

SESSION 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **Review Last Week's Homework & FIRE Starters Journaling Method:**
20 minutes
- **Group Discussion:** 15 minutes

WHY put God in the middle of your finances:

*Having a good sense of money management skills is an effective way to reduce stress, so as we evaluate our financial situation, God should be in the center of the equation. Remember, **God is the provider**, so embrace **Matthew 6:31** in your money management. Don't become materialistic but keep in mind that we are not supposed to constantly worry about money, but, at the same time, if we live without being fiscally responsible, we end up being foolish. Be thankful for the opportunities within your financial blessings that God provides, **but own your obligations**.*

HOW to put God in the middle of your finances:

Always discuss finances as a couple. One spouse likely has more financial skills than the other and will naturally take the lead, but this is no excuse for the other spouse not to be involved in the family financial situation. You both need to understand the issues that you are facing, and make decisions as a team. Above all, listen to what God may be saying to you through your financial circumstances. Finances can be a dividing factor in marriage, but they can also bring you together in a new and deeper way, as you trust God together and follow His plan.

1. Give to God First

As Christians, our first financial priority, just as in every other area of life, should be God and His work. The issue of managing all of our gifts, including our finances, is of great importance to God. The Bible instructs us to give a tithe, or **one-tenth or our income back to God**. This is a great starting point for Christian giving and should be calculated on the gross salary. **Luke 6:38** talks about the importance of giving. This is another way we put God first on a daily basis. It's important to remember that God provides you with the strength to work each day, therefore, it's only right to give financially to bring Jesus to our hurting world.

2. Set Up and Keep a Budget

In order to understand your financial situation and to keep on the same page with your spouse, you must keep and maintain a budget. Keep records so you can know where and what your funds are being spent on. **Proverbs 24:3-4** talks about the wisdom around understanding your finances.

3. Set Aside Savings

It's critical to establish the discipline of setting aside money for savings. **Proverbs 21:20** challenges Christians to see the bigger picture and what saving money each month can equate to. As a family grows, having savings built up will provide a foundation will allow for less stress. Consider getting 6 months of "emergency" money saved, and remember NOT to make savings an afterthought.

4. Stay Out of Debt

Borrowing for a house or a car is one thing, however, when you're borrowing to get more STUFF, you need to take a new perspective. Today's credit causes problems later. See **Proverbs 22:7**.

- **Small Group Discussion:** 30 minutes

If you are willing follow this simple plan and begin to intelligently and prayerfully give away 10% of your income, I believe your financial situation will improve. More importantly, you will be storing up treasures in heaven, which is what really counts. After a few months, please write us and let us know what is happening to your financial position. I have never met an ex-tither and I would love to hear your story as you seek to control your finances and serve God in this way.

- **Talk about tithing.**

- **Discuss the importance of budgeting.**

- ✓ How is the “budgeter” in the family?

- **Discuss how and when to save.**

- ✓ What has been modeled for you in the past?

- **Talk about debt.**

- ✓ How do you feel about debt?

- **Discuss This Week's Homework:** 10 minutes

Focus on the **FIRE Journaling Method** and it will give you more insight to what God says about money!

- **Pray for financial freedom and the work involved in getting there.**

- **Make some practical commitments (and RADICAL CHANGE) to address your finances.**

- ✓ What are those commitments and when can you begin the journey toward financial freedom?

- **NOW, spend time this week creating a budget that you both can live and also create a savings plan to get a 6-month “emergency fund” set up. Be ready to review and discuss next week.**

- **Read info for Session #6 on pages 33-34.**