulation driven by compulsion in order to feed one's pride and ego or a distorted sense of security. Saving, on the other hand, is accumulating money for future purposes. It requires discipline, foresight, and willingness to forgo immediate pleasure for the sake of future benefits. Though we can do our best to save for future needs, we can never save enough to meet every eventual financial problem in our lives. We must remember that all we have is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is our caregiver and our provider. He wants us to trust him to meet our needs. And all that we have is to be used as God directs.

Slide 110 **Saving is different from investing:** Saving is the accumulation of money that we cannot afford to lose because it is designed to finance future needs and opportunities. Therefore, the money is placed in accounts that are safe and not exposed to market risk. That's why savings

accounts belong in banks rather than the stock market. Investments, on the other hand, are a different form of accumulating money. Their purpose is to fund extraordinary future opportunities for ourselves or our heirs, but it involves risk. Money placed in investments can be lost or greatly reduced in value. Therefore, we don't invest money we cannot afford to lose. We will look more at investing next.

Slide 111 **Putting savings into a Biblical perspective:** let's summarize the principles that we have talked about in this module on savings:

- God wants us to trust him for future needs, not our savings account.
- It is true that we are to be prudent managers and faithful stewards of the resources he has given us. This means laundering our commitments to the lord's work, paying our debts and taxes, saving for future needs and living responsibly in the present.
- But there is an important point here: we cannot possibly save enough money for every unknown circumstance in life. In fact, God does not want us to worry about the future.
- Obsessively trying to save enough money to pay for every future contingency dishonors God's providence and will rob us of joy, peace and blessing.
- He has promised never to abandon us so we can say with confidence "the Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

Slide 112 **Class discussion:**

Slide 113 **Quiz:**

## **Part V: Investing money**

Slide 114 **Money management:** we now turn to the fifth topic in this module on money management: Investing money.

Slide 115 **Principles of investing money:** this is not a workshop on investing, and there won't be any stock purchase suggestions or specific ideas for making our money grow. It's simply going to be a high-level overview of what investing is and is not, some of the risks involved with investing, and some basic principles for knowing when and how to invest. What is investing?

- Stated simply, investing involves putting money to work over a long period of time with the expectation that it will increase in value at a rate greater than a simple savings account. It is similar to a savings account in that whether we save or invest we hope our money will grow.
- So what are the differences? One of the major differences is the level of risk. Savings accounts are relatively safe. Investments by nature are speculative and involve risk. Knowing when a savings vehicle, like a money market certificate, makes the leap from a being a relatively safe investment to a risky one is beyond the scope of this seminar.
- Successful investments benefit from the power of compound interest. That is, due to the phenomenon of compound interest, your principle amount balance will grow at an ever-increasing rate, even if the basic interest rate, more properly called the rate of return, stays the same.

Year-to-year risk can be somewhat mitigated by investing for the long-term. In this regard, investments may provide substantial resources for long term needs such as starting a business, providing education for your children and grandchildren, building the kingdom, starting a business, or leaving an inheritance.

The thing to keep in mind is that because investments are speculative, the investor might lose part or all of his entire investment. This could be for a variety of reasons. Therefore, investing should be made only with money that we can afford to lose. This means providing for our known mid-term and long-term needs through relatively safe savings accounts. Within certain limits, we should begin to invest only after our savings objectives are satisfied.

Of course, whether we save or invest it is the Lord who provides our security and not our money.

Slide 116 **The benefits of investing:** what are the benefits of investing? Simply stated, the benefits of successful investments compared to savings accounts is the potential for a higher rate of return over the long term. Investments generally do not provide immediate returns. But those who make wise investments can expect a good yield over many years.

Slide 117 **Examples of investing:** let's look at a few examples of investing. We'll see how certain occupations may not produce short term benefits but can pay off over a period of years. We'll consider the farmer, the pastor, the teacher, and the missionary. They resemble investors more than they do savers.

Slide 118 **Example of investing—the farmer:** the farmer sows his seeds in the spring in hopes for a great harvest in the fall. Is there risk involved in farming? Of course. The farmer has no guarantee of success. There could be drought, pestilence, or damaging storms. The market for his crops could go down between the time of planting and harvest, resulting in little or no profits, or maybe even a loss. Therefore, I believe the farmer is a good example of an investor because it involves both risk and reward over a long period of time.

Slide 119 **Example of investing—temporal parenting:** temporal parenting is another example of investing. Parents don't know whether their children will turn out for good or evil. They simply do their best to pour into their children their values, their beliefs, their hopes and their dreams. They model the kind of people they hope their children will become. But there is no guarantee. Because there is risk regarding the outcome of their efforts, and their engagement is over a period of many years, parents are investors.

Slide 120 **Example of investing—spiritual parenting:** spiritual parenting is similar to temporal parenting. The Christian parent invests in their children by teaching the truth of God's Word, instilling Godly values, developing a love for Jesus and his people, and cultivating a heart to follow and obey their Savior. The investment duration can be many years, continuing after the children leave home. There is no guarantee of success since each child has to decide for himself what his spiritual values will be. Spiritual parenting is investing.

Slide 121 **Example of an investor: the teacher:** teachers are investors. The teacher imparts knowledge, discipline, love and patience to her students now, hoping they will become productive citizens in the future. But there is no guarantee that their hard work will pay off. And once again, the investment occurs over a period of many years.

Slide 122 **Example of an investor: The pastor:** pastors are investors. They preach God's words today hoping to produce mature believers tomorrow.

Slide 123 **Example of an investor-the missionary:** our final example of an investor is the missionary. They share the gospel with others in this life, hoping to populate heaven in the life to come.

Slide 124 **What do all of these investors have in common?:** as you can see these investors in life have much in common with investors of money. Their work involves risk, huge expenditures of resources, and a long-term perspective. There is no guarantee of success but there is also the hope of great rewards. As with savings, we must trust God for successful outcomes of our investments.

Slide 125 **The rule of 72:** let's now look at a handy tool for investors. It is called the rule of 72. The rule of 72 can be used to determine the relationship between interest rate, time, and the doubling of your investment. It's use is limited strictly to cases where you wish to double your money.

Case 1: The formula is simple: if you want to determine how many years it will take an investment to double, divide 72 by the interest rate that you are earning. For example, if you are earning 6% on your money then 72 divided by six equals 12. It'll take 12 years for your money to double. If you deposit \$1000 in the bank today and earn 6% compound interest for 12 years, at the end of that time you will have \$2000 in the bank. Similarly, if you earn 36% interest per year, \$1000 deposited today will be worth \$2000 two years from now (72 divided by 36 = 2).

Slide 126 **The rule of 72:** Case 2: the rule of 72 can be used to determine what interest rate you need to earn in order to double your money over various periods of years. For example, if you wish to double your money in six years, divide 72 by six, which equals 12. You must earn 12 percent on your investment if you wish to double its value in 12 years.

Slide 127-129: **Quiz**

Slide 130 **A practical reality of investing:** let's take another look at risk, a major factor when investing. We've already seen that investments by definition are speculative, which means that their value can go up or down. Since financial risk tends to be higher in the short term, sound investing is a long-term proposition. I think it would be uncommon for investments to grow at a faster rate than in or bury savings account in the short term, for example, to three years. So in GEN, foreign investment to reap huge dividends, it has to be over the long-term. But having said that, successful investing is the fastest way to achieve long-term goals. Conversely, unsuccessful investing can produce great damage and even leave us penniless, especially if we liquidate that investment in the short term. Therefore, my recommendation is to invest only money for the long-term that you could afford to lose if the investment turns sour.

Slide 131 **Some risk factors:** here is a partial list of risks associated with investing. Some of them are predictable such as the type of investment, the historical rate of return, the planned duration. However there are many risk factors that are beyond our control: economic factors like inflation, political factors, natural factors, cataclysmic events, etc. I hope it is clear why I have suggested that you do not begin your investing until you have met your savings goals.

Even then only invest with money you can afford to lose. Because the value of investments can fluctuate, especially in the short term, it is important that you be prepared to hold your investments over a long period of time.

Slide 132: **Team assignment**

Slide 133: **Quiz**

Slide 134 **Prerequisites to investing**: most Christian financial counselors will recommend the following sequence of financial activities. Any given list might be slightly different in content, or in a different order. But investing is usually at the end of every list.

- For example, Ron Blue suggests saving 1-6 months of income for emergencies and opportunities.
- Next pay off all consumer and credit card debt.
- Third, save another 6 to 12 months of income to provide for your family in case of a job loss or other unplanned expenses.
- Fourth, save for planned expenses.
- Five, save for long-term major purchases and opportunities.
- Then, only after you have satisfied your goals for the other five categories should you begin to invest your money. Remember only invest the amount of money that you can afford to lose in assets that involve risk. That's why these first five categories must be satisfied before you begin to invest. Ron Blue states that, because of investment risk, some people who get to this stage in their financial lives decide to give their money away to worthwhile causes instead of investing.

Slide 135 to 138 **12 Biblical principles of wise investing**: here are 12 Biblical principles to keep in mind when investing.

- don't make getting rich your objective: Prov 23:4-5
- don't fall in love with your money: 1 Tim 6:10
- intentionally cultivate a generous heart so that if God gives you success in your investments you will consider kingdom needs: Prov 11:24
- don't invest with money you need to meet future obligations. Remember if you cannot afford to lose the money, you're not ready for investing. Better to keep your money relatively safe in a savings account: Prov 14:8
- here's a very important point. Since investing is speculative, never borrow to invest. You could not only lose your investment, you now have to repay the borrowed money to the lender: Psalm 37:21
- prayerfully set realistic plans and goals: Luke 14:28
- use wisdom and good sense: Prov 24:3
- get wise advice: Prov 15:22
- here is a trap that many people fall into. They have a little bit of money to invest, but they don't have a plan. So they become vulnerable to everyone who presents an investment opportunity to them. Everyone presents their investment as a "good" or "can't miss" deal. But remember this: no one is ever going to come to you with an opportunity

to invest claiming that it is a bad deal. Everything will be presented as a good deal. Therefore, invest with a plan after you have sought wise counsel so that you will not be vulnerable to every offer that comes your way: Prov 14:15

- be patient and avoid hasty speculation. There is no room for greed in the heart of a wise investor: Prov 28:20, Prov 13:11, Prov 28:22
- remember the poor when you are successful, and be sure to give back to God a portion of your increase: Prov 28:27
- be very diligent in managing your assets. Money can disappear like water vapor: Prov 27:23-24

Slide 139 **Poor motives for investing:** let's look at some poor motives for investing:

- Pride or building self-esteem: Prov 16:18
- The desire to get rich quick is a poor motive: Prov 13:11
- Beware of being greedy or loving your money: Luke 12:15
- Realize that no amount of money will result in our safety or security: Psalm 50:15
- And we should not invest with the intent to hoard our money. God wants us to use his resources for good deeds and worthwhile goals, not just to count: Luke 12:16-21

Slide 140 **Principle #4. God cares how we manage our money:** let's summarize what we have studied in this module:

Slide 141 **Obtaining money summary:** we are to obtain our money honestly through our own labor and creativity. We can earn money actively or passively. We should avoid trying to gain money by gambling or borrowing.

Slide 142 **Spending money summary:** when we spend our money, we should do it wisely as faithful stewards. We should quickly pay our obligations including our taxes and debt repayment and our commitments for the Lord's work. As with everything in life, we should be led by the Holy Spirit in the spending of money.

Slide 143 **Budgeting money summary:** for most people a budget is the best way to control their spending. Creating a budget requires prayer, planning, counsel, and wisdom. Discipline is required to maintain a budget. The amazing phenomenon of margin is useful for a variety of things and is one of the key principles of this entire seminar. We will examine margin in careful detail in module six.

Slide 144 **Saving money summary:** saving money is a discipline that you should encourage your parishioners to practice starting when they are young. A steady accumulation of margin over a long period of time is the best way for us to provide resources for our future needs and long-term goals and opportunities. A savings account provides the means to help others in need. As with investing money, we should have a plan for our savings to avoid hoarding, unreasonable accumulation, or succumbing to a good deal. Since our savings accounts have a future purpose they should be put at minimal risk.

Slide 145 **Investing money summary:** investing involves putting money to work over a long period of time with the expectation that it will increase in value. Remember that investments are

speculative so they are different than savings. It is unwise and presumptuous to speculate with money we cannot afford to lose, or with borrowed money. We should fulfill our savings goals first. Then we can choose to invest if we wish. One of the choices Christians have is to use a portion of the money they acquired after all of their savings goals are met to build God's kingdom, either through surpluses in their savings or by liquidating their successful long-term investments. Investments should be made carefully, prayerfully, and with proper guidance. Please remember that whether we save or invest it is not the money that we are trusting in. It is the Lord that we trust; perhaps by his grace and mercy he will use our savings and investment accounts for his Glory, no matter whether they are used to improve our own family's lifestyles, meet the needs of others, or build his kingdom.

Slide 146 **Final thoughts about managing our money according to Biblical principles:** here are some final thoughts about managing our money according to Biblical principles: obtain money honestly, spend money prayerfully, give money generously, budget money carefully, create margin intentionally, save money purposefully, and invest money wisely.

Slide 147: **Essay**

Slide 148: **End of Principle #4**

### **Principle 5. Honor God by faithfully giving of our income** **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1: **5. Honor God by faithfully giving of our income**

this is principle #5 in our series. The Bible encourages us to honor God by faithfully giving of our income.

Slide 2 **The Bible teaches us to faithfully give of our income:** The Bible teaches us to faithfully give a portion of our income back to him. As Christians, we desire to do this from a heart of gratitude rather than out of a sense of obligation.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** let's remind ourselves of our theme verse, 1 Timothy 1:8

Slide 4 **Principle #5. Honor God by faithfully giving of our income:** here is the outline for this module. We will consider the following topics (Highlight a few of them):

- reasons why we should give
- who should give
- how to give
- how much to give
- to whom to give
- when to give
- the secret for always having enough money to give
- who will give involuntarily
- God's promise of blessing to faithful givers



Slide 5 **Acknowledgement Ron Blue**-I have appreciated the counsel of Christian financial advisers such as Ron Blue and Brian Kluth. Their insights have been very helpful not only in preparing this segment but others as well.

Slide 6 **Acknowledgement Brian Kluth**: Brian has been a significant mentor and source for much of this seminar. I am so grateful for his support.

Slide 7 **Key Bible verses**: let's now consider passages from both the Old and New Testaments to provide background for this module. First, let's look at two passages from the Old Testament: Malachi 3:10 and Genesis 28:20-22.

Slide 8 **Key Bible passages**: The New Testament also gives insight into giving. Let's read three passages. 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9: 7 and 1 Cor 4:2.

Slide 9 **Why give faithfully?**: Principle #5 proposes that we should honor God by faithfully giving back to him a portion of our income. Though giving cheerfully and willingly are undeniable New Testament principles of giving, we are reminded that God is the owner of all that we have and that we are stewards of what he has entrusted to us. And, as we observed in module #1, a steward's life is characterized by faithfulness. In this module we will focus on our proposition that Christians should give faithfully of their income. Why should we give faithfully?

Slide 10 **Out of love and gratitude to God**: our primary reason for giving back to the Lord a portion of what he has given to us is out of love and gratitude for what God has done for us through Christ. Jesus purchased our freedom with his blood, and gave us eternal life as a free gift through our faith in him. As a token of our love and gratitude, we give him the gift of our labors.

Slide 11 **Jesus affirmed the practice of faithful giving**: a second reason is this: Jesus affirmed the practice of faithful giving in his rebuke of the pharisees. Let's read Luke 11:42 and Matthew 23:23. Jesus affirmed the tithe which was being consistent with Hebraic law at the time. Though today we are not under the law, Jesus was also commending faithfulness.

