

Southern Asia Division 6 and 7

Stewardship Certification *Handout*



The Wisdom of Managing Money

Aim: To teach about the basic principles of managing personal resources and showing that financial skills are essential for quality of life and effective partnership in God’s mission.

Introduction

We are designed for abundant life and to partner with God in His final mission.

Read John 10:10

Ellen White shares about God’s assessment of His children:

“The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them.” (Desire of Ages, P.668).

This is an invitation not to despise oneself and not to settle for a mediocre life. We are created and redeemed for greatness.

Mission brings meaning and purpose to our lives. Read Acts 1:18

“The Lord has placed in the hand of his servants the means wherewith to carry forward his work in home and foreign missions.” (Review & Herald, Dec. 23, 1890).

Our partnership in God’s mission involves both doing mission and supporting mission with our financial means.

The presentation **“The Wisdom of Managing Money”** introduces 5 basic rules to manage financial resources in view of improving quality of life and participation in mission.

Principle I: Your Pockets are not Empty

The first principle is a change of mindset. It is a shift from the conviction and feeling that we have nothing or cannot produce anything, “The Empty Pocket Syndrome.”

A biblical account reveals how someone was stuck in the empty pocket syndromes and God’s intention to move them out of this condition. Read Judges 6: 11-15.

Participants’ Involvement

Discuss about the change in mindset that took place in Gideon.

Gideon’s Perspective - Read Judges 6: 15

God’s Perspective - Read Judges 6:11

Common causes of the empty pocket syndrome:

- Involvement in the _____ game
- Wrong assessment of current reality
- Being paralyzed by the image in the rear-view mirror.
- Influence of education and social background.
- Looking in the wrong direction; focusing on _____ instead of God’s _____ materials. God’s raw materials include Time, Energy, and Talent.

Read about the encounter between the prophet Elisha and the widow in 2 Kings 5:1-2

Reversing the Empty Pocket Syndrome

The real problem is not that our pockets are empty, but rather a failure to believe and see what we have received and to apply the law of success.

There are three useful strategies to reverse the empty pocket syndrome:

- i. Challenge the assertion by claiming that “*Our Pockets are _____ Empty.*”

God has a financial plan for his children, it comprises three options:

Option 1: Not _____ for Bread (Ps. 37:25).

Option 2: Provide for _____ (Ph. 4:19).

Option 3: The Power to Generate _____ (Deut. 8:18).

The parable of the servants and gold bags illustrates well the concept that “Our Pockets are not Empty”. Read Matthew 25:14.

God’s servants have received something valuable.

Variation in the quantity of resources received is not _____ to the absence of resources. God has given something _____ to each one of His servants.

Ellen White explains about the various options: *“Some will have their hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. But all will not receive their hundredfold in this life, because they cannot bear it. If entrusted with much, they would become unwise stewards. The Lord withholds it for their good...”* (Counsels on Stewardship, p.232).

- ii. Pray for an _____ reality vision (2 Kings 6:17)
- iii. Apply the _____ of Success

Read about Paul’s Version of the law of success in 2 Corinthians 9:6

Read about Solomon’s Version of the law of success in Proverbs 10:4

Hard and diligent work is rewarded.

Illustration: The Wet Pen and the Prayer Request

Principle II: Plan Before Spending

Participants’ Involvement

Study Luke 14:28-32 to find out about Jesus’ recommended approach before acting upon an idea or desire.

SOMEONE	KING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to Build a Tower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to Go to War
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit Down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit Down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ the Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ what is needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is enough money available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are enough human resources available?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realize or Not Realize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to war or change plan.

In today's world, advertisers and other influencers encourage people to spend without thinking. They appeal more to our senses than to our reason. We buy what we see, hear, touch, smell and taste. This is creating a spending trend that is unhealthy.

A spending plan is a necessity whatever be our income. When the income is small and the obligations are many, it even becomes vital.

Illustration: The small birthday cake

Advantages of a spending plan:

- _____ to reflect critically before spending.
- Live within your income.
- Reach your financial goals.
- Prepare for financial _____
- Develop wise financial management habits.

3 questions to help individuals sharpen their critical thinking spending their resources:

- i. Do I really need what I'm about to buy?
- ii. Am I spending beyond my means?
- iii. Can I obtain the same value that I'm looking for by spending less?

This exercise most often leads to less spending.

Developing a Spending Plan

The development of a spending plan goes through 4 phases:

- Step I: _____ your current situation.
- Step II: _____ the budget percentages and allocations.
- Step III: _____ your spending, saving and investment patterns.
- Step IV: _____ financial progress and revise plan.

