

THE **COMPASS** CHURCH

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

BECOMING A TRUSTWORTHY

MANAGER

OF ALL THAT GOD

HAS ENTRUSTED

TO YOUR CARE



***Now it is required
that those who have been given a trust
must prove faithful.***

1 Corinthians 4:2

Welcome to the adventure of faithful stewardship.

God loves people. People love adventure. And, we were made to enjoy and advance all of God's resources that he has entrusted to our care for his glory and the good of others.

In this brief booklet, we will be exploring the purpose, passion, and priorities of faithful stewardship. So let's get started.

Thrilled to be loving and serving Jesus with you,



Pastor of Stewardship

The Compass Church

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THE PURPOSE OF FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

ANSWERING THE WHAT QUESTION

WHAT is faithful stewardship?

The Lord Jesus said, "A faithful and wise steward is one to whom the master can give responsibility. When the master returns and finds he has been faithful and has done a good job, there will be a reward."

Luke 12:42-43

Did you know that there are more than twenty-three hundred (2,300) verses in the Bible addressing the topics of money, possessions, and stewardship?

For comparison, prayer is mentioned in a little over four hundred (400) verses. Jesus spoke more about money than any other topic, other than the Kingdom.

Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus addressed how to handle God's resources of money and possessions. He said more about the issues surrounding faithful stewardship than about heaven or hell. There's more written in the Bible about stewardship than prayer and faith combined.

Clearly, the care and stewardship of God's resources, money, and possessions is a big deal to God.

Faithful Stewardship begins with a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of "the Owner" and "the stewards".

God is our loving creator and the owner of everything.

Isaiah 64:8 instructs us that . . .

We are the clay. The Lord is the Potter.

Isaiah 64:8

Here is a summary of scriptures that testify to the overwhelmingly clear truth that:

God is the owner of all he created.

*The earth is the Lord's, and **everything** in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

Psalms 24:1

*Yours, **Lord**, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for **everything in heaven and earth is yours**. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom. We adore you as the one over all things. Wealth and honor come from you alone, for **you rule over everything**. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.*

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

*But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generous as this? **Everything comes from you**, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.*

1 Chronicles 29:14

Here is an important question, Do you know what "everything" means?

Everything means absolutely EVERY . . . THING you have in your possession has actually been received as a gift from the God of heaven.

So, God owns it all. And, everything you have is a gift from God.

***Every** good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights.
James 1:17*

***What do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?
1 Corinthians 4:7*

Now, I can almost hear you reasoning in your mind saying, "Now wait a minute. I have worked very diligently and very hard for everything I have accumulated."

Addressing that line of thinking is this response from the author of the book of Deuteronomy.

*You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But **remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth.**
Deuteronomy 8:17-18*

The purpose of faithful stewardship can be clearly and simply stated as:

God is the owner (ruler, power, authority) over all of his creation and we have the honor of being God's trustees of his estate. We are God's money managers. We do not own anything. We are God's trustees and stewards of all that he owns.

When we have a proper understanding of ownership (God owns it all) and stewardship (we have the honor and joy of growing God's estate) it brings clarity to our roles and responsibilities.

Billy Graham put it this way:

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

When we faithfully steward all that God has entrusted to our care we bring God the appropriate honor and glory he deserves and we get the joy of receiving God's blessing - his smile of favor - on our service to his great cause.

We are stewards. We are either faithful or unfaithful stewards. No option exists for "opting out" of our accountability to God for how we manage everything that we have received from him.

PRAYER DARE

It is impossible to become a faithful steward without God's help. I challenge you - I "triple-dog-dare-you" - to begin praying like this in your own heart using your own words.

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that you are the owner of all things in my care. Forgive me for usurping Your ownership by thinking anything in my possession is "mine." Everything I am and have is a gift from you. "My home" is actually Your house I get to live in. "My car" is actually Your car that I am allowed to drive. Help me invest and use every resource You have entrusted to my care with the realization that it is all Yours!