Slide 12 **The Apostle Paul encouraged systematic giving**: thirdly, the Apostle Paul encouraged giving to provide for the church and to help the needy. And he suggested doing it systematically, such as every Sunday. Let's read 1 Corinthians 16:2. In this passage, Paul is referring to the special collection he was arranging for the poor church in Jerusalem. But it is entirely consistent with his teaching to infer that he would encourage our regular gifts to be done systematically in the same way. So, we give out of gratitude, but also obedience to the admonitions of both Jesus and Paul to be faithful and systematic in our giving.

Slide 13 **Caution: we are not under the law**: this is a good place to mention that we are not under the Old Testament law. There is no efficacy regarding remission of our sins when we give, nor can we earn favor with God by doing so. We simply know that we honor God when we return to him a portion of what he has entrusted to us.

So, the purpose of considering the idea of faithful giving by looking at the Old Testament is not to take upon ourselves the burden of Old Testament law, but rather as information to help inform us in this matter. The Old Testament practice of 10% for the basic tithe is not a requirement but it can be used as a guideline.

Slide 14 **class discussion:**

Slide 15 **Righteous motives for regular, faithful giving:** Let's now consider three good and righteous motives for regular, faithful giving.

- Love and gratitude for what Christ has done for us by giving us eternal life
- Thankfulness for God's care for us and provision of our needs
- Honoring the examples set by Melchizedek and Abraham with their voluntary tithes
- here is one additional motive: to have a sense of partnership and commitment to the success of kingdom ministries, including the spread of the gospel and the building up of believers in the faith. The next slide reveals our commission to do this.

Slide 16 **1. We give out of faithfulness to the Great Commission:** Let's read Matthew 28:16-20. But that process of going into all the world to spread the Gospel and build the church, whether we do it ourselves or vicariously through other missionaries, often requires money. Our regular contributions to the Lord's work make that possible.

Slide 17 **7 benefits of faithful giving:** let's look at 7 benefits that we find in Scripture that we enjoy when we give faithfully. Brian Kluth is one of the sources for this list.

First, faithful giving by Christ-followers blesses the poor. Solomon called it an act of worship. I think most New Testament churches had ministries to those in need. When we give to our local church, we might expect that some of the collections are used for food, clothing, medicine, etc to help the poor and needy. Let's read Proverbs 14:31

Slide 18 **2. Faithful giving reminds us that God alone is our provider:** secondly, faithful giving reminds us that God alone is our provider. We would not be able to give unless God had not first given it to us. Let's read 7 Chronicles 29:16 and Psalm 24: 1.

Slide 19 **3. Faithful giving allows us to overcome worry and fear about money:** the story of the widow at Zarephath gives us an important lesson about faithful giving. Her desperate circumstances, Mr. Fear when concern. Recall that although she was down to her last meal, Elijah asked her to use some of what remained to feed him. Because she was a Godly woman, her response was to obey him rather than use the last of her resources for herself and her son. But she also acted in faith because he had said to her that she would be taken care of if she followed his instructions. She undoubtedly believed him.

When we give of our first fruits to the Lord, we are acknowledging by faith that God can provide for us with what remains.

My dad taught me an important precept when I was young. We were talking about tithing, which he practiced not because he was under Old Testament law but because he felt 10% was the

proper amount to give. He said something he believed about God's blessing on our faithfulness in giving: "If you give to God the 10%, he will help you do more with the 90% that remains than you could do with all 100% on your own without his help". I have seen this precept in other places and I believe it is true.

**Slide 20 4. Faithful giving brings God's order into our lives:** fourthly, faithful giving brings God's order into our lives. The discipline of giving a portion of our income to the Lord, even when we are not sure that we have enough to spare, somehow motivates us to practice a more disciplined and orderly life in the way we handle our affairs. Let's read 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2.

**Slide 21 Hints for bringing financial order into our lives:** Here are some helpful hints for bringing financial order into our lives:

- Commit to regular giving of our income to the Lord; this will require faith and discipline
- Pray about the beneficiaries of our gifts; this will allow us to submit to God's leadership
- Ask God for his blessing and wisdom regarding the handling of our finances. We will be amazed at how he shows himself faithful to us

**Slide 22 5. Faithful giving is an antidote to materialism:** the fifth benefit of faithful giving is that it acts like deterrent to materialism. When we realize that we are giving up a portion of our income to honor the Lord, there is something in that step of obedience by faith which helps us be more careful and intentional with what we have left over. We may learn some day that our faithfulness in giving helped us avoid many sorrows that could have come from a greedy heart. Let's read Prov 15:27.

**Slide 23 Faithful giving is an antidote to materialism (cont'd):** here is a similar passage that discourages materialism. Luke 12:15

**Slide 24 The dangers of materialism:** here are some important lessons from Proverbs 15 and Luke 12:

- A greedy heart can cause grief to our whole family (Prov 15:27)
- Jesus said that our material possessions are not the measure of who we are or what our life is worth (Luke 12:15)

**Slide 25 6. Faithful giving helps us understand that God, not our money, is the provider of everything we need and every good thing in our lives:** another benefit of faithful giving is that it helps us understand that God is our provider, not our money. He is the one who graciously pours into our lives everything we need and more. And when God provides our needs, our response should be contentment and devotion to him. Let's read Matthew 6:31-33 and 1 Timothy 6: 6-8.

**Slide 26 1 Timothy 6:6-8 (NLT):**

**Slide 27 God is our provider:** here are some thoughts from these two passages:

- When we achieve true financial peace with God, our needs will not preoccupy us
- We will recognize that God knows all about our needs and that he will provide them if we seek his kingdom and seek to honor him with our lives

- We are reminded in the 1 Timothy passage that we will be content if our basic needs are met

Slide 28 **7. Giving to God shows our respect for him and enables him to pour out fabulous blessings:** this seventh benefit of faithful giving is that it shows our respect for God, enabling him to pour out fabulous blessings. Let's read Malachi 3: 9-12.

Slide 29 **Lessons from Mal 3:9-12:** The Malachi passage reminds us that the tithe belongs to God. Although we are no longer under Old Testament law, Christians believe that God owns everything we have. When we faithfully give him the first-fruits of our income, we are only returning to him what is already his. I believe when we do that, the promises of Malachi 3: 9-12 are ours to receive.

Slide 30 **What is our "income"?:** you might ask the question, what is our income? Here is the definition of income that we are using in this seminar:

- For individuals our increase is our income. This amounts to our paycheck
- For businesses, our increase is our profit. We sell a product or service and deduct all of our expenses. The amount leftover is the increase that is then used to reinvest in the business or to distribute to shareholders.
- Income may have both monetary and non-monetary components.

It is common to give "gifts-in-kind" rather than cash to support the Lord's work. Sometimes it is the only way that poor people can give. This could include our time, the produce of our land, the fruit of our handiwork, food, clothing, or other material objects.

When we receive non-monetary assets, should those be considered income? Brian Kluth went into some detail about this concept. He and his wife looked for ways that God blessed them unexpectedly, and not necessarily financially. They felt that if someone gave them an unexpected gift that met a need or took them out for a meal, that was part of their increase. They would then look for ways to return a portion of that benefit to the Lord's work. And he and his wife often gave gifts-in-kind (non-monetary) themselves.

Slide 31 **Class discussion:**

Slide 32 **How much should we give?:** let's now look at the Biblical basis for giving a 10<sup>th</sup> of our income as our regular commitment. We can be informed by the patriarchs in this regard. First of all, Abraham gave Melchisedek a 10<sup>th</sup> of all he brought back from battle. Let's read Hebrews 7:1-2. Secondly Jacob gave a 10<sup>th</sup> and we'll be owned. I believe both of these gifts of a tithe were voluntary expressions of gratitude. Let's read Genesis 28: 20-22. And thirdly we know that Moses required it as part of the Hebraic law.

Slide 33 **How much should we give?:** so, let's review this section which considers the question. "How much should we give on a regular basis to the Lord's work?" I think it is good to consider the 10<sup>th</sup> as a guideline, but if you decide on different percentage of your income, do from a grateful and willing heart. Paul talked about giving in "proportion" to your income. And he talked about the relationship between our generosity and the blessings we derive. Whatever

amount the Lord leads you to give, decide out of a cheerful and willing heart, then give it faithfully and regularly. I believe he will honor your faithfulness.

Slide 34 **Who should give?:** Now let's deal with the question, "Who should give?" I believe every believer can give from what they receive. Let's read the following passages:

2 Corinthians 8:12. We're not expected to give what we don't have, but rather according to what we have and in some proportion. Proportional giving is the focus of New Testament teaching.

Deuteronomy 16:16-17. In this passage it's clear that everyone was supposed to bring something. In today's language, do you think that it's possible for even a very poor person to give a tiny amount; perhaps just one rupee? Even the tiniest gift is appreciated by our Savior, especially sacrificial gifts from those who are very poor.

Slide 35 **Questions for discussion:**

Slide 36 **How should we give?:** the next aspect to faithful giving is the question how should we give? I believe there are two methods.

Slide 37 **Give secretly:** we can give secretly, as described in Matthew 6: 2-4. Let's read this passage. Here Jesus urges us to not make a show of giving. We do not want to be commended by men for our giving because then we will have earned our reward. Rather, when we give to the Lord in secret he will reward us openly. This may not be in an immediate, material blessing. I believe that sometimes God will reward our faithfulness in eternity rather than here on earth. Whenever and however God chooses to bless us, it will be according to his perfect plan for us.

Slide 38 **Give publicly:** besides giving secretly, we can give publicly. There are several examples in Scripture where people gave special gifts publicly. Sometimes public giving can encourage others. Once again, our motive should not be to gain recognition for ourselves but to advance the kingdom of heaven. We give out of joy, not boastfully or pridefully, or to gain status or favor. I personally believe that if we give publicly, we must humbly accept the reality that God will examine our heart. If for some reason, he sees that we gave with wrong motives and thus we lose our heavenly reward, we can take courage that by God's grace, our gift will advance his kingdom. That should be fine with us because our ultimate goal in giving, as with our lives, is that God would ultimately bring glory to himself.

Slide 39 **Bad attitudes for giving:** these next two slides talk about attitudes for giving. In this slide we look at some bad attitudes.

- Scripture tells us not to give grudgingly or out of a feeling of compulsion.
- We're should not give from a spirit of sadness or regret.
- And, of course, we do not want to give out of a superficial show of godliness expecting to get rich.

Slide 40 **Godly attitudes for giving:** let's now consider some Godly attitudes for giving.

Slide 41 **Willingly, cheerfully and generously**: I think we are all familiar with the passages that encourage willing, cheerful, and generous giving. Let's read 2 Corinthians 9: 7 and 2 Corinthians 9: 9.

Slide 42 **Faithfully and regularly**: now we get back to the idea of faithful giving. I have added the word regular for those who have a steady income. I believe it's important for each person to evaluate their income and make a commitment to give a portion back to the Lord in concert with the timing of one's income. If one's income is irregular, then one's "regular" giving pattern will be similar. Once you make a commitment to some pattern, faithfully carry it out. Let's read 1 Corinthians 16: 2 and 1 Corinthians 4: 1-2.

Slide 43 **Cheerfulness vs. Faithfulness**: let us now spend a few minutes considering the relationship between two attitudes in giving. Recall that this module talks about our regular giving, but we have also talked about cheerful giving.

So here is a key question. Is it more important that we be cheerful or faithful in our regular giving? That is, how would you prioritize between giving cheerfully or not giving cheerfully on the one hand, and giving faithfully or not giving faithfully on the other. Here is a little chart that will allow us to consider this dilemma. It shows four states, with cheerfulness as the column header, and faithfulness as the row header. We are going to order these four states from the highest priority (1) to the lowest priority (4). We could just as easily say we are going to order them according to preference or desirability. Could we all agree that the most preferred and most desirable state is that we give both faithfully and cheerfully? And could we also agree that the least desirable, or most pitiful state to be in, is to neither give faithfully nor cheerfully. In other words, we withhold our offering, and we also have a bad attitude. We are neither cheerful nor faithful.

But here is the key question: what would be the second most desired or preferred state? Would it be to go ahead and give faithfully even if we didn't do it cheerfully? We might say in our heart, "I don't feel cheerful today. Nevertheless, I will keep my commitment to give of my income to the Lord". In this case we will place our 2 in the upper right quadrant (blue question mark). We are faithful in giving, but our heart is not in it.

Or would it be better to withhold our gift, but do it with a cheerful attitude? We might say something like, "Lord, I have great joy in my heart today but I have decided not to give my commitment to you this month". In that case we would place a 2 in the lower left quadrant.

Class, what do you think would be God's preference for us? Let there be some class discussion at this point.

Slide 44 **Cheerfulness vs. Faithfulness**: I would offer this perspective: When we willingly decide to make a financial commitment to our church, as stewards we should be faithful in carrying out. When it comes to our regular giving commitment, it is better to be faithful even if we don't always have a cheerful attitude when we give. We know that God loves a cheerful giver and so we must accept on the basis of Scripture that he may not take great pleasure from our attitude. But I do believe he will take delight in our faithfulness. So, I would place the

second most desirable state in the upper right quadrant; in the “yes” faithfulness row, and in the “no” cheerfulness column.

Let me explain why I believe this is the second most preferable or desirable state. You are certainly free to disagree with me on this.

We know that the work of the church requires funds. And the regular, ongoing work of the church requires regular, ongoing giving by God’s people. If we withhold our gifts because we are not cheerful about it, the Lord’s work will suffer. For example, suppose we are angry with the pastor. It does not seem right just because we are angry to punish the church by withholding our regular giving. The same can be said if we withhold our committed giving because we disagree with some decision that the church leadership made. We must realize that there are consequences to our decision to withhold. If we fail to give, perhaps the pastor or a missionary does not get paid. Perhaps the utility bills pile up. Perhaps the church doesn’t get cleaned. This is not right. Therefore, in my opinion, when it comes to regular giving, faithfulness is more important than cheerfulness if we cannot have both. Both attributes are desirable and the combined state is clearly the best one to be in. But faithfulness is the more important virtue when it comes to our regular, committed giving. As said earlier, I understand that you may not see it this way.

Slide 45 Questions for discussion

Slide 46 **To whom should we give?:** to whom should we give. I believe Scripture supports three beneficiaries of our gifts.

Slide 47 **1. Support the Lord’s work and take care of his ministers, missionaries, and the needs of the church:** of course, we should give to the Lord’s work and take care of his ministers, missionaries, and the needs of the church. There are many passages of Scripture that admonish and encourage us to build the kingdom of God. This often requires money, so it should have a high priority with us.

Slide 48 **2. Give to the poor, the sick, the oppressed and the needy:** secondly, we all would agree that God is honored and well-pleased when we give to the poor, the sick, the oppressed, and the needy. I believe we start with our family, our Christian brothers and sisters, and finally the needy in general. And we can give as individuals, through the church, or to public and private charities.

Then needy are one of the most precious objects of our generosity. We know that when we give to the least of Christ’s brothers and sisters, we are giving to him. Let’s read 2 Corinthians 9:9, Luke 12:33, Ezekiel 18: 7, and Matthew 25:40.

Slide 49 **3. Support needy widows and orphans:** a third beneficiary are needy widows and orphans. These dear people are often supported by the church from its collections. But if you choose to give to them directly, as long as it does not affect your regular commitment to the church, I personally see nothing wrong with that. We will see later that giving to our needy

brothers and sisters in Christ has a multitude of benefits. For now, Let's read 1 Timothy 5: 16, James 1:27.

There are many other opportunities to do good. There are many worthwhile recipients of our regular giving. It is not the purpose of this seminar to allocate our regular giving among the church and other beneficiaries. Perhaps you could consult your Elders or pastors regarding allocation considerations.

My personal feeling is that our local church should be the prime recipient of most, if not all, of our regular giving. Then the church, in turn, can distribute its collections to the needs of the church, the widows and orphans, the needy, and other charities it supports.

