



GOOD \$ENSE

BUDGET COURSE

*Biblical Financial Principles for
Transforming Your Finances and Life*

**PRE-WORK
INCLUDED!**
Please complete
pre-work prior
to attending
the course.



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With Contributions from the Good \$ense
Ministry Team of Willow Creek Community Church

FOREWORD BY BILL HYBELS

Dear Good \$ense Budget Course Participant,

We're glad you're registered for the *Good \$ense Budget Course*! Regardless of your financial situation, a budget—what we call a "Spending Plan"—is the necessary and fundamental tool that enables you to control your money rather than having your money control you. Contrary to popular thought, a Spending Plan is not restrictive; rather, it is freeing. We believe the *Good \$ense Budget Course* will prove this truth to you.

Course Goal

The goal of the *Good \$ense Budget Course* is for you to commit to and begin developing a biblically-based Spending Plan. By the end of the course, you will have a Spending Plan in your hand, the knowledge in your head to implement it, and a commitment in your heart to follow through on it. The commitment of the Good \$ense Ministry is to provide you with the principles, practical steps, and individual assistance to help make that happen.

Pre-work

In order for the course to be as valuable and productive as possible, it is very important to complete the pre-work prior to attending the course. Completing the forms may take several hours so it is advisable to begin as soon as you receive these materials. The information you are asked to collect is confidential and no one else will see it. Throughout the course, you will use your pre-work information to establish your personal Spending Plan.

Supplies

In addition to your completed pre-work, please bring to the course two or three pencils, an eraser, and a pocket calculator.

Prayer

Pray that this experience will be a valuable one for you and the others in attendance, and that we will all grow in our understanding of Biblical Financial Principles and our ability to put them into practice.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

The Good \$ense Ministry



SPENDING

OBJECTIVES

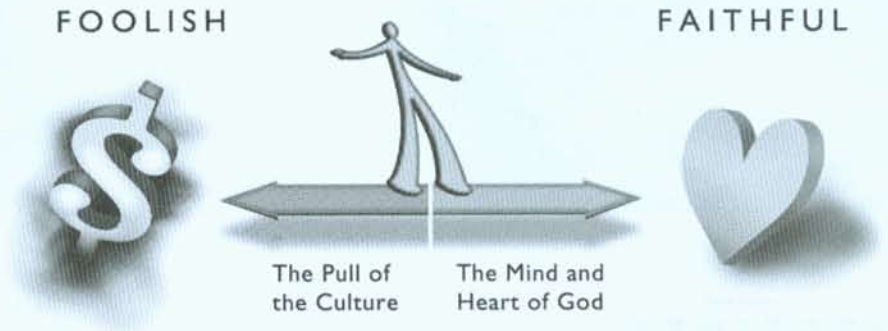
In this session, you will:

1. Reflect on “driving your stake” lifestyle-wise.
2. Set short-term goals for the housing, auto/transportation, insurance, household/personal and entertainment spending categories on your Spending Plan worksheets.
3. Identify action steps to reduce expenses in these categories.



Spending

The Pull of the Culture vs. the Mind and Heart of God



Four Myths:

- "_____ bring happiness."
- "Your possessions define who you are."
- "The more you have, the more you should spend."
- "Spending is a _____."

The Prudent Consumer is:

One who enjoys the fruits of their labor yet guards against materialism.

Three Biblical Financial Principles:

- Beware of idols.

Romans 1:25: *They "worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator."*

- Guard against _____.

Luke 12:15 (NLT): *"Beware! Don't be greedy for what you don't have. Real life is not measured by how much we own."*

- Be _____.

Philippians 4:12: *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*

Contentment with and gratitude for what we have is the antidote to greed and envy.

God wants us to recognize our immeasurable value as his beloved children and to not associate our value with the possession of material things.

When we practice _____ and learn contentment, we become free to be a blessing to others.

Driving Your Stake



Key Question: Are you willing to “drive your stake” lifestyle-wise?

Driving your stake means:

- There will be a point in time when you declare, “Enough is enough.”
- You distinguish between your _____ needs and what the culture says you need.

Individual Activity: *Driving Your Stake Lifestyle-wise*

Use the space below to answer the following question:

“What would it mean for you to drive your stake lifestyle-wise?”

Notes

Housing

Tips for Mortgage/Taxes/Rent:

- Consider the issue of renting versus owning.
- Think _____ of mortgage.
- Beware of basing a mortgage on _____.
- Exercise caution with regard to equity loans.
- Consider an extended household.

Maintenance and Repairs:

- Become a Mr. or a Ms. "Fix-it."

Utilities:

- Control the thermostat.
- Use phones wisely.
- Evaluate options for Internet and cable services.



SPENDING

WHEN IS ENOUGH, ENOUGH?

The Bible doesn't give absolute guidelines for deciding when enough is enough, but the following nine principles can provide guidance for making wise financial decisions or evaluating a desire to purchase something.

1. Start with the right attitude: everything you have was created by God, is owned by God, and is to be used for God's purposes.
2. If the desire seems reasonable to mature Christian brothers and sisters whose discernment you respect, it is usually wise.
3. If the desire arises from pain over the plight of the poor, the unfortunate, or the disenfranchised, it is likely to be Spirit led and honoring to God.
4. If the desire involves the well-being of children, it is often right.
5. If the desire is primarily one of wanting to improve your own living conditions or lifestyle, you should not automatically assume it is wrong.
6. Consider whether the desire springs from an incompleteness in your relationship with Christ. Are you trying to fill with purchases an empty place in your heart?
7. Consider whether the resources of God's creation would be adequate to provide for all of his children the thing you desire for yourself.
8. Evaluate how important your desire seems in the context of your own mortality. Ask, "How important will this purchase seem to me when I am on my deathbed?"
9. Ask, "What would Jesus do in my situation?"