THE PASSION OF FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

ANSWERING THE WHY QUESTION

WHY is a steward motivated to be faithful?

Becoming a dependable manager of God's resources entrusted to our care is challenging work.

There are many distractions and selfish deceptions that must be avoided.

Only with a devoted love for God and a selfless caring for others will it be possible to do the work of a faithful steward.

Jesus instructed us that loving God and loving others were the greatest commands of God we could follow.

*Jesus said: "LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: LOVE your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37*

Pursuing the glory of God and the good for others will sustain the faithful steward.

When temptation comes to be a consumer instead of a generous giver . . . our passionate love for God and others will help us ask:

"How can God get the most glory and others receive the most benefit?"

Only then, will we make the difficult but joy-filled decisions required of the faithful steward.

SO, TO REVIEW ...

1. The **purpose** of a faithful steward is to understand with clarity and resolve that . . .

God is the owner of everything that he has entrusted to your care and you will give him an accounting of how you have managed his resources.

Having the head knowledge of **WHAT** is required of a faithful steward must quickly be followed by the passionate motivation that answers the question of: **WHY** would anyone desire to be a faithful steward?

2. The only proper and enduring motivation for such a high calling is a matter of the heart. The motivation for faithful stewardship is . . .

LOVE - a love for God and a love for others.

So far we have addressed the "what" (purpose-head) and "why" (passion-heart) of faithful stewardship.

Now we need to get to the nuts and bolts of "how" (priorities-hands) we learn and grow the skills required to become a faithful steward who will hear from the Lord one day,

Well done good and faithful servant (steward)!
Matthew 25:23

PRAYER DARE

Again, I challenge you - I "triple-dog-dare-you" - to begin praying like this in your own heart using your own words.

Lord, I confess that I have used Your resources that You have entrusted to my care in selfish and self-serving ways because I have viewed them as "mine." Forgive me. It is unloving to You and others to be so self-absorbed. Help me to realize and make moment-by-moment decisions to use ALL that I am and have to show and share Your love and provision to those you have entrusted to my care to serve.

THE PRIORITIES OF FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

ANSWERING THE HOW QUESTION

HOW can you grow in becoming a faithful steward?

When you take time to think deeply about resources and money, you realize that it isn't very complicated.

There are really only three things that can be done with the money and resources over which you have care.

- You can **spend** or consume them.
- You can **save** resources for another time.
- Or, you can **give** those resources to God and others.

Our natural bent and the pull of culture is to prioritize these actions in this order:

SPEND first,

SAVE second, and

GIVE third.

Did you know that this order of prioritization is the direct opposite of what is required of a faithful steward?

Throughout Scripture we are encouraged to follow this prioritized order of faithful stewardship:

GIVE GENEROUSLY first,

SAVE DILIGENTLY second, and

SPEND WISELY third.

If we diligently follow this prioritized process of becoming a faithful steward - we will honor God, care for others and never run out of money.

Notice the difference between:

OUR WAY: and

spend first,
save second,
give third.

GOD'S WAY (of the faithful steward):

give first,
save second,
spend third.

When you spend and consume everything first, you have nothing left to save and give. And, you also run into the high probability of becoming enslaved to debt.

*The borrower is a slave to the lender.
Proverbs 22:7*

When you give to God first, save second and spend third ...

God is honored, you have reserves for your future, you live within your provisions, and don't ever become a slave to debt.

Are you seeing the simplicity and genius behind the priorities of the faithful steward?

It is very simple and attainable for EVERYONE to become a faithful steward.

It is a matter of always having an orderly process of prioritization.

1. God gets the first.
2. Saving follows giving.
3. And, spending comes **after** we have given and saved.

Are you doing this right now? If not, here is how you begin.

PRIORITY #1 - GIVING GENEROUSLY

The first priority of a faithful steward is to give generously.

Before you save for the future or spend any money to pay bills, the first priority of the faithful steward is to return a portion to God with gratitude for his provision.