**Slide 50 The secret to having enough to give faithfully and systematically?:** Now that we have decided to give faithfully and regularly, how can we be sure that we will have enough money to meet our commitments?

If you're convinced that faithful, regular giving is important, then we must manage our money so that we can reliably accomplish this month in and month out. Unfortunately, so many of us use up our income supporting our lifestyle, so that when it comes to meeting our commitment to the church, we run short. But there is a secret to always having sufficient funds to discharge our giving commitments. And it is super simple.

**Slide 51 Before we begin our spending, set aside our giving commitment:** here's the secret: begin our monthly spending with our giving. To say it another way, before we start spending on our needs when we receive our income, we first set aside in a safe place the amount that we have committed to the Lord's work. The active setting it aside is declaring that this money is now the Lord's. Happily, by setting the money aside and dedicating it to the Lord, we won't be tempted to spend it on something else. It's like putting our gifts under Guard. I have intentionally capitalized the word "guard".

**Slide 52 Some will give involuntarily:** The Bible teaches that some people, particularly the ungodly, will give involuntarily. It also teaches that the sinner's wealth passes to the Godly. Our God has a way of managing his resources in ways that benefit his kingdom and his people. Let not the ungodly think that they can frustrate God's purposes. Proverbs 13:22, Ecclesiastes 2:26, and Job 27:13-17.

**Slide 53 God's promise of blessing:** Let's consider what God has promised to do for us when we are faithful with our giving. Malachi 3:8-12 is a familiar passage. Let's remind ourselves of its marvelous promise by reading the passage together.

**Slide 54 God honors and blesses those who faithfully give:** Let's review the lessons from Malachi chapter 3:

- He expects us to keep our commitments
- This seems to be God's plan for meeting the needs of the church
- He will surround us with his special protection
- He lavishes his resources on those who are faithful ("you can't outgive God")



- We will be an asset to our fellow man and the kingdom of God

Slide 55: **quiz**

Slide 56: **class discussion**

Slide 57-58 **Principle #5. Honor God by faithfully giving of our income:** let's summarize the teaching of this module.

- Our basic motive for giving back to the Lord a portion of what he has given to us is out of love and gratitude for what he gave us through Christ death and resurrection, eternal life.
- Jesus affirmed and Paul encouraged the practice of giving to God proportionately from our income.
- Consider the tithe as a guideline with regard to the amount we give but remember we are not under the law and there is not redemptive value in it.
- Whatever the amount we decide to give, seek to do it faithfully and systematically in order to honor God and build his kingdom.
- After demonstrating faithfulness, cultivate other virtues such as gratitude, cheerfulness and generosity.
- Bring our regular giving into the church, which in turn should consider the poor the needy the widows and orphans, and other needy people
- Faithful, regular giving to God will teach us to respect him, teach us discipline and self-control, and enable God to pour out fabulous blessings on our lives and the lives of others.

Slide 59: end of module.

### **Principle 6. Develop a lifestyle which creates margin Instructor's Notes**

Slide 1 **Principle #6 Develop a lifestyle which creates margin**

Slide 2 **The Bible teaches us to practice a lifestyle which creates margin:** The Bible teaches us to save a portion of our income by creating margin which may be used to meet our future needs and to be able to bless others.

Slide 3 **The underlying theme of this seminar:** as in every module we are reminded that the goal of our study is not just information that we process with our mind, although that is important; But our real goal is a transformed heart. In this module we want a heart that motivates us to have the proper balance between 1) spending our money to meet our current wants, needs and opportunities, and 2) saving our money for future needs, wants, opportunities—including the ability to bless others.

Slide 4 **Principle #6. Develop a lifestyle which creates margin:** Here is the outline for this module.

- define margin and look at the Biblical basis for it.
- examine six keys to creating margin
- consider seven characteristics of margin.
- look at ways of determining God's purpose for our margin.
- list some uses of accumulated margin or savings
- factors that limit or discourage one's creation of margin
- consider a godly attitude towards margin.

Slide 5 **Margin-what is it?:** let's start by defining what we mean by margin. The clip art tells the story in pictures.

Slide 6 **Margin-a definition:** Here is a simple definition of margin. After receiving our income for a given period of time, then making all of our disbursements during that period, our margin is the amount left over. It is created by spending less than we make; it is the opposite of overspending or creating a deficit. For most people creating margin will require establishing and living by a budget. As we said earlier accumulated margin is called a savings account. It is my belief that systematically creating margin is evidence that we are serious about providing for the future needs for ourselves, our family and others.

Now that we understand the concept of margin, let's list some of the uses of margin. Assuming that we have accumulated our margin for an extended period, we are beginning to have enough to meet some of our future needs and perhaps even have enough to help others.

Slide 7 **Some uses of accumulated margin (savings):** accumulated margin is extremely useful. Just consider some of the uses for it. (Note to instructor: rather than read each item on the list, highlight a few of them).

Slide 8 **Key Bible passages:** let's look at the Biblical basis for creating margin and saving our money. Here are some passages which we will read together:

- Proverbs 21:20 - this verse describes one of the characteristics of a fool: he spends everything he gets. By contrast the wise person is someone who saves some of his earnings to invest in things that have lasting value;
- Proverbs 11: 24 through 26 - this passage suggests that a generous man who shares what he has will gain even more. It implies that generosity is one of the character qualities of a godly man who has been blessed financially. Giving to others obviously means we did spend everything we earned on ourselves. We created margin and used some of it to bless others. On the contrary, those who hold tightly to what they have may eventually be financially worse off, even to the point of poverty.
- Proverbs 31:20 - this verse describes as noble a person who helps the poor. The only way to help them financially is through our margin which we create by spending less than we make;
- II Corinthians 8: 13 - 16, Paul clearly states that those who have plenty should use some of their margin they have created to help the poor.

All four of these verses clearly imply that creating margin is an important practice of godly people. It produces benefits for themselves, others, and the church.

Slide 9 **Biblical examples where margin was created:** let's look at some examples in Scripture illustrating the creation of margin: if

- God told the Israelites to leave a little of their harvest along the edges of their field so that the poor could come and meet their needs by gleaning (Leviticus 23:22).
- When Jesus fed the 5000 his disciples were able to pick up several baskets full of leftovers. It is obvious that Jesus provided more than what was necessary—he created margin. Its purpose might have been for the disciples' future needs or perhaps was it meant to feed the poor. What we know is that everyone left that place satisfied, yet there was still enough left over. We assume that it was meant to provide for some future need (Matthew 14:20).
- We've already looked at the story of Elisha and the widow's oil. God provided more than what she needed for that day. She had an ample supply of oil in reserve to meet future needs. Her margin of oil became similar to a savings account for her.

Slide 10: **Questions for discussion**

Slide 11: **Class stories of how their margin was used to bless others:** Would anyone like to share with the class stories of people you know who have used their savings to bless others?

Slide 12 **6 keys to creating margin by God's grace:** It is by God's grace that we create margin. If we wish to do that consistently, then we must be intentional about our spending, resisting the temptation to spend all of our money on ourselves. Let's consider 6 keys for creating margin on a consistent basis. They require engagement of the heart, the mind, and the will.

First the heart:

- When our basic needs are met, we should have an attitude of gratitude and contentment. A grateful, contented spirit arising from trusting in God as our provider helps to counteract the obsession to have more and more stuff.
- Another secret might be to use some of our surplus to bless others. Such acts of generosity bless us even more, and might encourage us to live that way.

The mind and will: Our heart's attitude is very important. But our minds and wills have to be involved in the process of managing our money.

- As we saw earlier most people will need to develop and live by a budget in order to create margin. Our default mindset for living should be frugality and conservation. Ron Blue calls it a "non-consumptive" lifestyle. Others have a "make it last" philosophy. Whenever we want to call it, it's the discipline of not responding emotionally to satisfy our every desire.
- Focus on needs rather than wants. Here is a secret which you may have discovered in your own life: when we foregoing immediate gratification and wait for our desires to settle, then wait a little longer, sometimes the unexpected happens. The "need" that

seemed so urgent just a short time ago may vanish and the assault on our savings account will have been thwarted.

Slide 13 **The secret formula for creating margin:** I believe there is a secret formula for creating margin that is so simple it's easy to overlook. But I guarantee you that it will work every time you do it. You don't need to be a chemist or a mad scientist in order to discover this formula, but there is a simple habit that you can practice for success:

Slide 14 **The secret?:** So what is this secret practice? Actually, it's the same secret we discovered in the module on faithful giving. When we get paid, we set aside our margin *first* before we start our spending for the month. As soon as we receive our earnings, we deposit our budgeted margin in a bank savings account before doing anything else.

Slide 15 **4 suggestions for ensuring long- term success in creating margin:** Here are some practical tips for creating margin on a lasting basis.

- First, creating and abide by a budget. As we saw in a previous module, a budget is a tool for controlling our spending. And it will provide for achieving some margin up of our paycheck.
- Secondly, if you have been overspending and would like to start achieving some margin, start somewhere-- anywhere. Even if your budget enables you to set aside only a few rupees per month, at least you are developing margin and getting into the habit of spending less than you make.
- Thirdly, create margin regularly. Don't just discipline yourself for one or two months but make it a permanent change to your lifestyle. Set aside at the beginning of the month included in a safe and secure place, such as in a savings account in a trusted bank.
- Fourthly, be content with your new lower standard of living that you have achieved through discipline and prayer. Don't be wistful or dwell on the sacrifices that you are making relative to your old lifestyle, for your old lifestyle was irresponsible and risky. Your new lifestyle is healthier and prepares the way for you to face future challenges and opportunities. But as your income grows, maintain approximately the same standard of living. Make every increase to your budget prayerfully and deliberately. If you practice this discipline, the amount of margin you are able to create will grow and will result in some nice surprises regarding the balance in your savings account.

Slide 16 **Factors which fight against margin:** here are some practices, attitudes, and experiences in life that fight against our ability to create margin consistently.

- Perhaps the most common one is not having a budget or not sticking with it. This can happen if we make impulsive decisions or if we haven't planned properly
- Unforeseen expenses happen to all of us. Accidents, calamities, and factors outside of our control can easily consume all of the margin that we intended to create, in more
- We can succumb to slick advertising or peer pressure to live the good life. In doing so, we will find that it's hard to create margin.
- What are some other factors that can hinder our ability to live on less than we make?

Slide 17 **Margin-practical realities:** The concept of creating margin is sound and easy to understand. However, the practical reality is that achieving it in real life may not be so simple. And it may be more difficult for some than others.

Slide 18 **Let's consider two realistic examples:** Let's consider two realistic examples. First, a U.S. mechanic named John who makes a good income, and second, a father living in Northeast India who barely ekes out a living for his family.

Slide 19 **1. An American auto mechanic with a steady income:** in the U.S. an auto mechanic would be considered middle-class. Let's call our mechanic John. John should be able to create substantial margin with prayerful planning and discipline.

Slide 20 **The formula: work hard and systematically increase margin:** The upper graph represents a possible graph of his income over his lifetime, from apprenticeship to retirement. The lower graph represents his expenses. Being young and inexperienced, his income at first might be considered at the low end of the middle-class demographic. With frugality and discipline, he should be able to set aside a few dollars a month, perhaps as much as \$1000 a year. Over his lifetime, his skill and value will increase and he can expect that his income will rise. He might even get to the point in his forties or fifties where he can open his own shop.

John will increasingly be in the position of needing to make choices on how to use the abundance of income that he may make as the years go by. He can decide to live the good life, indulging his desires for more things and a better lifestyle as his income grows. Therefore, he may choose to build a savings account with his monthly surplus.

The secret to the mechanic being able to build a savings account over the long term is to keep his living expenses relatively constant as his salary rises over the early decades of his life. This is where wisdom and discipline are required. The temptation will be for him to do what we call "keeping up with the Joneses". That is, he will be tempted to let his spending increase at the same rate as his income. That practice may help he and his family to live the good life, but it is not the way for him to have future financial success.

If John is wise, he will look to the future and realize that there are going to be major needs and opportunities down the road that will require considerable sums of money. If John wishes to meet those future needs, a better long-term plan would be for him to keep his lifestyle approximately the same so that he can increase his margin and begin adding considerable amounts to his savings account each month, even into retirement. Now it must be stated that this is a simplified model. There may be circumstances that make it difficult for John to achieve large margins. But I'm talking in generalities and trying to make the point that his key to achieving abundant margins requires a long-term vision and discipline.

Slide 21 **The power of margin + time:** let's look at the power of creating margin over a long period of time. If our hypothetical mechanic applies this practice of increasing his margin steadily over his lifetime, wonderful things can happen to help provide for his family's future and to benefit others. Let's take a bird's eye view of his life story. In his early years, his twenties and thirties as he is raising his family, his expenses can be considerable. Even with

frugality, his expenses can be expected to increase over these first or second decades of his adult life. Thus, his margin may be very modest, even if his income increases during this period of time. But if he has a good long-term perspective, I believe it is possible for him to save some money each month. Then as he gets into his forties, fifties and sixties, unless he has great issues in his life that require him to use substantial savings, he should be able to set aside a considerable amount of his earnings. If he does this for two or three decades, his life savings may grow substantially. As he gets into his retirement years his income may go down and, even if his expenses are lower, he may not be able to save as much as he did during his middle years. This is illustrated by the flattening out of the white line. So over his life, his savings account rises modestly during his twenties and thirties as he is raising his family and putting together his household. It then goes up rapidly during his middle years, and once again more slowly in his later years. After retirement he may have to use some of his life savings to live on so that the total balance will actually go down.

But in this example, barring major tragedies or health problems, John will now have sufficient life savings by the time he is 50 years old to do some wonderful things that we saw in an earlier slide. In addition to preparing for retirement, he might be able to start his own business, help his children or grandchildren through college, make generous gifts to the needy, the appropriately increase his lifestyle, or make substantial gifts to the Lord's work.

As has been said, there are many possible situations which could alter this idealized scenario. He or his family could face catastrophes, tragedies, investments that turn sour, major illnesses, and other setbacks. He may choose to give away a large percentage of his savings to the Lord's work from time to time. Therefore, this chart may or may not hold true for any given individual. But I believe the concept is sound, and it is one that my wife and I have practiced overall our lifetime.

Slide 22 **Margin in Developed Countries:** creating margin in developed countries, such as the U.S. should be possible for most people with steady incomes. I believe success can be achieved by following a few common principles. Let's review them:

- cultivate a non-consumptive lifestyle
- practice spending less than we make, live frugally, shop wisely, make do with what we have; use it up rather than throw it away, and practice other cost saving disciplines.
- practicing these disciplines over a long period of time will allow us to build a savings account to help pay for some of our future wants and needs, and perhaps be able to give a little to others.
- for most people creating margin on a consistent basis will require developing and adhering to a budget.

Slide 23 **2. A struggling seminary student:** I believe for most people creating a small margin each month is possible, even if it is just a few rupees. But for the vast majority of people, especially those in developing countries, producing a large savings account may be impossible. It does they live hand-to-mouth and barely survive.

Let's now consider a struggling seminary student. This is an example where creating margin is very difficult. I know personally a seminary student who struggled to feed his family and put

himself through seminary. But by God's grace he did and today he is in a position of leadership in his church.

I met Bethel personally when he was just beginning his studies. I was drawn to him because of his gentle and humble spirit, and we established a friendship. After I got to know him, I asked him if he would tell me his story. He came from a very poor family, had many siblings, and had a father who was in the ministry. They didn't have much income. I am sure life was a struggle for them. Bethel wanted to become a pastor but had no realistic way of financing the required formal education. However, his faith was strong. For 16 years, he prayed that he might be able to go to seminary. Finally, after a very long time of waiting, the Lord provided a way for him to do that. Ben is one of my heroes.

