

BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE

SMALL GROUPS

RE-FINANCE

ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN MONEY MANAGEMENT



MICHAEL CATT



RE-FINANCE

ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN MONEY MANAGEMENT

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Re-Finance: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Money Management
Bible Studies for Life: Small Group Member Book

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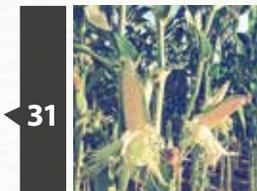
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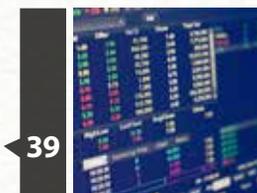
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ABOUT THIS STUDY

Don't be scared by money. Be confident in God's Word.

Money can be a helpful tool and a valuable resource, but it makes for a lousy boss. Ask people their opinions about money and you'll be left with a variety of answers: they love it, hate it, spend it, save it, want it, work for it, beg for it, borrow it, steal it, invest it, and give it.

Sure we need money, but many of us are often left weary and frustrated when it comes to our finances. We often feel managed by the very thing we are trying to manage.

But here's a question: What if the richest and wisest man who ever lived offered a free financial seminar? No gimmicks. No get-rich-quick schemes. Just practical life principles for managing money.

- How should you get it?
- What should you do with it?
- What about long-term investments?
- How can you bless others at the same time?

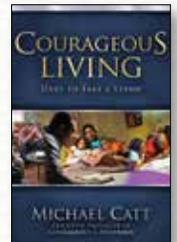
Through the writings of King Solomon, God has provided us with all of these answers and more. In this study, we will examine principles from the ancient wisdom literature of the Old Testament to provide clear direction for money management today.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michael Catt

Dr. Michael Catt has been the senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, since 1989. He and his wife, Terri, have two daughters. Michael has a heart for pastors and a passion for revival and awakening. He is the author of *Courageous Living*. He blogs about ministry, revival, and the church at michaeltatt.com.



SESSION 1

VIEW MONEY PROPERLY



*What do you like best
about money?*

QUESTION #1

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RE-FINANCE **7**

THE POINT

*Contentment and security rest in God,
not in money.*



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Just hours after closing on his new home, Josh Ferrin made the discovery of a lifetime: a treasure trove of nearly \$45,000 stashed in the attic. Ferrin found the first surprise in a heavy metal box containing several rolls of cash. By the time he finished treasure hunting, he had discovered seven more boxes full of the same.

The new homeowner knew his find didn't belong to him. So, he returned all the money to the children of the house's original owner. Ferrin noted: "The money wasn't ours to keep, and I don't believe you get a chance very often to do something radically honest, to do something ridiculously awesome for someone else. And that is a lesson I hope to teach to my children."¹

Not everyone would do what Josh Ferrin did. But when we're content with what God has provided us, it's easier to do what's right. The Book of Proverbs teaches us that when we find our sufficiency in God alone, no amount of money can rob us of the security and satisfaction that flows from contentment in Him.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Proverbs 23:4-5; 30:5-9

23:4 Don't wear yourself out to get rich; stop giving your attention to it.

5 As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears, for it makes wings for itself and flies like an eagle to the sky.

30:5 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

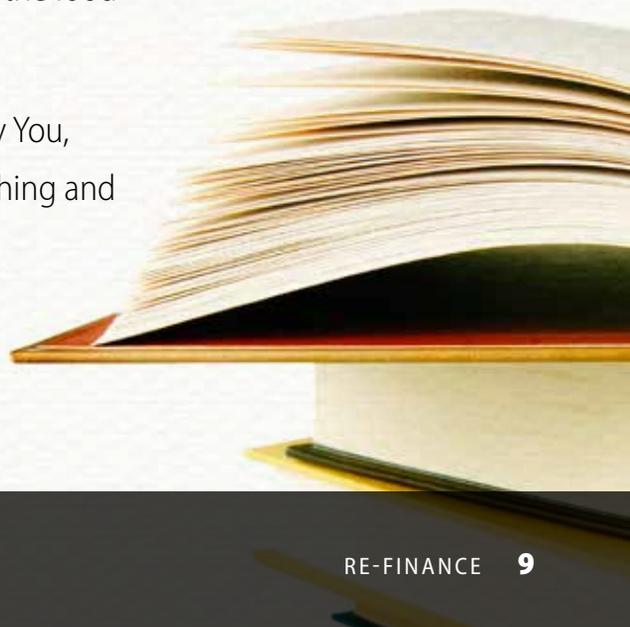
6 Don't add to His words, or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.