WHY GIVING TO GOD IS THE FIRST PRIORITY

The FIRST belongs to God because it always requires FAITH to GIVE the FIRST. And, your HEART (LOVE) follows where you place your treasure.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Hebrews 11:6

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

Giving the first (also known as firstfruits) expresses gratitude, love, and worship to God. Giving later or last makes giving feel like a tax assessment rather than worship.

THE FIRST BELONG TO GOD

Dedicate to me every firstborn among the Israelites. The first offspring to be born, of both humans and animals, belongs to me.

Exodus 13:2

The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

Exodus 23:19

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing.

Proverbs 3:9-10

WHAT DOES GOD CONSIDER TO BE GENEROUS?

Tithing is what God considers the baseline of generosity towards his house and mission.

Tithing is returning the first 10% of your income (asset resources) to God. Tithing is expressing your trust in God as your provider.

The Principle of the FIRSTFRUITS TITHE throughout Scripture

ABLE GAVE HIS FIRST AND BEST ... CAIN GAVE SOME

*OLD TESTAMENT - Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. When it was time for the harvest, **Cain presented some** of his crops as a gift to the Lord. **Abel brought the best portions of the firstborn** lambs from his flock as a gift to the Lord. **The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift.***

Genesis 4:2b-5

*NEW TESTAMENT - **By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did.** By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And **by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.***

Hebrews 11:4

ABRAHAM GAVE MELCHIZEDEK A TENTH OF EVERYTHING

OLD TESTAMENT - Melchizedek king of Salem was priest of God Most High, ... blessed Abram ... **Then Abram gave him (Melchizedek) a tenth of everything.**

Genesis 14:18

NEW TESTAMENT - Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and **Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.**

Hebrews 7:1

JACOB COMMITTED TO GIVE A TENTH TO GOD'S HOUSE

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, ... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." ... He called that place Bethel, Bethel means house of God. ... (then **Jacob** said) this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and **of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."**

Genesis 28:16

JESUS AFFIRMED THE TITHE

(**Jesus** said), You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect justice, mercy and faith.

Matthew 23:23

SUMMARY OF TITHING THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

- The tithe, the firstborn, and, the firstfruits, all belong to the Lord.
- Many Scriptural references about tithing proceed the giving of the Old Testament's Mosaic Law (found in the Books of the Law: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and were affirmed in the New Testament as demonstrations of faith. (Note prior page)
- The practice of tithing was affirmed by Jesus.
- Tithing is an enduring principle established by an unchanging God.

TITHING IS AN APPROPRIATE TEST

Tithing is the one area in the Bible where God tells you to test Him.

*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "**Test me in this,**" says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."*

Malachi 3:10

HAVE YOU EVER MET A REGRETFUL TITHER?

In nearly 40 years of ministry, I have never met a person who tithed and determined that it "didn't work for them."

God does not fail the test of his ongoing blessing and provision to those who faithfully give - with a heart of generosity and worship - the firstfruits tithe to his house and mission.

BEWARE OF THIS COMMON OVERSIGHT

Did you know that it is possible to give 10% towards the mission and house of God and yet not actually be tithing? It happens all the time.

Imagine, I've given you 10 one-dollar bills and have laid them out on a table in front of you, Now, my first question is, "How much is the tithe on this money?" I think everyone would get that one right. The tithe on ten dollars is, obviously one dollar. But here's the more difficult question. Which one of the one-dollar bills is the tithe? "Obviously, the first one," you might say. But which one is the first one? Is it the one on your left or is it the one on your right?

Let's say you get paid on Thursday and immediately pay all your bills, then buy groceries and then write your tithe check before going to church. Have you tithed the first of your increase? No.

If you tell me that God is first in your life, then let me see your checking account. Will it say the mortgage company is first in your life? Does it say your car company takes a higher place on your list of priorities? Or, is it the clear testimony of your spending patterns that God is first?

To clarify, let's go back to the one-dollar bills. Which dollar is the tithe? Here's how you determine which distribution was the tithe. The tithe is the first dollar spent or given. The first money that you spend represents your firstfruits. In other words, when you get paid, the first check you write or money you distribute should be the returning of the Lord's tithe to his house and mission.