Slide 24 **Map of India:** Here is a map of India. The northeast portion of the country is north of Bangladesh and is comprised of seven states. Over the past decade I have been invited to present this seminar at. Trinity college and seminary is in the state of Manipur.

Slide 25 **Map of 7 states of NE India:** this young man lived in the state of Assam, in a poor section of the town of Haflong, a small village not far from the city of Silchar.

Slide 26 **Bethel:** A man by the name of Bethel is a wonderful example of faith and perseverance in the midst of limited financial resources. He built a small house and garden where he raised his two children. When he was accepted at the seminary in Sielmat, Manipur, he told me that it was a 24-hour bus ride for him to travel from his home to the school. Being of modest financial means, he could only afford to return to his home once or twice a year. In order to help his wife care for the children, he invited his sister-in-law to live with them. Amazingly, the Lord worked it all out. He not only earned his bachelor's degree at the seminary, but a master's degree as well. But it wasn't so much his academic achievements that impressed me the most. Rather, I was deeply touched by his abiding faith and determination, his love for others, and the sacrifice he and his family made so that he could go into the ministry.

Slide 27 **Illustration from NE India:** I think it is useful to consider how difficult it is for most people in NE India and other emerging countries to survive. According to wap.business-standard.com, the average income across India is \$616/year. That is less than \$1.69 (Rs118) a day. It ranks 99<sup>th</sup> out of 131 countries in economic prosperity. According to bbc.com, 30% of the nation lives below the poverty level. And, of course, many developing countries around the world have high poverty rates. For a large segment of earth's population, just surviving through the day is a challenge. To illustrate this, let's look at what it costs just for food in Guwahati, a major city in Assam.

Slide 28 **Guwahati food prices:** Consider the price of chicken or beef. At the average daily pay scale, it would cost these poor families half of their daily wage to eat meat. It is not uncommon therefore for those below the poverty level to enjoy meat perhaps only once or twice a month. In spite of their poverty, it is amazing to me how generous they are. On more than one occasion I was a guest in the house of a poor family for a meal and they honored me by serving meat. I am not worthy of such a sacrifice, and it touched me deeply.

Slide 29 **Thoughts on the realities of creating margin by the world's poor:** in summary, let's consider some of the realities of creating margin by the world's poor:

- though creating some margin is desirable, it may come at a great sacrifice for many people around the world.
- Any margin they achieve is commendable and if they give away a portion of it to their poor brethren, their sacrifice is precious in God's sight.
- My experience has been that sometimes the poor are the most generous.
- They live hand-to-mouth and are totally dependent on God for their survival. Yet many will give you the shirt off their back.
- We should have nothing but compassion for the poor, especially our poor brothers and sisters in Christ, and those of us who are able should be willing to help them in tangible ways.

Slide 30: **Question for discussion**

Slide 31 **Caution!:** I believe a word of caution is important.

- First, it is neither possible nor desirable for us to save for every future need.
- Only God knows the future and we are dependent upon him.
- We cannot trust our own resources for our security.
- No matter how much money we have, we cannot extend our lives beyond what God has ordained
- Instead we should live within our means and be content with what we have.
- Whether we have an abundance or scarcity, we should commit our future into God's hands for he has promised to care for us.

Slide 32 **Pray for wisdom in using our margin:** if we are able to create some margin on a consistent basis, we will develop a savings account. The possible uses of that account, as we have seen earlier, far exceed our ability to pay for them. We should pray for wisdom in using our savings according to god's plan for us. He may want us to use some of it to bless others, enhance the quality of our lives or save for future needs and opportunities. It's really his money and he is in control.

Slide 33: **discussion questions on margin**

Slide 34: **quiz**

Slide 35: **quiz**

Slide 36 **Summary of Principle #6 on creating margin:** let's review what we've talked about during this module on margin:

- First, we should constantly remind ourselves that God owns everything he has entrusted to us.
- He has demonstrated the principle of saving for the future in nature and in the various ways he has provided for his people
- We should cultivate a heart for serving God and blessing others
- practice the graces of gratitude and contentment.



- We should develop and follow a budget to systematically create margin
- We can use this margin as God directs to meet our future needs, wants and opportunities; the needs, wants and opportunities of others, and to build the kingdom of God.
- Remember the objective of regularly creating margin and saving is not to get rich or to trust in it for our security, but rather to practice a life of discipline, generosity, and submission to God's will for our financial resources.

Slide 37: **End of principle 6**

## **Principle 7. Cultivate a generous heart and live sacrificially**

### **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1: Principle #7. Cultivate a generous heart and live sacrificially

Slide 2: The Bible is our source for understanding God's generous and sacrificial heart

Slide 3: we are reminded that the goal of our study is to be filled with love as we seek to emulate God's character.

Slide 4: In part I, we will

- Read several Scriptures on generosity
- Identify 12 keys for living a more generous life
- Explore the wonderful concept of a Blessings Fund
- Discover a secret to joyful giving
- 10 blessings that generosity produces

In part 2, we will

- Look at a Biblical model of sacrificial living
- Examine the Biblical teaching for sacrificial living
- Learn which sacrificial gifts are precious in the sight of God.

### **Part 1: Cultivate a generous heart**

Slide 5: Let's look at the virtue of cultivating a Generous Heart

Slide 6: here are key passages that deal with generosity. The first two are from 2 Corinthians chapter 8. You will recall that Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to give a willing, generous and cheerful gift to the struggling church in Jerusalem. Let's review his request found chapter 9 at verses 5 and 9. In verse 5, Paul urged the church to prepare the gift in advance, without pressure, so that it would reflect their voluntary generosity. He follows it up in verse 9 by reminding the church that their good deeds would not be forgotten.

In Romans 12:6, Paul states that giving is a spiritual gift, and encourages it to be done with a spirit of generosity. Let's read the passage.

Slide 7: In principle number 5 we looked at the discipline of faithfulness in our regular, committed giving. When evaluating faithfulness versus cheerfulness, the case was made that faithfulness was more important than cheerfulness because the life of the church depends on

faithful givers keeping their commitments. If everyone waited until they were able to give cheerfully, the work of the Lord would suffer. Since God has ordained that his people, through their giving, are to support the work of the ministry, it is important that we honor our commitments. Therefore, regular systematic giving is a step of obedience and a sign of our devotion.

We also said that the ideal would be to not only give regularly and faithfully, but to give willingly and cheerfully. So faithful giving may be done out of a sense of duty, but even better is to do it with the right attitude. Our hearts attitude is the primary focus of this module, including the spirit of generosity, willingness, and cheerfulness.

“Generous giving” is defined in this seminar as making voluntary gifts to the Lord’s work over and above our regular giving commitments. They are similar in concept to “offerings”. But I would like to take this idea of generous giving one step further and add the idea of the attitude of one’s heart. In this module, we would like to make the case that truly generous giving as a spiritual gift does involve one’s heart attitude. I believe truly generous giving is a cheerful, unpretentious, discretionary choice to invest our resources in the kingdom of God for the sake of the gospel and the benefit of others.

We saw in the module on faithful giving that it is best when done humbly, willingly, thankfully, joyfully and with hearts of love for what Christ has done for us. The same is true for generous giving. But I believe our heart’s attitude is especially important.

I will acknowledge that it is possible to give large quantities of our resources to the Lord’s work, without necessarily doing it out of a willing or cheerful spirit. I do not criticize people who make these gifts with sincere motives, but only point out that since God loves a cheerful giver, that is the preferred attitude of the heart.

Slide 8: let’s dig a little deeper into the virtue of generosity. The Greek word for the gift of giving is “Metadidomi”. According to [spiritualgiftstest.com](http://spiritualgiftstest.com), it simply means to impart or to give. However, in Romans 12:8 Paul admonishes those with the gift of contributing to the needs of others, “to give generously”. In the original, “Metadidonu” is accompanied by another descriptive word: “Haplotes”. This word means sincerely, generously, and without pretense or hypocrisy. The Holy Spirit imparts this gift to some in the church to meet various needs. It is God’s Spirit who gives us the ability to give generously. The result is that the Lord’s work, including caring for others, is greatly benefited and the giver is blessed.

Slide 9 **“Haplotes” generosity**: those who are blessed with “Haplotes” encourage and provide, giving all credit to God’s love and provision. Those with this gift love to share with others the overflow of blessings God has given to them. They are typically very hospitable and will seek out ways and opportunities to help others. They are also excellent stewards and will often adjust their lifestyles in order to give more to the spread of the gospel and the care of the needy. They are grateful when someone shares a need with them and are always joyful when they can meet that need.

Slide 10: the gift of generosity is a blessing from God. And it is wonderful to witness those who have it. But for some, the grace of giving, and especially giving generously, must be developed through intentionality and practice. For me personally, being generous does not come naturally. By God's grace, I am learning to cultivate this virtue. It will always be a work in progress. But I desire to give more from a spirit of "Haplotes" rather than "Metadidomi" because I know that pleases the Lord.

Slide 11: let's consider 12 keys to living a generous life. Brian Kluth and others have given us great insight on the practice of this virtue. We could:

- Study the Scriptures on finances and generosity. That is the purpose of this seminar.
- Realize that God himself has a generous heart and we can thank him for what he has generously provided in our lives.
- Submit ourselves and all that we have to the Lord.
- Endeavor each day to keep eternity and God's kingdom in mind.
- Practice a lifestyle of inner joy and contentment (2 Corinthians 8: 1-5).

Slide 12: 12 keys (cont'd): we could

- Practice managing our money so that generosity can happen. We can practice a non-consumptive lifestyle, living below our means in order to create margin.
- Keep in mind that it is not the amount we give, but the attitude of our hearts.
- Let our generosity be an outward expression of our love, gratitude, and devotion to God.
- Have faith that God can multiply any gift no matter how small to produce miraculous results for the kingdom.
- Cultivate through prayer and practice a truly generous heart.
- Create a mechanism, such as a "Blessings Fund", that will allow us always to be ready to be generous as we discover needy and worthy beneficiaries. We'll consider the concept of a "Blessings Fund" next.

Slide 13: questions for discussion

Slide 14: here's a secret to successfully practicing spontaneous generosity.

Slide 15: A secret to practicing spontaneous generosity is a simple and practical concept: prepare for the occasion in advance. One way to do this is to create a "Blessings Fund". I first encountered the concept of a blessings fund through the teaching and life of Brian Kluth. He revealed this wonderful tool for practicing generosity.

Slide 16: a blessings fund is place, such as a bank account or cookie jar, containing money that we cheerfully set aside out of our margin today to bless others at some point in the future. Let's take a closer look at this concept.

Slide 17: What is a blessings fund?

- It is a store of money given in advance to the Lord.
- Since the money now belongs to God, it is safe from being spent on ourselves.
- It is set aside out of our margin for some future purpose.
- It is over and above our regular giving.

- It is money that we give joyfully, cheerfully, and willingly.
- Its purpose is to be able to spontaneously respond to needs and opportunities as they arise.
- Here's a hint on how to succeed in contributing to your own blessings fund: set aside some of your margin early in the month, before you begin your spending.

Slide 18: There are many passages in Scripture which encourage us to do good. Let's read two of them: Hebrews 13:1-3 and Acts 28:10.

Slide 19: Brian Kluth shares the story of the publication of the Bhutan Bible. He met a young man who was translating the entire Bible into the Bhutanese language. He had 66 notebooks filled with handwritten translation work. Of course, he could not publish it in that form so he needed to enter the notebooks into a computer. Out of a spirit of love and generosity Brian, when he learned of his need, spontaneously gave him his own laptop computer. The man left rejoicing in God's provision. In this case, Brian's blessing fund was not a sum of money, but a computer that he was willing to give to the Lord. We know that God can use any gift, no matter the form, for his glory.

Slide 20: Pat's lesson. I have a friend named Pat who recalls as a little girl finding \$2.00 in a drawer. She had been looking for money to buy some candy. When she ran to her mother with her discovery, her mother asked her where she found the money. When Pat told her, she said "Oh, no honey, that's God's money. I set it aside for him out of money I earned. It no longer belongs to us." Her mother may not have called it a blessings fund, but effectively that's what it was. Pat's mother was waiting for the opportunity to give it. Unfortunately, Pat had to wait for her candy, but learned the lesson of willingly giving in advance to God's work.

Slide 21: A blessings fund could be your secret to joyful giving. Since the money you set aside is no longer yours but God's, you are released from the pressure of having to decide in the heat of the moment when a need is presented whether to give or not to give. This gives you great freedom to use this precious resource as God directs. And it can be great fun. It's sort of like spending someone else's (God's) money on someone else (the needy). You have become a channel of blessing! A Blessings Fund enables you to give spontaneously, joyfully, and willingly; perhaps even enthusiastically.

Slide 22: let's now turn to one of my favorite sections of this module. It's found in the text of 2 Corinthians chapters eight and nine. There are two great treasures in these chapters. I call them "10 Blessings of Generosity" and the Principle of Sowing and Reaping.

Slide 23: let's look first at 10 blessings hidden in these chapters.

Slide 24: Have you ever prayed that God would use your life to

- encourage others to be thankful to him?
- influence others to glorify him?
- be a model for others to follow?
- feel your love for them?
- experience the love and prayers of God's people?

- overflow with his grace?
- build treasure in heaven?

If that all sounds good, I submit there is a simple way to see these things happen and more.

Slide 25: there's a passage in Scripture that tells us of the many blessings that can be given without saying a word.

Slide 26: what is this amazing way? These blessings happen when Christians give willingly and generously to their poor brothers and sisters in Christ.

Slide 27-29: these 10 blessings of generosity are found in 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9, and Luke chapter 12. They speak of some exceedingly precious promises that result in a bundle of blessings. Let's read these passages together:

Slide 30: did you see the 10 blessings? Let's go back and take a closer look.

Slide 31: first, from 2 Corinthians 9:12, when we give, the needs of others will be met. This blessing is obvious. In this case, Paul encouraged a collection to be taken in Corinth which he would transport to their sister church in Jerusalem, which was struggling financially at the time.

Slide 32: secondly, Paul says the recipients of the gifts will give thanks to God. And they will not just give thanks but they will do it with joy. Can you imagine that your loving gift would cause others to joyfully give thanks to God? Well, it is possible according to verse 12. Let's read it again.

Slide 33: thirdly, through our gifts God will enrich us and produce a great harvest of generosity in us. We've already seen that the gift of joyful generosity, "haplotēs", is from God. Here is a venue where we can practice that: participating in the simple act of giving to our poor brothers in need can produce wonderful results. Let's read once again verse 12.

Slide 34: here's another blessing: besides giving thanks with joy, they will give God glory. How wonderful it is when our lives are used in a way that causes others to give God glory. Let's read verse 13.

Slide 35: through our generosity, we will demonstrate to others our obedience to the gospel message. Once again, let's read verse 13.

Slide 36: it just keeps getting better: through our generosity they will experience our love for them. Let's read 2 Corinthians 8:24.

Slide 37: blessing #7 is precious: through our generosity, those who are blessed will pray for us. It's a specific promise. It demonstrates that we don't always have to ask others to pray for us; sometimes Christians pray for those in whom they see the grace of God in action. Let's read verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 9.

Slide 38: Those who benefit from our expression of generosity will express their love for us to our heavenly Father. If you desire to be loved by others, here is an unselfish way of seeing that happen. We show our love for others by helping them in their need, and they in turn express their love for us to God because we cared for them.

Slide 39: the ninth blessing is that God's grace will overflow in our lives. We often pray and desire that we would be an object of God's grace. We want God to show his grace to us. But we also can be a vessel of God's grace. We can demonstrate his grace to other people This passage in 2 Corinthians shows us one way that can be accomplished.

Slide 40: number 10. There is still one other benefit. Jesus said that such acts of compassion toward others store up treasures in heaven for us. Let's read Luke 12:33.