7 Two things I ask of You; don't deny them to me before I die:

8 Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me. Give me neither poverty nor wealth; feed me with the food I need.

9 Otherwise, I might have too much and deny You, saying, "Who is the LORD?" or I might have nothing and steal, profaning the name of my God.

Pure (30:5)—The image here is one of testing or purifying metal by fire in order to remove the dross and develop a pure substance.



When have you seen money sprout wings and fly away?

QUESTION #2

Proverbs 23:4-5

We spend a lot of our time thinking about money, don't we? *What will I buy? Can I afford this? Will I get that raise? Should I invest now?* The questions can be endless, and they feed the ravenous discontent within.

Solomon knew the emptiness and frustration of discontentment all too well. When he penned the words of Proverbs 23:4-5, he was reflecting back on his own experience of chasing the temporary pleasures of this world. Solomon made two straightforward declarations in these verses: Don't exhaust yourself trying to make money, and stop thinking constantly about money.

That's good advice, but it can be tough to follow.

Because of economic uncertainties, more and more Americans have come to understand our only real hope is the Lord (see Ps. 62:5-7). When we set our hearts and our affections on the eternal riches of Christ, we have a secure foundation that will stand regardless of what happens with our job, paycheck, or retirement account.

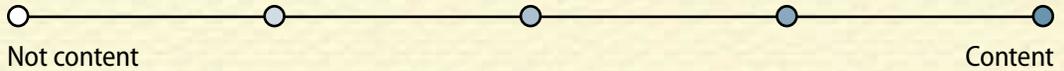
How do you stop giving your attention to the fleeting riches of this world?

- ▶ **Recognize God as your source.** God is your Provider, and He cares for every detail of your life. Regardless of who signs your paycheck, the Lord is the one who provides for your needs (see Phil. 4:19).
- ▶ **Remember the temporary nature of wealth.** We will hold wealth and possessions loosely when we remember they are only temporary. The shine will dull, the pleasure will fade, and the cycle of discontent will continue (see Prov. 27:24).
- ▶ **Rest contentedly in the Lord's provision.** Godliness with contentment is great gain (see 1 Tim. 6:6-8). Resting securely in the Lord frees you from the worry and stress of this world's unquenchable thirst for more.
- ▶ **Refocus on eternal things.** Spend your energies on building God's kingdom (see Matt. 6:33). When you do, you'll find yourself thinking less about money and more about eternity.

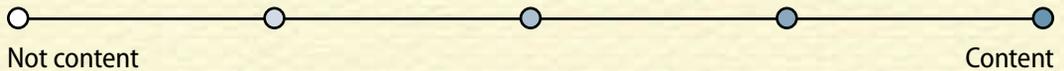
PERSONAL ASSESSMENT: CONTENTMENT

Are you content? Use the following assessments as a starting point to find out. How content do you feel in the following areas of life?