-The Blessed Life, Robert Morris

**Biblical tithing is not just any 10%, it is the FIRST 10%.
If you are giving the second 10% or the last 10% it is not firstfruits tithing.**

YOU MAY THINK THIS IS BEING UNNECESSARILY PRECISE

If you examine Scripture closely, God's promised blessing is linked to the firstfruits tithe.

God desires our faith-filled first and not our leftovers.

*"You dishonor my name with your actions by bringing me your leftovers. . . . Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?" asks the Lord.
Malachi 1:12-13*

Giving to God is not about what God wants FROM us.

Giving generously is all about what God wants FOR us.

God does not need your money. He owns it all. God encourages all of us to give generously first because he wants us to experience the joy, cheerfulness, and blessing of giving.

*Remember the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is MORE BLESSED TO GIVE than to receive."
Acts 20:35*

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a CHEERFUL giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7*

My Dad always modeled and encouraged generosity. I can still hear his voice in my thoughts saying, "Don't give until it hurts. Give until it feels great. If you don't feel great about what you are giving, you need to give it more thought."

HOW FAST COULD GOD'S MISSION BE ADVANCED IF CHRISTIANS WERE FAITHFUL TO THE FIRSTFRUITS TITHE?

In the latest statistics I could find it is estimated that Christians in the United States earned \$5.2 trillion and of that amount they gave \$92 billion. That is a giving rate of 1.7 percent of earnings. That giving rate is less than the entire globe's giving rate of 1.8 percent of earnings. We, in the riches of the United States, are giving less than the whole world and not even close to the tithe. Think of the blessing we are missing and how God's mission could be advanced through Christians growing in generosity.

GOD'S MATH AND CHALLENGE ... 90 > 100

God's challenge and promise to us is found in this math equation 90 > (greater than) 100.

Ninety percent (90%) with God's promise of blessing is "greater than" (>) one hundred percent (100%) without it.

GIVING IS INVESTING IN YOUR HEAVENLY PORTFOLIO

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.
Matthew 6:19-20*

TIPS FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY - FIRST

- Automate your giving to come out first before paying any taxes or bills.
- Consider giving prior to receiving your income for the next pay period as an expression of complete trust in God's provision.
- Beyond firstfruits tithing, consider establishing a "Blessing Fund" to give generously to others who are in need.

RESOURCES FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY

[The Blessed Life: Unlocking the Rewards of Generous Living](#) - Robert Morris

[Gospel Patrons: People Whose Generosity Changed the World](#) - John Rinehart (*NOTE: Free Download Available)

PRAYER DARE

Pray something like this in your own heart using your own words.

Heavenly Father, You are my Hero and You are a Giver and I want to be like You! You gave your first and best ("Your One and Only Son - Jesus") for my salvation. I realize that it always takes faith to give the first. I give you my first and best as an expression of gratitude for all of Your provisions in my life. Lord, You, Your House and mission, are my First priority. Receive my first as worship. I completely trust you to take care of the rest of my needs.

PRIORITY #2 - SAVING DILIGENTLY



After giving generously - FIRST, the second priority of a faithful steward is to save diligently.

WHY SAVE DILIGENTLY BEFORE SPENDING?

You cannot be a faithful steward without saving diligently because spending everything you earn is foolish.

The wise man SAVES for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.

Proverbs 21:20

BENEFITS OF SAVING DILIGENTLY

- **Preparedness for emergencies** - Emergencies are coming! It is not a matter of “if” . . . it is a matter of “when”. Savings prepare you to be ready for the emergencies of life without the financial fear and stresses that come with going into debt.

(Jesus said) . . . In this world you will have trouble.

John 16:33

A steward avoids debt because debt is slavery.

Proverbs 22:7

- **Building healthy relationships** - Up to seventy-five percent of conflicts in relationships and marriage center around money. Appropriate savings reduces the probability of money fights and fears.
- **Capacity to help people in need** necessitates having money in reserves. If you consume all that you earn there is nothing left to help others.
- **Retirement savings** allows you to retire with dignity.