Slide 41: let's review the 10 blessings of generosity found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and Luke 12:

1. The needs of the poor Christians will be met 9:12
2. They will joyfully give thanks to God 9:12
3. God will enrich you and produce great generosity in you 9:10
4. They will give God glory 9:13
5. You will demonstrate to others the grace of God in your life 9:13
6. They will experience your love for them 8:24
7. They will pray for you 9:14
8. They will express their love for you to God 9:14
9. God's grace will overflow in your life 9:14
10. You will build treasure in heaven (Luke 12:33)

In summary, what is amazing to me and what blesses me so much about this passage is that the simple kindness of helping meet the needs of our fellow believers not only results in many earthly blessings and encourages the spiritual lives of both the giver and the recipient, but also has eternal benefits.

Slide 42: 2. The Principle of Sowing and Reaping

The passage we just studied revealing the 10 blessings also contains another truth: the principle of sowing and reaping.

Slide 43: **We reap what we sow.** The principle taught here is the amount we reap is proportional to the amount we sow

- Our sowing, according to this passage, is focused on benefitting our poor brethren in Christ, but the principle may extend to good works of every kind
- Our attitude should be willingness and cheerfulness We may reap more than mere money; through grace we will receive everything we need to abound in every good work
- Our generosity to the poor should not be an occasional event but a lifestyle
- God seems to say that as we give up our lives to others, he will give back our lives several fold, so that we can be even more generous
- Willing, generous giving yields spiritual and eternal benefits as well as temporal ones.

Slide 44: here is a final thought from Brian Kluth: “If we don’t set aside resources and time to give, every request for help will make us feel tight-fisted, pressured, and sometimes even angry. But when we intentionally set aside finances, time, and things for the Lord, we will actually be excited and will prayerfully look for God-given opportunities to give, share, and serve. This “set aside” secret will truly change our lives and allow us to live open-handed in a tight-fisted world.”

Slide 45: questions for discussion

Slide 46: quiz

Slide 47: class exercise

## **Part II: Practice sacrificial living**

Slide 48: this brings us to part II of principle seven: God is pleased when we practice sacrificial living.

Slide 49: the key to sacrificial living is to offer ourselves and everything we have to God on a moment by moment basis. Let’s read Romans 12:1.

Slide 50: there is a wonderful Biblical model of a person who lived his life as a sacrifice to God. We are speaking, of course, of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Let’s read Ephesians 5: 2.

Slide 51: I believe the Bible clearly teaches that sacrificial gifts, made unselfishly and from a heart of love for Christ and others, are precious in the sight of God. We will look at two cases. First, we will read the story from Scripture of the poor widow. Then we will consider another famous case of sacrificial giving.

Slide 52-53: the story of the poor widow. Let’s read Mark 12:41-44,

Slide 54: let’s consider some of the lessons from this passage about the poor widow:

- First of all, our she did not give a great amount of money, yet she was commended. So I believe the principle here is this: the amount we give is not as important as the degree of sacrifice.
- I believe it follows by implication that the greater the sacrifice, the more commendable the gift.
- Some sacrificial gifts may bless others immediately. This is our normal expectation when we give. We have the hope that the needs of others will be met upon receiving our gift.
- However, other sacrificial gifts may not begin blessing others until after we are gone. We know this happens through bequests we make, the legacy we leave, and by other actions that we perform in this life that have delayed-action or long-term benefits. In the case of the poor widow, she touched the lives of the disciples who were watching her.

But her sacrifice continues to give to others down through the ages in the pages of Scripture. Every time her story is told, the hearers receive a blessing for what she did.

Slide 55: class discussion

Slide 56: helping those in need. Let's read Hebrews 13:14-16 and Ephesians 6: 8. We all know the story of the good Samaritan. A Jewish man was accosted by thugs who beat him up, stole everything he had, and left him for dead along the side of the road. Men of his own race looked the other way and passed him by, leaving him hurting and in great need. Finally, a lowly Samaritan man passed by, stopped, and nursed the man's wounds. He then took him to a local inn and gave the innkeeper money to care for him. He also assured the innkeeper that if his care was more expensive than what he had just been given, the Samaritan would make up for it when he returned. This is one of the most touching stories in Scripture of sacrificial living. We would do well to emulate it.

Slide 57: class discussion

Slide 58: let's summarize our study of principle #7 having to do with generosity and sacrifice:

- Generosity is consistent with God's character. As his obedient and faithful children, we wish to emulate him.
- The Bible encourages and even commands us to live sacrificially so that we might bless others in need.
- A blessings fund is a wonderful and practical tool for living a generous life and building heavenly treasure.
- When we give freely and generously to the needy, especially poor believers, the result is a bounty of blessings to both giver and recipient.
- I believe Scripture teaches that God will reward those who sacrifice their own interests for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Slide 59: class essay

Slide 60. End of Principle 7

### **Principle 8. Care for the poor, weak, oppressed, and needy** **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1: in this module we will study what God's word has to say about caring for the poor, the weak, the oppressed, and the needy. It will not be exhaustive, but it will be comprehensive enough to get a glimpse into God's heart regarding this very large group of people that is very special to Him.

Slide 2: We'll discover that God is concerned and cares deeply about these amazing people. Our desire is that, through this study, our we will align our hearts with his heart regarding the poor.

Slide 3: Let's read our theme verse once again. I Timothy 1:5



Slide 4: Here is the outline for this module: we will

- examine key Bible passages having to do with the subject.
- provide context through a graph that portrays the continuum of wealth among all people
- define who are the poor and needy; or, in more general terms, the underclass.
- list five Biblical truths about poverty.
- understand God's special relationship with the underclass.
- look at blessings he gives to all
- 6 scriptural warnings against mistreating the poor
- 21 excuses people make for mistreating them.
- consider some responsibilities that Christians have towards the poor
- list 10 responsibilities the poor have to themselves.
- Talk about at a number of strategies for achieving poverty

Slide 5: there are dozens of passages in Scripture that deal with the poor and the needy. Let's read three of them that set the stage for our study: Proverbs 14:31, James 1:27, and James 2:5.

Slide 6: this is a graph entitled "the continuum of wealth". It classifies everyone in the world according to the assets they possess. The "x" or horizontal axis is wealth, from nothing at all on the left (extreme poverty) to fabulous riches on the right. By definition, I propose that everyone on earth can be placed somewhere on this curve. On the "y" or vertical axis we have the world's population, which stood in January, 2018 at 7.7 billion people (source: Wikipedia.com). According to some research, over half of the world's population lives on less than \$2.00 a day. Approximately 80% live on less than \$10.00 per day.

At the far left end of the wealth axis, approximately 5% of the world's wealth is spread over approximately 40% of the people or three billion souls. At the other end of the scale, the richest 20% earn 75% of the world's income. At the extreme right we have people like Jeff Bezos worth \$109B, Bill Gates worth \$92B and Warren Buffett with an estimated \$90B. Here's a staggering statistic: just 9 of the world's richest men have more combined wealth than the poorest four billion people on earth.

These are such staggering statistics that we would do well by understanding God's perspective on this inequity.

In this module, we will consider the poor, represented by approximately half of the world's population. In the next module we will consider the group of people represented by the right-hand side of the graph-the rich.

Slide 7: Let's now take a closer look at the world's poor, especially the three billion people who live in extreme poverty. Who are these people?

Slide 8: For the purposes of our study, here is a partial list. Notice it includes not only the poor and homeless but the abused, the misused, the neglected, the persecuted and oppressed, the sick, and social outcasts. Every society has its outcasts and I believe they tend to be abused by the rest of the population. I believe God would consider these people to be in this group of people that he especially cares about. In India the outcasts are called the Dalits or the Untouchables.

Slide 9: let's consider five important truths about poverty.

Slide 10: First, their condition may not be their own fault but rather as a result of the sovereignty of God . We must realize that it is He who ultimately decides our financial strength. Let's read 1 Samuel 2:7-8.

Slide 11: Secondly, God may have many purposes for visiting poverty on people. Many of them could be redemptive in purpose. That is, it could be a blessing in disguise. For example, it could be to humble us or to teach us to trust him for our needs. It could be for the personal growth we could experience by bearing the consequences of our own decisions and actions. That may not seem like a blessing at the time, but if we, during a time of poverty, develop deeper character, it could be seen in retrospect as a very important and worthwhile time in our lives. We would view it later as a blessed experience. Another reason could be to teach us gratitude for what we have, or used to have. He could be testing the genuineness of our faith. And there may be many other reasons that God allows us to experience poverty. Of course, no matter what our financial circumstances happened to be, we are to bring him glory through humility, patience, obedience, trust, praise and thanksgiving.

Slide 12: Though there may be exceptions, I believe it is God's ultimate desire to lift people out of their poverty, oppression, and disease. We know that Jesus said that the poor will always be with us. And this is certainly true of the world's population. But I believe we are not to judge on an individual basis, so if we have a chance to help those in despair, we should do so. We should see all people for the potential that God has built into them.

History is filled with examples of believers and nonbelievers alike who have contributed to the betterment of society, particularly toward the poor, the sick, and the helpless. Noble societies have always had people who treat their underclass with respect, and I believe this honors God. Let's read 1 Samuel 2:7-8.

Slide 13: the principle of Christians caring for the poor and needy is further emphasized in 1 Timothy 5:8 and Isaiah 58:6-7. Let's read these passages together.

Slide 14: A fifth aspect of poverty is that God may give the grace to some people to choose that lifestyle for the sake of the kingdom. Their model for this is Jesus himself as described in II Corinthians 8:9. Let's read this together. A person who seemed to have this mindset was Mother Teresa.

Slide 15: Questions for discussion.

Slide 16: this next section is one of my favorite studies of the entire seminar, for it shows God's heart of deep love and concern for this large segment of our population—the underclass. And it also shows his fierce anger towards those who would abuse them and his desire that we care for them. So, let's look at a number of verses that characterize God's special relationship with the poor.

Slide 17: first, God honors them. He holds them in high esteem. They have a lofty position in his eyes. Let's read James 1:9. This is consistent with other passages of Scripture. For example, 1 Peter 5:6 says that he exalts the humble, which includes those of low estate.

Slide 18: God defends the underclass and will punish those who rob or exploit them. We are to treat them with respect. There are many passages in Scripture that make this point. Let's read two of them: Proverbs 22:22-23 and Proverbs 21:13. Lest we think that we would never rob or exploit the underclass, it may be instructive to discuss this question: "What are some of the more subtle or respectable ways that people rob or exploit the poor?"

Slide 19: Here is a verse that I love. I think we find among the poor, especially poor believers, a treasure-- not in worldly goods but in spiritual treasures such as faith and love. Let's read James 2:5.

Slide 20: here is another precious verse because it shows how truly rich the poor can be. God may give them special discernment into rich people, especially their motives. The gift of wisdom and discernment is more valuable than gold or silver. Let's read Proverbs 28:11.

Slide 21: here is a wonderful truth. God gives all of us, including the poor, a multitude of graces of everyday life. They are freely given and available to all of us regardless of our financial circumstance. Though we often take many of them for granted, they are the things that make life rich and rewarding. We'll look at a list of these blessings shortly. Here is just a foretaste found in Isaiah 55:1 where it speaks of the invitation we have to draw near to God.

Slide 22: another aspect of God's special relationship to the poor is that he may give them the grace to experience deep joy within themselves and extend their sacrificial generosity towards others. I have personally experienced this in India as well as the United States. Some of those who have the least of this world's goods are very generous both with their material possessions and their hearts. Let's read 2 Corinthians 8:2.

Slide 23: besides the list of material blessings that God freely gives the poor, if they are believers, they like all of his children are the recipient of God's spiritual gifts, which cannot be bought. Let's read acts 8:18-20.

Slide 24: the eighth characteristic in our list is a truth that we find throughout Scripture. God will deliver the needy and afflicted in their time of need. He may use people to accomplish this or he may intervene directly. We would do well to avoid invoking God's wrath in this area of human relationships through neglect or abuse. Let's read two verses, Psalm 72:12 in some 12:5.

Slide 25: besides discernment, joy, and generosity, the poor have full and free access to The True Riches. We will look at The True Riches, which are spiritual riches that far surpass material wealth in module number 10. Let's read II Corinthians 8:9.

Slide 26: The 10<sup>th</sup> characteristic in our brief study of God's special relationship to the poor is a truth that we all know. That is perhaps the most important of all: it is God's gift of eternal life, which is free to everyone. We cannot buy it, no matter how much money we have. And we can

afford it no matter how little of this world's goods we possess. The full price was paid by Jesus Christ, God's son, by his death on the cross. We cannot add even one rupee to the price he paid. We freely receive it through repentance and faith.

Slide 27: I Trust that all of you are believers who have received God's wonderful plan of salvation. We recognize that we are sinful people and under God's judgement, deserving of the penalty of eternal separation from him. Because we are hopelessly lost, we need his forgiveness. We believe that we cannot pay the penalty for our sin, but humbly and graciously accept the redemptive price that Jesus Christ, God's son, paid on the cross. If we turn from our sin and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, trusting in his great redeeming sacrifice to make us right with God, we will receive full forgiveness and the gift of eternal life.

Slide 28: we know that when we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God's Spirit enters our lives and we become his children. Let's read Romans 8:15

Slide 29: because God is trustworthy to keep his promises, we can be assured that our faith in Christ to save us will be sufficient on that final day when we see him. If we are trusting in Jesus, we are secure in his arms. I John 5:11-13 gives us that assurance.

Slide 30: quiz

Slide 31-35: we are talking about God's perspective on poverty and his relationship to the poor in this module. But we need to realize that he freely gives all of us—rich and poor alike-- a multitude of blessings that can make our lives rich and rewarding. The list of blessings that we receive freely from God is probably endless, but here are some.

Slide 36: we've already discovered that God loves and is jealously protective of the underclass. Let's look at six scriptural warnings against mistreatment of the poor. This will help us realize what a terrible thing it is to neglect or mistreat them.

Slide 37: first, it is wrong to discriminate against them. When we impart or deny social courtesies to people based on their financial standing, we offend God. The example given in James 2: 2-4 has to do with the partiality we show the wealthy in our churches. This is something we need to be careful not to do. We should be looking at the quality of a man's heart rather than their outward appearance. Let's read this passage.

Slide 38: secondly, we must realize that the rich have great power to harm the poor. They are defenseless against such lopsided opposition. This verse links those who oppress the poor with those who blaspheme God's name. May we as Christians never be guilty of such offenses. Let's read James 2:6-7.

Slide 39: when we insult the poor, we are actually insulting God himself. Proverbs 14:31.

Slide 40: we've talked about the act of oppressing the poor. But there are passages that deal with other ways we can sin against them. Withholding justice is one of them. James 5:1-4 warns us

that withholding their wages is something God notices. He will hear the cries of those who have been defrauded of their earnings. Deuteronomy 24:14 - 16 has a similar warning.

Slide 41: the fifth warning has to do with mistreating those who are suffering. We do not want to ignore them, persecute them, or add to their disgrace and shame. Rather, we are to comfort and help them. If they are suffering because of God's judgement on them, perhaps he will use our kindness in their time of need to help restore them, for we know that he is a redemptive God. His judgements do not last forever, and they are ultimately for our benefit and his Glory. Therefore, our kindness might be a part of God's redemptive plan for them. Conversely, if they are suffering by their own hands or the hands of others, when we come alongside to help them, we show them the love of Christ and perhaps show them a better way to live or give them hope.

Slide 42: here is some additional insight regarding the mistreatment of the poor. We should not profit at their expense, compromise their dignity, or exploit them. Let's read Exodus 22: 25, Leviticus 19:9- 10, and Proverbs 22:22. There are other passages of Scripture that deal with the mistreatment of the underclass.

Slide 43-44: It is sad to say this, but there is a myriad of excuses people make for not helping the poor. Let's list some of them.

