



MONEY MATTERS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Money Matters* ...

How different would your life be if you lived on a budget, were debt free, and were able to give more to the church and to others? During *Money Matters* you will explore how to create a financial vision that will free you to manage your finances the way God intended. You will learn how to set financial goals, create a budget, invest in the future, and be generous with the resources God has given you. *Money Matters* will help you move forward to financial freedom.

Who is *Money Matters* designed for?

Money Matters is ideal for anyone looking for financial freedom. *Money Matters* will give you practical tools and resources to help you trust God with your finances and move forward in the financial vision He has for your life.

What is the end goal of *Money Matters*?

The end goal of this Life Group material is for all the participants to understand the importance of being a good manager of the finances God has blessed them with.

What can you expect from *Money Matters*?

This specific financial study is composed of 4 sessions. At every meeting, a session will be discussed. You will need a total of 4 meetings to finish the 4 topics.

¹ This material is copied and based on the Life Group curriculum, Money Matters.
https://open.life.church/resources/1665-money-matters?item_type=General&view=parts

MONEY MATTERS: Week One

“FINANCIAL VISION”

WARM-UP:

1. When you think about your life and money, what do you see? Describe it.
2. If money was no object, what would you do with the rest of your life?
3. In what ways does our culture pressure us to love or pursue money?

WORD:

As we start studying finances using this material called Money Matters, it is important to know that ALL of us are students in this area. ALL of us want to be a good manager of God’s money and ALL of us need to improve the way we handle our finances. In this group, we do not need to hide anything or to pretend. The first step to real change is to be honest with ourselves.

Wherever you are in your finances, the wise thing is to always start with a vision. Proverbs 29:18 KJV says that *“Where there is no vision, the people perish...”* What is your vision when it comes to money?

To help you get there, there are 5 basic things we need to know and apply if we want to be a good manager of God’s money. All these 5 foundational things are based on the truth: God’s Word.

1. Get out of debt.

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7 NRSV)

- Debt turns us into slaves. Slaves do not have any option. They are controlled by their owners. In the same way, when we have a debt, our creditors control us. In a way, they “own” us.
- God does not desire us to be slaves to any creditor. Jesus died for us so we can be free - free to do God’s will. God’s will is for us to be blessed and for us to be a blessing. If we are slaves to debt, we cannot be a blessing.

2. Act according to your wage.

“...a foolish man devours all he has.” (Proverbs 21:20 NIV84)

- This means very simply: spend less than you make. If you have the habit of spending all the money the you make, the Bible calls this foolish.
- 1 Timothy 6:6 says that "godliness with contentment is great gain." This is the secret to living less than we make. Trust this truth because this is wisdom. When you see that you still have money in the bank towards the end of the month, this alone will enable you to experience a form of financial peace. And you will love it!

3. Get on a budget.

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?" (Luke 14:28 KJV)

- Let's say you own a company and you ask your accountant one day: "Show me the breakdown of all expenses. Where did the money go?" And he/she answers you: "I have no idea!" You surely would fire this accountant, would you? Certainly that accountant is very irresponsible. Now ask yourself: if you were the accountant of your company called "my life", would you fire yourself?
- You have to assign a name to every euro. It is called a budget. It is called planning. If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. No wonder a lot of people always wonder where their money went because they do not follow a budget. This is irresponsible.

4. Save and invest.

"In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil..." (Proverbs 21:20 NIV84)

- It is very wise to save and have an emergency fund because "it is going to rain." A lot of stress can be avoided just by having this kind of fund. This is preparing for the "oh no" moment. Remember, it is just a matter of time. These moments will come. We have to be prepared.

5. Give.

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house..." (Malachi 3:10 NKJV)

- The most exciting part of this basic biblical study on finances is giving. Can you imagine these 2 scenarios? First, you give a percentage of your income to your local church because you want to honor God and because you believe and support the vision and mission of your local church. When you see the church being a help in people's lives and eventually the community, don't you feel the joy that this produces? Second, before you go eat at a restaurant, you pray and ask God to show you the person who He wants to bless through you. Then you go inside, you eat and then you see your server is a pregnant lady. Then you feel the Lord told you to bless this person. Because you follow the biblical plan for your finances, you have the money. So after eating, you tip your server €100! Can you imagine the joy that you would feel upon knowing the joy that your server will feel? Then you tell her about Jesus. For sure, she will listen to you! This can be your life. This is what God wants for you.

God is not concerned about your money. He is concerned about you because He cares for you. He has a plan for you. And He is saying to you, "My child, this is how you live. And if you live this way, you will win." He is trying to change the person in front of the mirror. He wants you to win at a level that you have never won before. If human parents want the best things for their kids, how much more our Father in heaven. He has a game plan for your money. And it works every single time and without fail!

APPLICATION:

1. If someone were to look at your bank account, what could they tell about you based on how you spend your money?
2. Create a Financial Mission Statement. In one sentence, cast a vision for what you want to accomplish regarding your finances. Your mission statement can relate to a long-term or short-term goal. Here are some examples:
 - My financial goal is to be debt free in five years.
 - Our goal as a family is to increase our income so that we may increase our giving over our normal tithe.

- My personal goal for my finances is to invest 20 percent of my income toward my retirement.
- My goal is to create a budget so I will no longer live from paycheck to paycheck.

My Financial Mission Statement:

3. Write Down Your Financial Core Values

List three to five core values that will define the focus of your finances. These values can relate directly to your mission statement. This is the answer to the question: "How will I fulfil my Financial Mission Statement?" Here are examples of some core values:

- To not spend more than I make
- To not use credit cards
- Doing everything possible to stay on budget
- Saving and investing a certain percentage of income for emergency situations
- Giving above and beyond our/my normal tithe not only to our/my church but also to other charities and people in need

My 5 Core Values

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

4. Next Steps. Consider these next steps as you continue working on and refining your financial mission statement.

1. Read Proverbs 22:7. Have an honest conversation with God about your debts. Ask God to give you wisdom and vision in attempting to get out of debt. Pray for those you know who are struggling with debt.
2. Finish your Financial Mission Statement and your Core Values. If you are married, talk it over with your spouse and finalise it together. If you are single, you may want to talk to your Life Group leader about it for accountability purposes.