If your current and only retirement plan is Social Insecurity, be prepared to get a new cookbook titled, “100 Ways to Fix Alpo and Like It” - Dave Ramsey

- **Leaving a legacy** on people you love and causes you are passionate about serving requires diligent savings.

A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children.

Proverbs 13:22

SHORT-TERM & LONG-TERM SAVINGS

1. Short-term savings are for emergencies & periodic expenses.

- Emergencies (“Murphy’s Law” insurance) \$1,000 minimum. Then, up to a fully-funded emergency fund of 3-6 months of expenses.
- Periodic expenses (real estate taxes; insurance premiums, Christmas, replacement of appliances, etc.)

Short-term savings need to be in low-risk liquid bank and savings accounts. Safety and ease of access are the most important qualities of short-term savings vehicles.

This type of savings is for anticipated expenses that you will have within the next three years.

**NOTE: A major emergency (currently defined as an unexpected expense of \$10,000+) comes approximately once every 10 years.*

2. Long-term savings is for future hopes and dreams.

- Retirement, College, etc.

Long-term savings for retirement and your future should be put into higher-growth potential investments. Also, make sure that they are tax-efficient and diversified. (i.e. retirement: IRA, 401k, 403b, and Roth when available and wise, etc.; college: 529, etc.; mutual, index, and ETF funds and not single stocks.)

These types of saving investments are for future hopes and dreams that you will not access for at least the next four-plus years.

LONG-TERM INVESTMENT SAVINGS TIPS

- **Interview, vet, and work with trusted professional advisors who have the heart of a teacher.** If your advisers cannot explain investment options and/or tax implications in a way that you can understand the pros and cons, then, it's time to find new advisers.

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed.
Proverbs 15:22*

- **Do not invest in anything you do not understand.** Advisors only advise. **You are responsible for the decisions you make.**
- **Diversify investments** into higher-growth potential (i.e. mutual funds, index funds, ETF's, target date funds that hold index funds etc.)

*Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.
Ecclesiastes 11:2*

- **Research.** Invest in diversified funds with a long track record of low turnover in companies that meet or beat the index consistently.
- **Buy and Hold.** Long-term investments are for the long-term. Remember four-plus years. Markets go up and down like a roller coaster.

The only people who get hurt on a roller coaster are those who choose to get off in the middle of the ride. - Dave Ramsey

Since World War II there have been 12 bear (bad) markets:

- they averaged a market decline of 32.5%**
- they lasted an average of 14.5 months**
- they took on average 24 months to fully recover**

Investors who sold at the bottom of these markets saw a detrimental effect on their savings. And of course, those who stayed in long enough to experience a subsequent recovery were better off. Remaining focused on the long-term is important when in the middle of a bear market.

- **Rebalance** investment categories regularly to stick with your chosen plan and goals.
- **Review** performance annually.
- **Slow and steady wins the race.** Be the turtle. Don't waste time trying to time the market. Instead, invest consistently over time.

Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.
Proverbs 13:11

Faithful stewards save consistently while others only save occasionally.

TIPS FOR SAVING DILIGENTLY - SECOND

- Automate your short-term and long-term savings to come directly from your checks every time you get paid.
- A fully-funded emergency savings account should hold between 3 and 6 months of expenses. What would be that amount for you?
- Saving 15+% of your income is a good goal for retirement savings.

RESOURCES FOR SAVING DILIGENTLY

[22 Practical Ways to Save Money](#) - Dave Ramsey Blog

[Investing Guide: Everyday Millionaires Investing Guide](#) (*NOTE: 31-page free download available)

[A Random Walk Down Wall Street: The Time-Tested Strategy for Successful Investing](#) (Twelfth Edition) - Burton G. Malkiel

[Retirement Savings Calculator](#)

[Fidelity Retirement Score Tool](#)

[Vanguard Retirement Nest Egg Calculator](#)

PRAYER DARE

Pray something like this in your own heart using your own words.