Slide 45: Class discussion

Slide 46: Quiz

Slide 47: Let's consider six responsibilities that we as Christians have to poor and needy. We will see that some of the warnings we studied earlier are now expressed as positive actions. You will see that the basic concept is to come alongside and help our neighbor in his time of need. We see this from the second commandment that Jesus gave when he talked about the two greatest commands. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Let's read mark 12:31.

Slide 48: first we are to treat the poor with respect. We will not need to read the passage again because we already looked at James 2:1-4.

Slide 49: this admonition should now be familiar to us. We should not neglect them. This particular slide is especially convicting to me. In Jesus' parable, there is a rich man who daily walked out his door and passed by a beggar named Lazarus, completely ignoring his suffering. Day after day, he showed complete disregard for him. But the dogs were kinder than the rich man; they came over and licked Lazarus' wounds. There could be some symbolism here, but it's the imagery that pierces my heart. Don't let it be said of us that the dogs, whether animals or other outcasts, care more for the poor than we do as Christ-followers.

Slide 50: of course, we are to care for them. This is further illustrated by Jesus when he said that when we care for the poor and needy believer, we are actually ministering to him. Matthew 25: 34 - 36. This is a wonderful promise that shows us a practical way to serve our Lord.

Slide 51: the church is to be a model of caring for the needy. Widows and orphans constitute a class of people especially close to God's heart. There is perhaps no higher priority of people that the church can minister to than widows and orphans. It is very revealing in James 1:27 that God seems to summarize Christian life as two basic acts of service: living holy lives and looking after widows and orphans. Let's read this passage together.

Slide 52: here are several passages regarding treating the poor with kindness and even generosity. Let's read these verses together.

- Proverbs 19:17 suggests that when we help the poor, we are lending to the Lord. And the Lord pays wonderful interest on his debts.
- Leviticus 23:22 states that we can help the poor to maintain their dignity and respect by establishing ways that they can support themselves.
- We are commanded to be generous and willing to share with the needy in 1 Timothy 6:18.
- Hebrews 13:16 is a call to good deeds and the sharing of our resources with those who need it.
- 1 John 3:17 is a sobering reminder that when we disregard our brother in need, we need to question whether we have the love of God in us.

Slide 53: here is a teaching by Jesus that is especially precious. Here he talks about lifting up the poor and making them feel special. Jesus implied that as we do this, but God will repay us. In the U.S., we have public and private agencies that provide social services to the needy. When we support them, we are ministering to the poor. And sometimes we can get personally involved when the opportunity is right. Here is a suggestion for your personal ministry to the poor: if we do something to meet a poor person's need like giving them a piece of bread or cup of cold water, why not once in a while do something beyond the bare minimum for them? For example, consider taking them to a restaurant for a nice meal, or give them a pair of shoes. If we take them to a doctor's appointment, we could treat them to a cup of coffee or tea on the way home. I believe that sacrifices of time and money like this not only can be a tremendous blessing to both giver and recipient but is acceptable in God's sight as well. Let's read Luke 14:12 -14.

Slide 54: we are to rescue and defend them. The importance of this principle cannot be overemphasized. Let's read these two passages, Proverbs 31: 8-9 and Isaiah 58: 6-7, then consider Job.

Slide 55: we can learn a lot about treating the poor from Job. He was a wealthy, upright man. But instead of using his wealth selfishly, he used some of it to be a father to the needy and to rescue those who were suffering from the hands of their persecutors.

Slide 56: We can summarize as three principles what we have studied regarding our relationship to the underclass:

- treating them with dignity and respect,
- rebuking those who are oppressing them and defending them possible
- coming alongside to love and help them as we have opportunity

Slide 57: questions for discussion

Slide 58: Quiz

Slide 59: Quiz

Slide 60: our study of the poor would not be complete if we did not talk about some of the responsibilities that they have to themselves. They do not need to forever remain helpless, but sometimes can be part of their own journey out of poverty. Here is a list of some of the responsibilities they have to themselves. We should encourage everyone that is struggling financially to follow these principles:

- Trust God as their protector and provider
- Practice Godly contentment
- Take advantage of every opportunity to help themselves
- Work hard at whatever job they can find
- Honor God with their first-fruits
- Learn to live sustainably with what they have
- Avoid borrowing, gambling, or stealing
- Seek Godly counsel to try to improve their situation
- Pray for God's wisdom as to how they might support themselves
- Use their humble circumstances to seek The True riches rather than monetary wealth

Slide 61: This last segment in principle #8 offers you 16 strategies for achieving poverty. There is, of course, a little bit of wry humor embedded in this heading because I don't believe God wants us to become poor intentionally. Therefore, what follows are attitudes, habits and practices to avoid. As stated earlier, there may be some people who have the grace of poverty and who choose to live in hardship for the sake of the kingdom of God. We are not talking about Godly or sacrificial lifestyles; we're talking about those who through their own poor or sinful choices end up in poverty.

Slide 62: perhaps the most obvious way we can become poor is through laziness. There are several cousins to laziness that we will discuss, but nearly everyone in the world understands that laziness is not the way to prosperity. There are many passages in Scripture that warn us against being lazy. We will consider one of them, Proverbs 6:9-11.

Slide 63: Proverbs 28:19 presents another path to the poorhouse: wasting our time chasing fantasies and other worthless pursuits. The wise person will occupy himself productively. If he is in a stage of life where he needs income, then he will most likely succeed in that endeavor by being industrious and working hard. Even those who don't need more money in their stage of life should not waste their time but rather submit their time to the Lord so that he can use it for his Glory. They might be able to advance the kingdom through their gifts and talents, or help others in need. They have the opportunity to spend their time doing good deeds and contributing to the benefit of others. It is a wonderful blessing to be able to volunteer one's time for kingdom work or for the good of society. I believe God does grant us the grace to rest and reap the rewards of our labor, but I'm cautioning us to avoid taking a hard-earned privilege to excess.

Slide 64: an abundance of idle talk can lead to poverty. Unless we are planning a useful endeavor, seeking advice, or otherwise engaged in a useful conversation, too much talk can be a time waster. And when we are talking about avoiding poverty, time is money. Proverbs 14:23.

Slide 65: A corollary of wasting our time is to live for pleasure. It's good to give a party once in a while to share our joy and prosperity with our friends. But it's not good to live a life of ease and pleasure, because it not only robs us of productive endeavors, we can find that our money quickly disappears.

Slide 66: this principle is similar to some of the earlier ones we saw. It is clear from this passage that the name of a 4-lane highway to poverty is called drunkenness and gluttony. Proverbs 23:20-21.

Slide 67: wanting to live the good life right now is another way to becoming poor. That's because instead of creating margin and saving for the future, we want to enjoy the fruits of our success now. We spend everything we make to live life to the fullest. And maybe we spend a little bit more than we make in order to do that. Enjoying the fruits of our labor can be an acceptable practice in moderation, but the reality is that circumstances can change. A time of abundance can quickly turn into an extended period of scarcity. We can lose our job, we can experience financial loss, we or our loved ones can get sick, or we can suffer tragedy. Those who don't plan ahead but think of only the present and their enjoyment of it may suffer the consequences later on.

Slide 68: Success usually comes from good planning and hard work, mixed with God's blessing. Sometimes we can take hasty shortcuts or make reckless decisions because we're uninformed, impatient, lazy or foolish. Those mistakes can lead to poverty. Consider Proverbs 21:5.

Slide 69: it takes discipline to achieve success for most people. If we ignore good counsel, ignore discipline, or refuse correction, we run the risk of making foolishness mistakes. And sometimes those mistakes can cost us dearly. Proverbs 13: 19.

Slide 70: it is good to begin worthwhile projects. But it's necessary to do our homework. Proper planning requires understanding a number of relevant factors, including the benefits and drawbacks, the market, the economy, the gov't, the cost of the project, the risks, etc. Failure to do this can lead to project failure and a financial setback. If a person has placed everything on the line too hastily and without proper planning, the results can be disastrous.

Slide 71: this should be obvious to Christians. If we choose to live a sinful lifestyle, we cannot expect God's blessing. He may visit poverty on us to help us come to our senses. Micah 6:13.

Slide 72: here is a remarkably good way to become poor: conduct our affairs dishonestly and engage in corrupt dealings with people. Today we have thieves and predators on the Internet who rob people of their life savings. Some of them have success in this world, but have eternal poverty, suffering and despair in their future. Let's read Jeremiah 8:10.



Slide 73: we can choose the wrong friends. This can be fatal for our lives both morally, spiritually, and financially. Prov 13:20 speaks to this. Then, in Psalm 1:1-6, Here is a somewhat colorful rendition of which warns us against choosing bad company.

Slide 74: Here is a principle that may be counter-intuitive to some of us: there is a lifestyle which tends to grasp onto what we have too tightly in the hopes of collecting more stuff. We're talking about the miserly, the scrooge, and the tightwad. These people hoard and keep everything for themselves. They do not give to others what is justly due them, and make excuses for it. But those attitudes can lead to shortsightedness and short-term thinking where they lose out in the long run. They may be fearful of seizing opportunities that come their way, or they may come to a point in life where they need help but no one will give it to them because of their past selfishness. Or they might find that inflation has robbed them of the value of what they were clinging to. So, a miserly and stingy lifestyle can be dangerous. On the contrary, the Scriptures say that the liberal soul will be made fat. Let's read Proverbs 11:24-25.

Slide 75: here is a common way that people become poor. They become greedy. They make poor choices in their desire to become wealthy. They are enticed into get-rich-quick schemes. The Bible clearly exposes this danger in Proverbs 28:22.

Slide 76: if we get our money unjustly, we can expect to lose it. Obviously, this doesn't happen to everyone in this life, because we know that the ungodly can become rich for a very long time through unjust means. If, as a child of God, we have fallen into this sin, we can pray that he might gently show us the error of our unjust ways so that we can recompense anyone we have cheated, before we do them and ourselves irreparable harm.

Slide 77: we not only run the danger of achieving poverty by oppressing the poor, but an equally effective way to the poorhouse might be by flattering the rich. Currying their favor can become a snare to us and entrap us. We may fall into a practice of spending our money in order to win their favor. Once we get on that merry-go-round there may be no way off. The Bible says showering gifts on the rich is dangerous. Let's read Proverbs 22:16 once again to see the contrast between oppressing the poor and flattering the rich.

Slide 78: Summary

- God is the one who ultimately determines our financial status
- God cares deeply about the poor, the needy, the abused, the oppressed, and the neglected
- God has given the poor special gifts. Many are very generous, have great faith, and have deep insight into people
- The underclass should be treated with dignity and respect. Christians have a responsibility to be kind and compassionate towards them, and to help them if they are able
- Don't let it be said that the dogs care more about the poor than we do
- We should defend the widow and orphan, and rebuke those who mistreat the poor
- The poor have certain responsibilities to lift themselves out of poverty if they are able
- God is pleased when we help those in need, and assist those who wish to escape poverty
- We should not blame God if we fall into poverty through wrong choices and evil behavior

Slide 79: class discussion

Slide 80: end of principle 8.

**Principle 9. Use wealth to glorify God and build treasure in heaven**  
**Instructor's notes**  
**Revised 1-10-2019**

Slide 1: in the previous module we studied God's heart towards the poor and needy. In this module we'll look at his instructions and warnings to the wealthy.

Slide 2: it is the thesis of this module that the Bible teaches us to use our wealth to glorify God and build treasure in heaven.

Slide 3: let's review our familiar theme verse. As before, our goal is not just head knowledge but a transformed heart. Let our prayer be that we would allow the Holy Spirit to lead us concerning the management of whatever wealth—large or small—the Lord may give us. Let's read for 1 Timothy 1:5.

Slide 4: let's take a closer look at principal #9: Use wealth to glorify God and build treasure in heaven.

Slide 5: there are many Biblical passages we could use as core verses to study God's desire for the management of wealth. We'll read two of them. 1 Timothy 6: 17-19 and 2 Corinthians 6:15. The first verse is a specific command to the wealthy not to put their hope in their money but to use their prosperity to do good. In so doing they will lay up treasure in heaven for themselves and experience real life. The second verse is a general statement encouraging us to give our lives away for the sake of Christ.

Slide 6: this module is divided into two parts. In the first part we will examine wealth from many different points of view, and particularly its dangers but also how it can be used to glorify God. We will

Part I

- look once again at the continuum of wealth
- identify the true source of our wealth
- understand the danger of having too much or too little
- consider biblical arguments for and against becoming. We will consider both sides.
- answer the question: "how much money does it take for God to accomplish great things through us?"
- consider a wise balance between riches and poverty
- discuss a Godly attitude towards wealth.

I love part two of this module:

Part II

- Discover the difference between heavenly math and earthly math. Let me just say that it is astronomical.
- Look at two examples of heavenly rates of return.
- Finally, we'll explore a wonderful concept called the "Treasure Principle", a concept taught by Ron Blue.

## **Part I: Use wealth to glorify God**

Slide 7: let's look at Biblical teaching about riches: Part 1 is entitled "Use wealth to glorify God." This is a theme of Scripture when it comes to God's desire for the use of riches.

Slide 8: Let's take a second look at this graph entitled "The continuum of wealth". You will recall that on the far left we have those with nothing of this world's goods and on the far right we have the exceedingly rich, with everyone else on earth somewhere in between. Notice once again that vast numbers of people on planet earth live in poverty, whereas relatively few have great wealth.

Slide 9: In the last module we studied biblical teaching regarding poverty, the state of a large percentage of the world's population, the underclass.

Slide 10: let's now examine Biblical teaching on riches.

Slide 11: let's begin by talking about a hypothetical situation. Suppose you wake up one morning and realize that God has given you some measure of wealth. You had not been thinking about your financial status previously, and your life goals are not about money. But now, suddenly, you're rich. You have been given more money than you'll ever know what to do with. How would you respond to that realization in the light of God's word? It's a useful exercise to think about this as we begin this module.

Slide 12: as Christians, and as stewards, we know that God is the provider of this gift. So let's assume he is the first one we would consult as we contemplate our new situation. Let's take a few minutes and have each person write a short prayer regarding your situation. What would you say to God?

Who would like to share their prayer with the class? Note to instructor: write on the board some of the key elements of the various prayers to get an idea of the scope of issues that one should consider when prayerfully contemplating vast wealth.

Slide 13: Let's continue our study by seeing what the Bible has to say about the subject. We'll start by identifying the true source of our wealth, whether great or small. We'll see how God's sovereignty factors into wealth, and read a prayer for moderation.

Slide 14: First, God is the true source of our wealth. He is not only the owner of everything, but he is the giver of every blessing, both material and spiritual. Let's read Jas 1:17.

Slide 15: As the Sovereign God, he is the one who gives success and riches. Let's read Ecclesiastes 5: 19 and 1 Chronicles 29: 12.

Slide 16: By his sovereign purposes, God determines each man's financial strength according to his righteous judgments. He is in control of our lives, he has a plan for them, and it is he who will determine whether we are ultimately poor or rich. We see this in 1 Samuel 2:7. Deuteronomy 32:4 reminds us that God never makes mistakes; his ways are perfect. He does no wrong and is not caught by surprise. Deuteronomy 30. 9 is one that portrays God as delighting in making us successful when we follow his ways, live an obedient life, and honor him in what we do. Therefore, we can rest in the assurance that as we live lives pleasing to God, he will orchestrate our financial status as he deems best.

Slide 17: because there can be adverse consequences, it is dangerous to ask God to become rich. Similarly, most of us would not ask him to make us poor, at least financially. Solomon knew that there was wisdom in moderation. Let's read Proverbs 30: 7 - 9. What do we observe from this passage? On the one hand, if we have too little we may be tempted to do wicked things to meet our needs rather than trusting God to provide for them. On the other hand, if we have too much we may develop a cold heart and begin living a selfish, indulgent life. I think this passage teaches us to ask God for his perfect balance between riches and poverty. If he chooses to give us wealth, then we place that blessing under his Lordship. And if we have little, Scripture is full of encouragement to lean on God for his provision, to thank him for whatever we have, and to try to be a blessing to others no matter how small our resources might be.

