

Hello! Welcome to the 2018 ISBC Christian Finances Workshop!

If you want to get started you can:

1) Watch a video:

<https://vimeo.com/178328999>

2) Look at your own personal financial picture by looking at this FREE resource from Crown Financial Ministries.

It is a downloadable PDF-writable 13-page Finance Workbook. (We couldn't load it on Google docs directly because it loses the ability to be pdf writable).

Here is the link: <https://www.crown.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/financial-planning-workbook-1.pdf>

We will not be sharing any of your personal information at this workshop.

3) After watching the video, read the following article about being stewards of God's possessions: 

TRULY RICH



(from MoneyLife Personal Finance Workbook, Crown Financial Ministries)

William Borden made the great exchange. From the video we could see that he traded the wealth of this world for the wealth that God promises his faithful servants. This exchange is available to every one of us right where we are. It is not a call to a job but to assume the responsibility of living as a faithful steward of all God entrusts to you.

THE FIRST STEWARDS

God made Adam and Eve His representatives here on earth. That's part of what it means to be created in the image of God. But He also made them managers of the whole earth, beginning with the garden. They were to work, to take care of it and to develop it on God's behalf. Think about it ... Adam and Eve were the very first stewards.

God doesn't need anyone to represent Him or to help Him in the ongoing creative work of cultivating the earth, but He invited Adam and Eve to do just that. And He gives us the same invitation today!

The commandment not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was about a choice. Adam and Eve could either humbly submit to God's reign and continue as His managers or try to claim personal reign over the earth, setting themselves up on God's rightful throne. As a result of their disobedience, sin came into the world, and with it, their perfect communion with God was destroyed too.

A. W. Tozer, in his classic work, *The Pursuit of God*, described the seriousness of our problem this way:

"Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and things were allowed to enter. Within the human heart things have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk, stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight amongst themselves for first place on the throne.

This is not a mere metaphor, but an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble. There is within the human heart a tough, fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets things with a deep and fierce passion.

The pronouns my and mine look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down deep into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die.

Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by this monstrous substitution."

OPERATE WITH FOCUSED, ETERNAL PURPOSE

In Luke 16, Jesus tells a parable of an estate manager who was in charge of his wealthy master's entire household and business affairs. He had been wasting his master's

resources, we are told, and so he is called to account. Knowing that he'll soon be out on the street, the manager makes deals with everyone who owes his master money. In doing so, he makes friends and secures himself the good graces of the very people he will likely need to rely on once he loses his position.

This is a strange parable because the master actually applauds the steward's dishonest actions. But the point of the parable is not the bad ethics of the manager. Rather it's the perspective he had. After realizing his time was short, he used his available resources to prepare for the future. This should be our perspective as well.

Our time on this earth is short—for most of us, just 70 or 80 years. In eternal terms, that's less than the blink of an eye. Are we using God's resources to prepare for eternity or are we wasting them in the here and now, acting as if this life is all there is?

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God is the Owner of everything, and as Christ-followers, we've been adopted as sons and daughters of the King. Peter wrote,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

It's a fool's errand to try to top that incredible promise of an eternal, abundant inheritance by substituting the world's goods for it. No amount of security or pleasure provided by worldly wealth will ever compare to the riches that God lavishes on His children in this life and in the life to come.

No matter how much wealth you acquire here and now, it would never be “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” As missionary and martyr Jim Elliot once wrote

in his journal, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

THE GREAT LOSERS

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8). This is the attitude we should be striving for—one that finds its complete joy in knowing Christ.

With that attitude, we can accept that no earthly loss will ever outweigh the worth of having a personal relationship with the Lord of Lords. Armed with this truth, we can find contentment and joy in every aspect of our lives.

As Solomon discovered, *“I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man”* (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). The truly rich person is the person who recognizes God as the Owner and who gratefully accepts the call to be a temporary steward, content to please his Master.

Have you ever sat down and counted the non-material gifts in your life? Are you healthy? Do you have a family? Friends on whom you can depend? A church home? How about a good job that allows you to use your gifts and talents? And then there are those things we tend to take for granted. Do you have a roof over your head? Food to eat? Clothes to wear? These are all gifts from God and reasons to be thankful.

God’s call for us to become stewards is not simply to apply His truth to our life so we can get out of debt or save for the future or become great investors. All of those are vastly secondary to His real purpose for giving us His financial principles. You see, many believe that being a steward means ordering our finances in such a way that we can spend whatever we want. In reality, being a steward means ordering our finances in such a way that God can spend us in whatever way He wants! That is our great joy and privilege.