Dear God, thank you for the clear instructions in Your Word regarding savings. You have made it clear that I must prepare for trouble and emergencies. You have also warned me of the dangers of consuming all that You have entrusted to my care. Help me to be diligent with saving while avoiding the dangers of hoarding. Give me the wisdom to make wise investments with the resources you have graciously given to me to manage. While saving diligently, I want you to know that my hope is in You and not my savings accounts. As you prompt me to help others who are in need through the reserves I have saved, I desire to be quick to help bless others!

PRIORITY #3 - SPENDING WISELY

After giving generously - FIRST; and, saving diligently SECOND; the third priority of a faithful steward is to spend wisely.



THE REQUIREMENTS OF SPENDING WISELY

You must plan and track your spending. Spending wisely requires that you know the state of your flocks (finances).

*Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.
Proverbs 27:23*

How well do you know your finances?

FOCUS TIME AND ATTENTION ON INCOME & EXPENSES

It is not a complex or difficult task to know with certainty the condition of your finances. It just requires your focused time and attention on two types of financial activities.

1. INCOME (What is coming in?)
2. EXPENSES (What is going out?)

TWO TOOLS FOR PLANNING & TRACKING SPENDING

1. Projecting and **planning your future** income and expenses is called a **BUDGET**.
2. Tracking and **reporting on your past** income and expenses is referred to as an **INCOME STATEMENT**.

Both are helpful tools for knowing the condition of your finances.

The income statement holds your budget accountable by telling the actual truth about how realistically you are planning.

The budget plan for the future, informed by your past income statements, helps you make wise decisions regarding future spending.

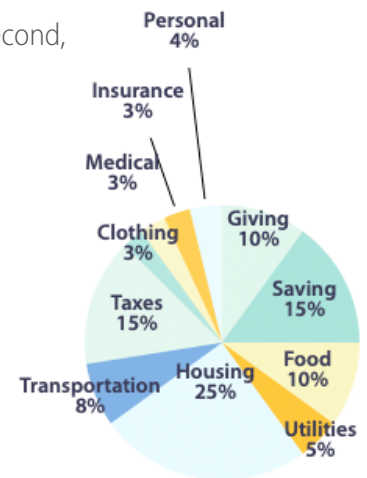
LET'S GET PRACTICAL

What do you spend on first?

When putting your budget together, after giving generously first, and saving diligently second, your spending priorities start with securing the "4 Walls" of essential expenses.

THE "4 WALLS" OF ESSENTIAL EXPENSES

- Food
- Utilities
- Housing
- Transportation



SAMPLE BUDGET PLAN

TYPE	CATEGORY	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	INCOME %
Income	Salary	\$40,000.00	\$3,333.33	100.0%
1st	Giving	\$4,000.00	\$333.33	10.0%
2nd	Saving	\$6,000.00	\$500.00	15.0%
Four Walls	Food	\$4,000.00	\$333.33	10.0%
Four Walls	Utilities	\$2,000.00	\$166.67	5.0%
Four Walls	Housing	\$10,000.00	\$833.33	25.0%
Four Walls	Transportation	\$3,000.00	\$250.00	7.5%
	Taxes	\$6,000.00	\$500.00	15.0%
	Clothing	\$1,000.00	\$83.33	2.5%
	Medical	\$1,250.00	\$104.17	3.1%
	Insurance	\$1,250.00	\$104.17	3.1%
	Personal	\$1,500.00	\$125.00	3.8%
TOTAL		\$40,000.00	\$3,333.33	100.0%

YOUR BUDGET IS UNIQUE AND PERSONAL

This sample budget is not your budget. Your budget will require thought, prayer, and the partnership of a spouse or godly, faithful-stewarding friend. You can do a paper or digital budget plan.

**NOTE: Budgeting resources at the end of this section.*

A budget plan is only helpful in spending wisely if you then track every income and expense with an income statement report.

Here is a sample income statement report that shows that the "Sample Budget Plan" was actually over budget by \$87.50. This report helps you make a better budget plan for the next month.