Slide 18: Solomon seemed to realize that there was wisdom in asking God for moderation between wealth and poverty. Here summarize some concepts related to this subject.

Slide 19: The Bible makes arguments both for and against becoming wealthy.

Slide 20: The Bible makes at least 24 arguments against pursuing wealth. Many of them state the threat to our temporal lives. Some of them warn of the danger to our spiritual life.

Slide 21. First, wealth is not advisable for fools. Proverbs 17: 16 suggest that a fool would not know what to do with the money because he has no desire to seek wisdom, and great wealth requires great wisdom to be properly managed.

Slide 22 here is a danger that we are all familiar with. If we become rich, we may put our trust in money rather than God's provision. Here are three verses that caution us in this regard: Proverbs 11:28, 1 Timothy 6: 17, and Job 31: 24 - 26, 28.

Slide 23. Here is another reason to avoid becoming rich. I think we all see this problem in the world. Rich people become a target for evil people. If we are wealthy, our lives might get threatened. We or a loved one might be kidnapped and have to pay a ransom or have a life threatened. This is illustrated in Proverbs 13.8. We also become a target for greedy people who may deceive us because they're after our money. This is the caution found in 2 Peter 2: 1, 3.

Slide 24. Here is a corollary to the previous point. If we become rich, we may not be able to trust

our friends. We're sure to have many of them, but are they genuine? I'm sure there are many wealthy people who are very lonely because they really have no friends who love them for who they are but only for what they can get out of them. Proverbs 14:20 suggests this reality.

Slide 25: if we have riches we may develop a cold heart. This is especially dangerous for Christians who become wealthy. They may see a brother in need and just ignore him. This is a great sin and indicates that God's love is not in that person. 1 John 3:17.

Slide 26: Rich people sometimes do not experience peace. There are a lot of worries that come along with great wealth. Ecclesiastes 5:12 makes the comparison between a poor laborer who can sleep at night and a rich man where sleep escapes him. This is a real sad situation. Is there anyone in the audience who would give up a life of restful sleep for riches?

Slide 27: Another danger of becoming rich is that we may become arrogant and demanding. We may feel like we are better than others or that God has looked upon us with special favor just because he has given us lots of money. That arrogance can lead to treating others badly--especially the poor. We've already seen that it is sin to put them down or gain unfair advantage over them. Let's read Proverbs 18:23

Slide 28: if we become rich we may have many troubles in this life. We saw how it can lead to restless nights and untrustworthy friends. If we are eager to get rich, we make money an idol and thus incur God's displeasure. That desire can preoccupy us or become an obsession, draining any real spiritual vitality that we have in life. Proverbs 28:20 and Ecclesiastes 5:13 address this point.

Slide 29: here's an interesting irony. If we're eager to get rich, we may actually end up in poverty. That could be part of the consequences of a selfish and greedy attitude. It is far better to seek faithfulness and righteousness and let God determine the strength of our financial resources. Let's read Proverbs 28:20.

Slide 30: wealth or the love of it does not bring us happiness. If used according to God's will, it can be a blessing to our family and others. But only a right relationship with God can bring true happiness. Let's read Ecclesiastes 6:10.

Slide 31: another danger of riches is that it may steal our heart. This is similar to making it an idol. We are all familiar with the verse that says where our treasure is there will our heart will be. If we see our earthly wealth as the most important thing in our lives, our heart is going to be chasing after money rather than being focused on eternal things. Let's read Luke 12:33-34

Slide 32: It may lead to a false sense of security. Though a person's resources may have limited usefulness, no material asset can protect us from the dangers and calamities of life. Only God can do that. Ecclesiastes 7:12-14.

Slide 33: the pursuit of riches may cause us to focus on earthly and temporal things, making our Christian walk unfruitful. We might waste our lives focusing on earthly things rather than working to build Christ's kingdom. Let's read Matthew 13:22.

Slide 34: if we are wealthy, we may not only be unfruitful for God's Kingdom but we also might become spiritual dwarfs. Jesus gives us this warning in Luke 8. 14.

Slide 35: we may become proud. This is similar to becoming arrogant. Rather than seeking humility and service as we move through life, wealth may have just the opposite effect. We may become proud and haughty and look down on others. Let's read Ezekiel 28:5 and Psalm 49:16 - 20.

Slide 36: here is the danger that we all recognize. Riches may tempt us to pursue a life of pleasure. Luke 12 16 – 21.

Slide 37: 1 Timothy 6:9 is a familiar verse. It speaks of the desire to become rich as a trap. It's a self-created form of bondage. When we choose to immerse ourselves in the world's system, we become vulnerable to all the evil ways that people can hurt one another, particularly when it comes to money. You have heard it said: it's a jungle out there. The imagery of the verse is clear; when we make riches our goal, we make ourselves vulnerable to falling into a pit of disappointment, misery, and ruin.

Slide 38: another warning against seeking great wealth is that we may be tempted to oppress the poor. I would hope that as Christians, if God gives us some measure of prosperity, that we would remember the poor and be willing to share with those in need. But it remains a warning and a reason for not becoming rich. Consider James 2:5-7.

Slide 39: the desire to become rich is a danger to our spiritual vitality. The church at Laodicea was guilty of this. Jesus chastises them for their complacency. He calls their lukewarm hearts towards him as making them "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked". Let's read Revelation 3: 17-19.

Slide 40: a love for riches will cause divided affections. We know that God will not share his supremacy in our lives with any material competitor. We need to stay focused on God as our sole object of worship and affection. Luke 16:13.

Slide 41: if we pursue riches, we may come to the end of our lives realizing that we have wasted them. We have produced nothing of lasting value. The Bible promises us that the rich will fade away like a flower in the field. When that happens, there is little left to show that its existence was a benefit to anyone. James 1:10 speaks to this.

Slide 42: another danger of having material wealth is that we may abandon God. When God blessed Israel, instead of worshiping and serving him all the more, they forgot him. They chased after false idols and materialistic pleasures. Like Israel, our material wealth may cause us to "become heavy, plump and stuffed". Let's read Deuteronomy 32:15.

Slide 43: if we become rich, we may end up hating God. We shouldn't think this could never happen to us. Consider what happened to Israel as recorded in Deuteronomy 31:20.

Slide 44: the worst outcome for all those who wish to get rich is their pursuit of worldly wealth may keep them from considering eternal values and responding to their need for salvation. Let's read Mark 8:36.

Slide 45: class exercise

Slide 46: one of the dangers of wanting to become rich is that we might become hoarders and stingy people. This next section deals with three possible consequences of this tightfistedness.

Slide 47: first we may develop a cold, hard heart, especially towards our Christian brothers and sisters who are in need. We saw this characteristic in the last section having to do with the pursuit of riches. Hoarding what we have can lead to the same result. Those who are stingy think only about themselves. Every expenditure is a threat to their security. And if it robs our Christian brothers of their basic needs when we had an opportunity to contribute towards them, it is especially offensive to the Lord. Let's read Deuteronomy 15: 7-10.

Slide 48: here's a surprise for the selfish: they may lose everything. We have considered before how this can happen. We know that God is displeased when we hoard to the detriment of our brother in need. And I'm sure that he can find a way to help us see the error of our ways. Proverbs 11:24.

Slide 49: our excessive dust-gathering accumulations will be evidence against us on judgement day. They will become worthless and toxic. James 5:1-3.

Slide 50: quiz

Slide 51: we examined 24 Biblical arguments against becoming wealthy. However, the Bible does state that there are some benefits to having wealth if it is used properly.

Slide 52: first wealth that is used for good deeds can bring glory to our Heavenly Father. Matthew 5:16.

Slide 53: when used wisely, money can be very valuable. Proverbs has much to say about how the wise use of money can benefit not only the owner but others as well. Here is a passage from Ecclesiastes 7:11-12.

Slide 54: our wealth can be a tool to demonstrate our love and obedience to Christ. Let's read Matthew 25: 34-40. This passage teaches that when we use our money to meet the needs of the underclass, Jesus considers those merciful actions as being done to him.

Slide 55: it can be a resource for good deeds and the advancement of righteous causes. Consider three verses that encourage us to do good with what we have. Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 10:24, and 2 Corinthians 9: 8-9.

Slide 56: we have seen this before and it is one of the reasons for having wealth. Money can be a tool to bless others in need. In these passages we are encouraged to perform our good deeds willingly and generously. Let's read 1 Timothy 6:18 and Proverbs 11:24 -25.

Slide 57: money can be used to build God's kingdom. Those who are wealthy and give generously, can greatly advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consider Romans 12:8.

Slide 58: wealth can enhance the quality of our lives. We've seen how using our money to benefit ourselves has to be disciplined and regulated, but I believe there is nothing wrong with reaping some of the benefits of our hard labor. Some believers may see that improving their lifestyle is an option, but choose to maintain their lifestyle and use some of their wealth to bless others and further God's kingdom. Let's read these three verses: Proverbs 10:16, Proverbs 21:20, Proverbs 24: 3-4.

Slide 59: besides enhancing the quality of our own lives, it can enhance the quality of the lives of others. The generous man with abundant resources is like someone walking into a garden with a watering can and liberally watering the flowers that find themselves in dry soil. And in Proverbs 13:22, we are encouraged to leave an inheritance to our children and our grandchildren.

Slide 60: the real problem is not whether we have wealth. The question is where is our heart. If our heart is yielded to the lordship of Christ, and if he chooses to give us wealth, we will seek to manage it well and use it for not just for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others and to promote the kingdom of God.

Slide 61: questions for discussion

Slide 62: In the previous module, we considered several strategies for achieving poverty. In a similar vein, there are a number of attitudes and practices that can lead to some measure of prosperity according to God's will. Here are 13 of them presented in no particular order. First, let's put them in proper perspective:

- Riches should not be our goal, but rather righteous living in Christ
- There is no magic formula guaranteeing that God will make us rich.
- However, we can put into practice values that the Bible links with prosperity and leave the outcome to the Lord.
- Remember, it is God who determines our financial stature.

Slide 63: The most important thing we can do in life is to have a close relationship with Jesus Christ. This is critical to developing a proper attitude towards material things. Psalm 37:4 and Psalm 1:41 speak to this.

Slide 64: There is perhaps no pursuit more important than acquiring wisdom for achieving earthly success and heavenly usefulness. Proverbs 14:24 and 24:3-4 are two of many passages which teach this principle.

Slide 65: Live righteously. When we live righteous lives through the control of the Holy Spirit, we put ourselves in a position to be blessed. Proverbs 13:21 and 21:21.



Slide 66: This principle is similar to living righteously. Serving, trusting, and obeying the Lord is a fundamental to receiving his blessings. Job 36:11 and Proverbs 28:25.

Slide 67: Hard work is universally recognized as a basic building block of prosperity. Proverbs 28:19.

Slide 68: Faithfulness is a key character quality of a successful person. It is one of the basic elements of earning the trust and favor of others. Prov 28:20.

Slide 69: Humility is like faithfulness. It is a virtue with many benefits, including teachability and winning the favor of others—both secrets of success. Psalm 37:11 and Proverbs 22:4 are two relevant passages.

Slide 70: Planning is an important ingredient for a successful life. It helps us focus, set priorities, and promotes efficiency. Proverbs 21:5

Slide 71: It should be a familiar concept to us that to be successful with our money, we need to spend less than we make. This provides benefits to ourselves, our families, other people, and the kingdom of God. Proverbs 21:20

Slide 72: Simple and frugal living helps us avoid waste and make good choices in our expenditures. These qualities are elements of living a prosperous life. Proverbs 21:17.

Slide 73: We considered earlier the passage that the liberal soul will be enlarged. Proverbs 11:25.

Slide 74: We looked in an earlier module the principle of sowing and reaping. If we sow liberally, we will reap liberally. 2 Corinthians 9:6-9.

Slide 75: Here is a summary of these attitudes and practices which place us in a position for God's blessings, including financial. Again, by practicing them does not guarantee us prosperity, but pleases the Lord.

Slide 76: Suppose God blesses us with abundant financial resources. What would a godly response to that blessing look like? I think it looks about the same as if we are blessed in some other way. Perhaps we have talents that God has given us, or perhaps we have wisdom that we can share with others. It seems there are common elements of being devoted to him, no matter the gift or blessing.

Slide 77: first, we should give our hearts to the Lord. Since we know that wealth can be a temptation to turn our eyes away from him, we should make sure that our hearts are truly his. Let's read these three verses: 2 Chronicles 16: 9a, Isa as 64:4, and 1 Corinthians 2: 9.

Slide 78. we should acknowledge that God is the true source of our wealth, not our own wisdom or cunning. let's read Deuteronomy 9: 17- 18 and Proverbs 10:22.

Slide 79: we should remember that it is God who is the provider and that these blessings are from him. Let's read Deuteronomy 6: 10-12.

Slide 80: we should realize that it is only God who allows us to enjoy what he has given us. The ability to get wealth comes from him, the wealth we gain is itself a gift from him, and the ability to enjoy that gift comes from him. Let's read Ecclesiastes 5:19 and Ecclesiastes 6:1-2.

Slide 81: As we learned in a number of modules, we should never trust in our wealth for our security. God who is the source of our security. Wealth can disappear in a moment; God will never leave us or forsake us. 1 Timothy 6:17 in Proverbs 11:25.

Slide 82: in the same way that we should not trust in money for our security, we should not count on it for our happiness. Let's read 1 Corinthian 7:30-31 and Psalm 62: 10.

Slide 83: we must be careful not to become boastful or proud. It would be so easy when we are rich to develop a high-minded attitude, but we must guard against this. Let's read Jeremiah 9:23 and James 1:9-10.

Slide 84: after getting our hearts right and understanding that it is God who has provided our wealth, that we are not to trust in it for our happiness, and guard against pride, then we should seek to understand how that resource he has given to us fits in with his plan for our lives, including how it can be used as part of his great plan of redemption. Let's read Ephesians 1:3-10.

Slide 85: we should use our abundance to do good. The objects of our deeds can be our family, our Christian brothers and sisters, and those in need. Proverbs 11:25, Romans 12:13, and acts 4:34-35.

Slide 86: quiz

Slide 87: quiz

Slide 88: quiz

Slide 89: quiz

Slide 90: quiz

Slide 91: quiz

Slide 92. The final question in part I is this "How much money do we need in order for God to accomplish great things through us?" The wonderful truth is that God can accomplish much through us whether we have little or much

The keys:

- A life yielded to the Lord
- A heart fully committed to him
- Belief that he can accomplish his purpose in us
- Stepping out in faith

Slide 93: Questions for discussion

## **Part II: Building treasure in heaven**

Slide 94: part two of this module is about building treasure in heaven. Ron Blue uses the concept of “The Treasure Principle”. This is one of my favorite concepts.

Slide 95: Jesus talked much about laying up treasure in heaven. Let’s remind ourselves of some of his teaching. Let’s read Luke 14:13-14, Luke 16:9, Matthew 6:19-21.

Slide 96: the treasure principle is to make investments for eternity here on earth believing that God will multiply those investments in heaven. We do not invest everything we have on temporal things, but also on eternal things. Let’s read Hebrews 11: 13-16.

Slide 97: here are the basic concepts behind Mr. Blues “Treasure Principle”. When we make earthly investments we can expect earthly rates of return. But when we invest in God’s kingdom, we experience heavenly rates of return. Let’s consider some expected rates of return on this earth and compare those with heavenly rates of return.