A good spending plan has some key features:

- **Prioritize Giving to** _____ Tithe, offerings, and donations.
- **Well planned.** It is not a quick exercise. Try to involve everyone that is affected by it.
- **Realistic.** It should not prevent us from enjoying life, not a synonym for dieting!
- **Flexible.** Be ready to adapt to changes.
- **Clearly Communicated.** It should be written and available to all household members.
- **Balanced.** It must be amended until expenses balance with income.

- **Be Detailed.** The details make the whole.
- **Include** _____ It is a tool to prepare for the future.

People can adopt three guiding principles when they develop a budget:

- Normal budget: Use what you have _____.
- Need-oriented budget: Use resources according to your _____.
- Christian’s budget: Practice _____.

For the Christian, the budget is characterized by self-denial:

And the absence of _____ in His professed followers, God regards as a denial of the Christian name. Those who profess to be one with Christ, and indulge their selfish desires for rich and expensive clothing, furniture, and food, are Christians only in name. To be a Christian is to be Christlike.

Review & Herald, Oct. 13, 1896.

Ellen White recommends budgeting to assist us in our partnership with God:

This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically. . . Let each regularly examine his income, which is all a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund, to be sacredly the Lord's. This fund should not in any case be devoted to any other use; it is to be devoted solely to support the ministry of the gospel. After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be _____, "as God hath prospered" you.

Review & Herald, May 9, 1893.

Illustration: The man who was always accusing others of stealing his money

Principle III: Avoid Using Others’ Money

The practice of borrowing to meet one’s obligations is not new. However, there exists some important differences between today and past practices. The table below captures some of the differences.

Characteristics	Past	Present
Revenue of Debtors	Low	High and Low
Items/Services purchased	Vital and Essential	_____
Accessibility to credit and loan	Difficult and Constraining	_____
Opting for Credit	_____ Option	First option
Percentage of Population	Few	50% and above

Participants' Involvement

What are some major causes that contribute to indebtedness in your local context?

Factors which contribute to the recent accentuation of indebtedness:

- Reduction in income.
 - Unexpected bills
 - Instant _____
 - Lifestyle of overconsumption
 - Ease of credit
 - Eating out.
 - Copying others..
 - Absence of adequate _____
 - _____ about the future (James 4:13-14)
-
-

Complications Related to Indebtedness

Indebtedness is a source of various complications. The Scriptures provide warning against the practice of debt. The well-known instruction is from Proverbs 22:7, "*The borrower is servant to the lender.*"

Reverend Desmond Tutu compares debts to the worse form of human exploitation: "*Debt is modern-day apartheid.*"

Ellen White speaks about the one driving the debt phenomenon:

You must see that one should not manage his affairs in a way that will incur debt. . . . When one becomes involved in debt, he is in one of _____'s nets, which he sets for souls. . . . (E. G. White, *Christian Education*, p.67).

The debtors who are not able to repay their debts affect their Christian's witness to the community:

You bring a reproach upon the cause by locating in a place where you indulge for a time and then are obliged to run in debt for provision for your family. These are your honest debts you are not always particular to pay, but, instead, move to another place. This is defrauding your neighbour. The world has a right to expect strict _____ in those who profess to be Bible Christians.

TC, vol. 5, p.179

Debts imperils the giving of the believer:

Many do not remember the cause of God, and carelessly expend money in holiday amusements, in dress and folly, and when there is a call made for the advancement of the work in home and foreign missions, they have nothing to give, or even have _____ their account. Thus they rob God in tithes and offerings, and through their selfish indulgence they lay the soul open to fierce temptations, and fall into the wiles of Satan.

R. & H., Dec. 19, 1893.

The debtor faces a terrible dilemma!

Some have not come up and united in the plan of systematic benevolence, excusing themselves because they were not free from debt. They plead that they must first “owe no man anything.” But the fact that they are in debt does not excuse them. I saw that they should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Some feel conscientious to “owe no man anything,” and think that God can require nothing of them until their debts are all paid. Here they deceive themselves. They fail to render to God the things that are His. Everyone must bring to the Lord a suitable offering. Those who are in debt should take the amount of their debts from what they possess, and give a proportion of the remainder.

TC. Vol. 1. P.220

Debts affect the effective partnership of believers with God.