SAMPLE INCOME STATEMENT REPORT (MONTHLY)

TYPE	CATEGORY	MONTHLY BUDGET	MONTHLY ACTUALS	OVER BUDGET
Income	Salary	\$3,333.33	\$3,333.33	\$0.00
1st	Giving	\$333.33	\$333.33	\$0.00
2nd	Saving	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
Four Walls	Food	\$333.33	\$350.00	\$16.67
Four Walls	Utilities	\$166.67	\$155.00	-\$11.67
Four Walls	Housing	\$833.33	\$833.33	\$0.00
Four Walls	Transportation	\$250.00	\$275.00	\$25.00
	Taxes	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
	Clothing	\$83.33	\$120.00	\$36.67
	Medical	\$104.17	\$100.00	-\$4.17
	Insurance	\$104.17	\$104.17	\$0.00
	Personal	\$125.00	\$150.00	\$25.00
TOTAL		\$3,333.33	\$3,420.83	\$87.50

BUDGETING TIPS

- **Your first budget won't be perfect.**

It takes time, usually six months+, to improve the accuracy of your monthly budgets. Your monthly income statement reports will tell you exactly how accurate your budget was the previous month. With that information, you can improve the accuracy of your budget plan each successive month.

- **Increasing income and/or reducing expenses is how you improve a consistently unsatisfactory budget situation.**

Target lowering your big expense items like (housing, food, transportation) for making the largest reductions in expenses.

If you are Noah and the ark is sinking, go to the elephants first. Throwing squirrels and rabbits overboard isn't going to make as big of a difference.

- **Eliminate and/or comparison shop recurring expenses.**

Canceling and finding better deals for your recurring expenses can help lower your costs. (i.e. subscriptions, cable, insurance premiums (car, home, health, life), cell phones & plans, rent/mortgage, gym memberships, etc.)

- **Debt-repayment is the biggest drag on a budget.**

Do you have debt to car, student, and/or credit card loans?

Over 80% of Americans are in debt. This kind of consumer debt was unheard of 75-100 years ago in America.

Your income is your most powerful wealth-building tool.

If your income is being consumed by paying down debt, you need to get on a debt reduction plan as soon as possible.

Get out of debt as soon as possible!

Remember debt is slavery.

*The borrower is a slave to the lender.
Proverbs 22:7*

*NOTE: Debt repayment tools at the end of this section.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS BEFORE SPENDING

The larger the amount you are about to spend, the more diligent you need to be in asking the following questions regarding a potential purchase.

Why am I considering this purchase?

Can I afford this item?

Do I need it?

Can I get by with what I already have?

Can I borrow it?

Can I rent it?

Can I buy it used?

Have I comparison-shopped?

Did I get at least three comparison prices?

Have I gotten reviews and references on this product or service?

Is this purchase worth the asking price?

Have I requested a discount?

Have I waited 24 hours, a week, or a month before spending on this item?

Intentionally delayed-purchasing, on non-essential items, helps to bring protection against impulse buying.

WHILE DELAYING, ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

Have I asked God for his wisdom considering this purchase?

Am I willing to delay or refuse this purchase if I don't sense God's approval on this purchase?

STEWARDSHIP EXTENDS BEYOND PERSONAL FINANCES

We are accountable to God for all of the resources that he has entrusted to our care to manage.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES YOU ARE TO STEWARD

- **Your Time**

Every earthly minute you are granted is a gift from God. How effectively are you spending your resource of time?

*Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
Psalm 90:12*

- **Your Body**

Your body is a gift from God and you honor God by caring for your body. Are you eating healthy, exercising, and getting proper sleep?

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

*For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.
1 Timothy 4:8*

- **Your Work**

The way you employ the talents, skills, and passions that God has given you through work, civic engagement, service, and ministry; is also a stewardship of resources.