Slide 98: When we make earthly investments we must use earthly math. For example, when we put our money in a bank, we can expect to earn a few percentage points in interest. If you deposit 100 rupees in a bank and earn 2% compound interest, your deposit will earn two rupees per year in interest. If you keep your deposit in the bank for 36 years, it will double in value. So if you deposit 1000 rupees in a bank today, it will be worth 2000 rupees 36 years from now if you earn 2% compound interest for the entire duration. Here’s another example of an earthly rate of return. This is a little better because instead of a savings account, this is an investment. We saw earlier that investments have the prospect of a higher rate of return. Suppose we buy a piece of property today with the expectation of realizing 10% compound appreciation on that property. Its value would double in seven years. We have considered 2% interest and a 10% rate of return. These are typical earthly rates.

Slide 99: now let’s look at God’s rate of return for heavenly investments.

Slide 100: Let’s analyze three Biblical examples of divine multipliers.

Slide 101: where do we find heavenly rates of return in Scripture? The first one is found in Mark 4:20. Here Jesus talks about increases of up to 100 fold.

Slide 102: Jesus was talking about heavenly rates of return of 30, 60 or 100 fold. These translate to the phenomenal rates of return of 3000 percent, 6000 percent, and 10000 percent, respectively. I don’t know of any place on earth where you can earn these rates of return.

Slide 103: Now, here's where the fun begins. It's about to get even better. Please sit down because you won't believe what you are about to see! Jesus talked about rates of return up to 10,000%. But that stellar rate will be dwarfed by the next example.

Slide 104: Let's consider the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. That day, Jesus produced a staggering, intergalactic rate of return.

Slide 105: Let's read the account of this miracle as found in mark 6:41 – 44.

Slide 106: what happened that day? Jesus took the lunch of a boy and multiplied it 5000 times, for an increase of 500,000%. And he did that all in just one day. If we annualize this rate of return over one year, it calculates to be 182,500,000%. And that's not even compounded; that's just using simple interest. If God can do this, multiplying a little boy's lunch to feed 5000 people (and that was just the men), what do you think he could do with our small sacrificial gifts invested in the kingdom?

Slide 107-108: let's look at third example of an astronomical rate of return. It's the account of the miracle of the never-ending supply of oil which God produced through Elisha for the benefit of the widow of a priest. Let's read 2 Kings 4:1-7. This lady was impoverished to the point where she was in deep debt and her two sons were about to be taken as slaves. Her cupboards were bare. She obviously had no hope. But out of desperation, she cried to Elisha begging him for assistance.

Here's the beautiful part. Instead of just providing enough oil for a meal or two, Elisha asked her to borrow not just a few jars but all she could find, I suspect she gathered several dozen of them; maybe hundreds. After she did her part in obeying Elisha, he then instructed her on what to do. She went inside her house and proceeded to fill every single jar she had with oil! She ended up with enough oil to not only pay off her debts but a sufficient store to live on for the foreseeable future. The implication is that she could continue selling oil to provide for her daily needs, including but not limited to food.

Slide 109: What was her rate of return that day? Again we can do the math. Though we have to make some educated guesses, the exercise will be useful. Suppose that small amount of oil she had left for her last cake (a tablespoon?) at the time of her appeal to Elisha was multiplied to the point where she could fill three dozen 1.5-liter jars. At 67 tablespoons per liter, that computes to an increase of 100-fold per jar, or 3600-fold in total. This would be an increase of 360,000%. If she filled 100 jars, her increase would be 10,000-fold or 1,000,000%! Again, these increases occurred during a single day. If we annualize this rate of return, it calculates to an APR of 365,000,000%! I really like these heavenly rates of return, don't you?

Slide 110: I would like to share two more stories of the miracle of divine multiplication, borrowed from Brian Kluth's booklet "30 days to a more generous life". These are the stories of Hattie May Wiatt gift of \$0.57 and the little girl's gift of \$1.

Slide 111: first, there is the story of Hattie May Wiatt. She gave only 57¢, but God multiplied its purchasing power by a staggering amount.

Slide 112: Hattie May lived near a crowded church in 1886. She later became sick and died. At her funeral the pastor told mourners that she had saved 57¢ towards a bigger church building and had given her purse to the pastor. The purse was sold for \$250 and used to purchase a house near the church. Later the first classes of Temple College were held in that house. The college later sold the house and moved to another location. The result was Temple University and the Temple University hospital. The enrollment of the undergraduate school in 2018 was approximately 30,000 students!

Slide 113: the second story is of John Bechtel and how a little girl's gift of \$1.00 yielded a harvest of 100,000 souls for Christ. This divine conversion from the material to the spiritual, producing eternal benefits, is really the point of this entire discussion.

Slide 114-115: Bechtel was a missionary to Hong Kong. He wanted to start a Christian camp to reach school children and adults for Christ. When an orphanage became available, he traveled around the world to raise the millions of dollars it would take to purchase it. However, no one gave. When he returned he received a letter from a little girl containing a gift of \$1.00 which she had set aside out of her ice-cream money. Bechtel offered the Sellers \$1.00 for the property and prayed that God would move in the hearts of the sellers. Miraculously, they accepted it as the full purchase price. Today this camp has welcomed more than a million people through its doors and over 100,000 people have accepted Christ.

Slide 116: While I believe that God uses different multiplication tables for heavenly investments compared to earthly ones, there is one sacrifice for the kingdom of God whose rate of return cannot be calculated. Let's consider the story of William Borden.

Slide 117: William Borden was a Yale graduate and heir to great wealth. He wrote in his journal to say "no" to self and "yes" to Jesus every time. Though wealthy, he rejected a life of ease. After giving away hundreds of thousands of dollars to missions, he went to Egypt to minister to Muslims. Tragically, he contracted a case of spinal meningitis and died a few months later at the age of 25.

Slide 118: what is the explanation for a life lived this way?

Slide 119: his epitaph gives us a glimpse into the answer. Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life. The return on his life is incalculable; it is priceless.

Slide 120: this section has been about using wealth for kingdom purposes. When we do, God can produce incredible results with the smallest amounts given to him. Brian Kluth encourages this kind of open-handed living. Let's read the quote: "when we are open to spontaneously releasing anything and everything in our hands to the Lord, we will have the privilege of being part of God's miracles for all to see. What may be our prized possessions of influence and authority, prideful accomplishments, available time, or stored up resources can become part of a living miracle when we yield whatever is in our hands to be used by the Lord."

Slide 121: class exercise.

Slide 122: quiz

Slide 123: let's summarize principle #9: using wealth to glorify God and build treasure in heaven.

- First, God is The True source of our wealth and Christians are commanded to develop a Godly attitude towards it.
- There are Biblical arguments both for and against becoming wealthy.
- If God does give us some measure of wealth, we should manage it humbly and carefully, using it wisely as good stewards of his grace.
- God does not need our money to accomplish great things through us
- Investments in heavenly treasure pay astronomical dividends, are guaranteed, safe, and eternal. Earthly investments are low paying, unreliable, and have temporary benefit.

Slide 124: End of module.

### **Principle 10. Pursue The True Riches rather than material wealth** **Instructor's notes**

Slide 1: we have examined nine different Biblical principles concerning money and wealth. This tenth module is perhaps the most important of all because it puts into perspective the previous nine. Nearly all of them deal with earthly, material principles. These principles are important for living lives that please God with our money and wealth. Occasionally, we would consider heavenly aspects of wealth, such as building treasure in heaven. This 10<sup>th</sup> module deals with The True Riches. The Bible encourages us to pursue The True Riches. The True Riches have nothing to do with material wealth, because they are spiritual and have eternal value.

Slide 2: The Bible reveals the eternally surpassing value of The True Riches compared to earthly wealth.

Slide 3: The True Riches are discerned with the spirit and affect the heart. Heart transformation has been the goal of our study from the beginning. Let's read once more 1 Timothy 1:5.

Slide 4: in this module we will

- study the relationship between material wealth and The True Riches
- examine five ways they differ
- consider 13 examples of The True Riches found in Scripture
- identify two more priceless blessings in Christ
- list five things that are better than monetary wealth
- look at a treasure of great value
- discuss ways we can share The True Riches with others

Slide 5: let's read two Bible passages that illustrate The True Riches: the first one is 2 Corinthians 8: 9. In this passage we learn that Christ took on poverty so that we could become

rich. Of course, this is not referring to us gaining material wealth, but spiritual riches and specifically eternal life.

The second passage is 2 Corinthians 6:10. In this passage, Paul states that his gifts to others make them rich spiritually. He specifically states that he has nothing of this world's goods to give, but he can give spiritual riches to others. Let's unpack this subject of spiritual riches.

Slide 6: The True Riches reflect the greatness, goodness, grace, and Glory of God. They are spiritual, free of charge, and have eternal value.

Slide 7: Let's do a survey of Scripture and identify thirteen examples of The True Riches. Many of them are interrelated, all having to do with the gifts and spiritual blessings given to us by God. But, at the risk of some will overlap, it is useful to take a close look at each one identified in Scripture.

Slide 8: the first example is perhaps the most important of The True Riches: Christ made us rich through his poverty. Let's read 2 Corinthians 8:9.

Slide 9: The most significant of the riches being referred to in the previous slide is the salvation of our souls. Its value cannot be measured. It was not purchased by monetary means but at a far greater price--Christ's own precious blood. It is a free gift given to us through faith. Though it is a free gift, it cost the giver everything. Let's read Romans 10:11-13.

Slide 10: Another one of The True Riches given to us by God is a supernatural gift that cannot be explained by natural means. It is Christ living in us, our hope of Glory. This is found in Colossians 1: 27.

Slide 11: another of The True Riches are the resources we need to live a Godly life. By his spirit, he imparts spiritual knowledge to us, he informs our speech, and he gives us wisdom to live our lives in a Godly to the manner. Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:5.

Slide 12: Is there any spiritual treasure more valuable than our faith? Let's read James 2:5.

Slide 13: another of The True Riches is the abundant and satisfying life that Christ gives those who have put their faith in him. John 10: 10.

Slide 14: number seven: the riches of glory of his inheritance in the saints. This is a concept that is too profound to delve into in this seminar. Ephesians 1: 18.

Slide 15: God's grace. We see these words throughout Scripture. But in two passages, we understand that they are part of The True Riches. God's grace is indeed one of the greatest riches that we could ever hope to experience: Let's read Ephesians 2:7b and Ephesians 1: 7.

Slide 16: spiritual riches given to us by the poor. As we've already seen, God has a special relationship with the poor. He often gives them great faith and joy. And as special objects of his

grace, I believe he can give them extraordinary spiritual insight. And they often unselfishly pass these spiritual riches on to others. Let's read 2 Corinthians 6:10.

Slide 17: God's mercies are another of the spiritual riches. How can we measure the extent of his kindness, tolerance and patience toward us. Romans 2: 4.

Slide 18: a precious treasure is the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is the source of power for living a life pleasing to God. Ephesians 3:16.

Slide 19: the unsearchable riches of Christ. The word unsearchable gives us a clue that blessings that we get from his storehouse of treasure cannot be completely described, contained, understood, or characterized. And I believe that we only see a glimpse of these in our lives here on earth. The complete revealing of these riches will be in heaven when we will know him as he is.

Slide 20: the last on our list of 13, though not exhaustive, is the blessing of having God as our provider. Once again this comes from his immeasurable treasures given to us in Christ.

Slide 21: as I mentioned, this list is not exhaustive and perhaps not even representative of the full extent of The True Riches. But, having looked at several examples of what the Bible calls The True Riches, let's look at five ways that they are different from material wealth.

Slide 22: first The True Riches are spiritual in nature rather than material. Let's read Luke 16: 10-11 illustrates this.

Slide 23: The True Riches originate in heaven rather than on the earth. Luke 16:11.

Slide 24: The True Riches of heaven are eternal; earthly wealth is temporary. Matthew 6:19-21.

Slide 25: The True Riches are gifts from God. They cannot be earned or purchased. On the other hand, earthly wealth can be achieved through human effort. Let's read John 1:16 and John 10:10.

Slide 26: The True Riches depend upon our relationship with God. They come from above. They are given at his discretion and for his purposes. Earthly wealth, on the other hand, often comes from our abilities, wisdom, performance, and circumstance.

Slide 27: A study of The True Riches would not be complete without looking at two other priceless treasures that we have in Christ. First, the fruit of the Spirit: let's read Galatians 5:22. The second treasure we have in Christ are the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. We all know what the spiritual gifts are for building up the body and expanding the kingdom. We will not study them further in this course. But it is important to note that they exist and that they are so valuable that no price can be ascribed to them.



Slide 28: we have examined 13 of The True Riches, and we have looked at two additional spiritual blessings of immeasurable value. Let's now look at five things in life that are better than monetary wealth.

Slide 29: the first is poverty with purity. It is better to be poor with a pure heart than it is to be rich but corrupt. Proverbs 28:6.

Slide 30: the second is a good reputation. Let's read Proverbs 22:1.

Slide 31: the third are the triad: knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Let's read Proverbs 24: 3-4, Proverbs 3:13-15, in Proverbs 16:16.

Slide 32: here is a priceless gift: a wife of noble character. This is a photo of my beautiful wife Julie. She has been a true gift from God. In January of 2019 we will celebrate our 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, Lord willing. She is a deep object of my care and concern, and I love her deeply.

Slide 33: the fifth thing that is better than monetary wealth is the ability to enjoy our lives. Many people who obtain wealth are not happy. Yet there are those who have little of this world's goods who have deep joy. This is a gift. Let's read Ecclesiastes 5:19.

Slide 34: here is a treasure of great value. It is one of the keys to happiness, and it is very precious. It is contentment accompanied with Godliness. Let's read 1 Timothy 6:6.

Slide 35: let's look at some principles of contentment that we find in Scripture. We have already seen that Godliness is its foundation.

Slide 36: first, to be content, we should commit our heart to God and pursue a life of holiness. As his children, we desire to be led by the Holy Spirit. Let's read 2 Chronicles 16: 9a and 1 Peter 1:13-16.

Slide 37: secondly, if we want to be content, we must trust in God's promise to care for us. Hebrews 13: 5.

Slide 38: we should be satisfied if we have the basic necessities of life. We have examined Godly ways of dealing with material blessings should God give them to us, but the Bible teaches that these additional blessings are not necessary for contentment. Let's read 1 Timothy 6: 6-8.

Slide 39: this principle is similar to the previous one. We should decide to thrive in whatever financial situation we find ourselves. Obviously, we want to work hard and improve our situation if possible. We have seen this leads to additional blessings for ourselves and for others. But we should not wait until our lives improve in order to thrive right where we are. There is a saying, if "bloom where you are planted". I believe there is wisdom in that old adage.

Slide 40: two other keys to contentment are 1) to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and 2) to be thankful. Let's read Colossians 3:15.

Slide 41: in this module has been about seeking The True Riches rather than material wealth. I believe there are some ways that we can share with others The True Riches God gives us. We can

- give them our time
- pray for them
- use our spiritual gifts for their benefit
- give them tangible expressions of love empathy and compassion. We saw a from the concept of the blessings fund that we can be spontaneous in meeting the needs of others. I believe this can be a great joy to them.
- disciple others and help them grow in their relationship to Christ.
- Last but not least as we can share the gospel of Christ.

Slide 42: quiz

Slide 43: questions for discussion

Slide 44: let's summarize this module on The True Riches.

- First, if we are faithful with worldly goods God may grant us spiritual treasures.
- The True Riches are spiritual in nature rather than material.
- The True Riches are eternal, not temporal
- They are given by the grace of God and reveal the Glory of God.
- They are our true source of happiness and usefulness for God's kingdom, and are to be earnestly pursued rather than material wealth.
- I believe Scripture teaches that an abundance of faith is found most often among the poor
- Contentment with Godliness is a precious treasure.
- We should share The True Riches that God gives us with others.

Slide 45: team assignment

Slide 46: this completes principle number 10

Slide 47: the end of the basic course: 10 Biblical principles regarding money and wealth