There are 8 recommended steps to move out of debt:

- Move out of _____ and decide to become debt-free.
- Seek _____ interventions and guidance.
- Determine your overall financial situation.
- Re-establish the practice of _____
- Discontinue all credit purchases.
- Develop a repayment plan.
- Be careful about using a debt consolidation loan.
- “Snowballing” the debt. List the debt, starting from the biggest obligation to the smallest. Start by paying the smallest amount and move to the top

Ellen White encourages believers to move out of debt by embracing simplicity and frugality:

Make a solemn covenant with God that by His blessing you will pay your debts and then owe no man anything even if you live on porridge and bread. It is so easy in preparing your table to throw out of your pocket twenty-five cents for extras. Take care of the pennies, and the dollars

will take care of themselves. It is the mites here and the mites there that are spent for this, that, and the other that soon run up into dollars. _____ your taste, _____ the indulgence of appetite, save your pence, and pay your debts. Work them off as fast as possible. When you can stand forth a free man again, owing no man anything, you will have achieved a great victory.

Adventist Home, pp 393-394

Part IV: Recovering the Art of Saving

Our generation is known as one that is saving the _____. Some practices were common in ancient cultures days:

- Drying vegetables.
- Preserving sweet potatoes by putting them in holes and sprinkling ashes over them.
- Father's granary only used during the drought or war.
- Salted fish
- Drying meat

The Scriptures plead for the importance of practicing savings. Read Proverbs 6:6-8.

The ant is both laborious and frugal.

Read Genesis 41:34,36

The family of Jacob was saved from extinction through adequate savings.

Ellen White links the absence of savings to the cycle of poverty: *"Many poor families are poor because they spend their money as soon as they receive it."* (The Adventist Home, P. 392).

Participants' Involvement

What could be the benefits of practicing saving in your context?

Some benefits of practicing saving:

- To face life _____.
- To realize major financial goals.
- Possibility to offer an exceptional service.
- Prepare for _____.

- Leave a financial legacy.
- Break the cycle of poverty.

Read Luke 8:3; Acts 4:34,35

The Bible provides examples of believers who partnered with God through their savings. Jesus and his missionary crew were supported by a group of women. The members of the Early Church, whose wealth was in form of land and houses, sell their properties to provide for the beginning of the Christian's mission.

There are clear instructions for believers of today to support God's mission through their savings:

Each should keep a _____ box at hand, and drop into it every penny he is tempted to waste in self-indulgence. But something more must be done than merely to dispense with superfluities. Self-denial must be practiced. Some of our comfortable and desirable things must be sacrificed.

Counsels to Stewardship, p.290

As new fields are opened, the calls for means are constantly increasing. If ever we needed to exercise _____, it is now. All who labor in the cause should realize the importance of closely following the Saviour's example of self-denial and economy.

Counsels to Stewardship, p.290

Every _____ should be carefully treasured. A cent seems like a trifle, but a hundred cents make a dollar, and rightly spent may be the means of saving a soul from death.

Counsels to Stewardship, pp.290-291

Illustration: The stranger who changes my life

There are some practical pieces of advice to practice saving:

- Teach the principle of delayed gratification as early as possible.
 - Start somewhere.
 - Be systematic. Make it a habit.
 - Practice automated saving.
 - Set a limit.
- Beyond a certain point, saving can become _____.

- Differentiate between saving and _____.

It is important for believers to differentiate between hoarding and saving. Hoarding is the mere accumulation of money for _____ motives and _____.

Read Luke 12:16-21

A famous example of hoarding is the one given by Jesus.

Ellen White wrote these words about the danger of hoarding: *“Hoarded wealth is not merely useless, it is a _____ . In this life it is a snare to the soul, drawing the affections away from the heavenly treasure.”* (Christ’s Object Lessons, p.352).

Principle V: He _____ whatever He receives

We should be careful about the prosperity gospel and its errors. However, we should not hesitate to share about God’s rewards for the faithful. The Bible suggests a very interesting sequence: God Bless, You Give, God Multiplies the Blessings.

Illustration: The Restaurant in the Desert (Mark 6:30-44)

God’s Multiplication Table	
Giving to the _____ (Matt. 25:40)	He multiplies (Prov.19:17)
Returning _____ (Lev. 27:30-32)	He multiplies (Mal. 3:10)
Giving _____ (Deut. 16:17)	He multiplies (Prov. 3:9-10)
Offering _____ (Rom. 12:1-2)	He multiplies (Luke 18:29-30)

Even if I manage to give to God all of my wealth, He will always find a way to give me back much more to what I have previously.

Our liberality towards God should not be limited to time of abundance. We are encouraged to practice tithing and to bring an offering to God whatever our current financial situation. By putting God first, the believer is granting permission to God to change a situation of scarcity to one of abundance.

Participants’ Involvement

Share one experience about how God has multiplied the resources of those who are faithful in tithe and offerings.