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
Colossians 3:23-24*

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT WORK ABOUT SPENDING WISELY

- How are you stewarding your business, work, civic and ministry budgets?
- Is the mission of your church, business, or organization being advanced by the current deployment of allocated budgetary funds?
- Where are your budgetary investments making the largest advancement for the mission of your church, business, or organization?
- Where are you currently spending resources that are being the least productive toward the fulfillment of your mission?
- What can you eliminate because it is duplicated somewhere else in your organization or community?
- Are you willing to eliminate a program or line item in your budget that was effective historically but, is not effective now?
- What is something new you could do if you eliminated this program or expense?

TIPS FOR SPENDING WISELY - THIRD

- Consistently plan and track all of your income and expenses.
- Before spending - Ask, if it is in your budget? Then, assess your motivation, your need, the alternatives, and the value of the product or service. See questions on page 21.
- After spending - Check your income statement to see if you are tracking this expense. Ask hard questions about the return on investment (ROI) of your expenditures. See questions on pages 22.
- Invite the evaluation, review, and assessment from others (i.e. spouse, godly friends, peers, leadership, older wise people who have an effective track record as faithful stewards).
- Godliness with contentment is deeply satisfying (1 Timothy 6:6).

RESOURCES FOR SPENDING WISELY

[Budgeting Resources - FREE - Simple Budget Worksheet](#)

Budgeting and Income Statement Reporting Resources - PAID - [EveryDollar+](#) [YNAB](#) (You Need A Budget)

[Budgeting Video - Rock Solid Finances](#)

Debt Repayment Resources - [Debt Snowball](#), [Debt Snowball Calculator](#)

Building Healthy Habits for the best use of your time, body and work - [Atomic Habits](#) by James Clear

PRAYER DARE

Pray something like this in your own heart using your own words.

Dear Lord, thank you for the clear instructions in Your Word regarding the spending and use of all of the resources that You have entrusted to my care. I understand that I am to: know the condition of; and, that I am to give careful attention to, how I spend Your resources. Forgive me for my neglect and lack of attentiveness to how effectively I am using all of Your gifts to me. Oh God, I acknowledge that I need Your help and the wisdom from others to use all that You have given in a way that honors you and helps others. I ask that you give me the humility and insight needed to grow in my effectiveness and faithfulness as Your steward. You are worthy of my very best efforts. I will seek to express my love to You through the faithful stewardship of all that you have entrusted to my care for your glory and the good of others. AMEN!

ONE PAGE FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP SUMMARY

- God owns everything. We are stewards of every gift of resource (health, ability, finances, another day of living (time), etc.) from God's hand of provision. We are accountable to God for how we manage His resources.
- Our motivation for faithful stewardship is LOVE. A love for God and a love for others.
- The priority order for faithful stewardship is giving first, saving second, and spending third.
- God deserves our first and best. We express this in faithful stewardship by giving our first and best to God not because he needs it but because he is worthy of it as worship.
- The faithful steward after giving generously first to the house and mission of God; saves diligently second.
- Saving diligently is always about the future. Saving diligently will protect us; and, provide for us, other people, and causes that we love.
- Only after giving generously and saving diligently are we to spend wisely.
- Spending wisely requires that we know the state of our flocks (finances). We must prioritize, plan, and track our spending.
- General percentage guidelines: Generously give 10%+ to God's house and mission. Save diligently 15%+ before spending wisely the balance.
- Money is like a magnet wherever it goes with purpose and priority it attracts more.
- Lowering your percentage of spending so that you can give and save more is the great joy of a faithful steward.
- Be faithful with a little and the Lord will bless you with more to manage.
- Faithful stewards are very effective at managing God's resources He has entrusted to their care because they consistently (not perfectly) follow the priorities of: giving generously first; saving diligently second; and spending wisely third; while others only do this occasionally.

NOTES

TO BE CLEAR

This booklet and all associated materials are intended to inspire and assist you with faithful stewardship information and instruction. This booklet is not an attempt to render legal, accounting, or other professional services. Your personal financial situation is unique and fact-dependent. Before making any decisions or implementing any financial strategy, you should consider obtaining information and advice from wise professionals who are fully aware of your circumstances.

