

Some guidelines for managing a budget

1. **Budget your savings just like you budget your spending.** Make sure that every dollar you save has a specific purpose—and to the best of your ability, determine how much you need to save.
2. **Give every dollar in your budget a biblical job description.** See if you can identify from Scripture why each item in your budget is part of your discipleship of Christ.
3. **Let any excess in your budget at the end of the year go to giving, not savings.** That way your day-to-day decisions are not so much “spend vs. save” but “spend vs. give.”
4. **If you’re married and it’s possible, make it your ambition to budget off of the husband’s income alone.**
5. **Include a line for “generosity” in your budget.**
6. **Know when to break the budget.** And use your budget to understand the implications of breaking the budget—and what you need to do to get back on track.
7. **Talk through your budget with a Christian friend.**

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Core Seminars – Christian Discipleship Stewardship

Week 4



The Economics of Today: Spending and Budgeting

I. Introduction

“Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”

Proverbs 30:8-9

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” – 1 Timothy 6:10

II. Review: Some Basic Principles

1. Everything you have belongs to God. Not just your money.
2. You are a steward, and you will give account for your stewardship.
3. Hoarding is spiritually damaging.
4. Give until the next dollar you *would* have given away would actually bring more glory to God if you spent it on your own needs. (but have a Biblical view of *spending* money can bring glory to God)

III. How much should I spend on myself?

Two ways to ask this question:

- How much do I need?
- What lifestyle is God calling me to?

“Lifestyle” = the spending habits we become accustomed to. Many of our “needs” are the result of our lifestyle choices.

Two dangers to keep in mind:

1. Lifestyle-determined needs exceed our income
2. Our “needs” rise in parallel with our income

Your lifestyle largely consists of what is “necessary”—but recognize that what is “necessary” is actually quite subjective

How to choose a lifestyle:

Our goal: to use every gift, every opportunity, every relationship, every dollar we have to proclaim the glory of God with every minute he gives us on this earth. (Eph. 5:16)

Six principles:

1. Lifestyle is often defined by a few big decisions—but can slide incrementally over time.
2. Time and money are interchangeable. And to a degree, so are relationships and time and money.
3. Flexibility in lifestyle can be very helpful. (James 4:13-17)
4. Keep the long view in mind. Goal is a *lifetime* of faithfulness.
5. Consider the “weaker brother”. (1 Cor. 8:9, 6:12)
6. Give strong consideration to opportunities that seem unique.

III. Managing to a budget

Budgets are primarily tools for communication and contentedness.

“. . . if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.”

1 Timothy 6:8-10

Tool for contentedness:

- Helps to restrain overspending
- Helps to protect against false guilt
- Helps to keep spending independent from income

Tool for communication:

- Helps make financial conversations strategic and proactive rather than constraint-driven and reactive
- Helps protect against ungodly judging

IV. Stewardship as a Community Project

Building a culture of financial transparency

Two dangers

1. Judging (Matthew 7:1). To protect against judging:
 - a. Don't presume motives
 - b. Work to have *your* motive be compassion, not disdain
2. Pride (Matthew 6:1)

Exuding grace while still being specific in our encouragement and exhortation of one another.