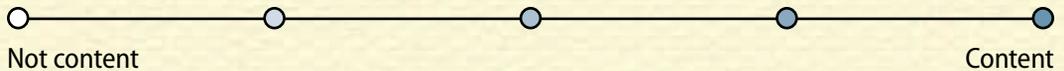
Your savings:



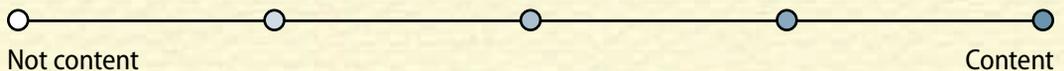
Your household income:



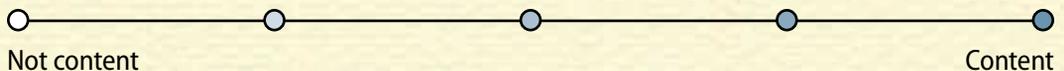
Your current home:



Your current automobiles:



Your prospects for the future:



Why does the Bible remain our best source for financial wisdom?

QUESTION #3

Proverbs 30:5-6

The Bible has a lot to say about money. Over 1,400 verses deal with issues like poverty, wealth, debt, greed, and borrowing.

As we consider the Bible's teaching on money, keep in mind what verse 5 proclaims: every word of God is pure. Every word of God found in Scripture has been tested, refined, and proven free from error or imperfection. The Bible provides the flawless standard for all of life and its issues. Therefore, Scripture demands our full attention that we may not neglect or overlook any portion of it (see 2 Tim. 3:16).

Unfortunately, many people err in one of two ways regarding the connection between the Scriptures and finances:

1. Some hold fast to their favorite passages while disregarding the entirety of Scripture. They express a belief in God's Word, but ignore its teaching on finances. Meanwhile, they squander their resources on temporary pleasures.
2. Others try to force the Bible to say what they want it to say about finances—or any area of life for that matter. For example, a man once called my research assistant and asked, "Where in the Bible does it say, 'Give a man a fish and feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime?'" Even after she informed the man that this proverbial saying was not found in Scripture, he asked, "But where do I find that basic concept in the Bible?"

God has laid out clear principles to guide our stewardship—principles that have less to do with the size of our 401k and more to do with the posture of our hearts. We can't possibly navigate this life, including our finances, apart from Scripture. We need steady biblical wisdom amid the constant ebb and flow of our changing world and economy.

"Money never stays with me. It would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should find its way into my heart!"

—JOHN WESLEY

Proverbs 30:7-9

Satan is a liar (see John 8:44; Rev. 12:9) who has fed believers a host of lies related to money. For example:

- ▶ When we gain wealth, the devil tries to convince us we don't need God. Satan hopes we'll begin to rest in the sufficiency of our hard work or good fortune, elevating money and status to a higher place than God in our lives. This idolatry enslaves us and leads to all sorts of evil (see 1 Tim. 6:9-10).
- ▶ The enemy also plants lies when we find ourselves lacking. He whispers that God doesn't care about our needs, or that God is unable to help us in times of trouble.

The truth from God's Word is that all people in all circumstances can experience great contentment in Christ: "Your life should be free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He Himself has said, I will never leave you or forsake you. Therefore, we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:5-6).

Jesus assured His followers that He would be with them always (see Matt. 28:20). Through financial hardship? Yes. During economic downturn? Of course. In the midst of foreclosure, job loss, divorce, or bankruptcy? Absolutely. We can remain content in Christ because God is our Source and our Sufficiency. At the same time, we must rest in Christ-centered contentment when our financial future appears secure, when our paycheck increases, or when we inherit a large sum of money. Money must not control either our present satisfaction or our future security.

Whom do you know who lives out the truth in these verses?

QUESTION #4

How would you describe a lifestyle of godly contentment in today's culture?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

How will you express your contentment and security in God this week? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Pray daily.** As you talk with God each day, ask Him to give you a spirit of contentment about your money and possessions. Ask for a greater sense of trust in God's ability to meet your present and future needs.
- ▶ **Seek God's Word.** As you read and engage with the Bible this week, highlight any verses you come across that touch on the subject of money. Begin building a greater awareness of what God wants you to know about finances.
- ▶ **Reach out.** Ask a friend or family member to join you in better understanding what the Bible teaches about money. Invite this person to join you as you engage this study, highlight portions of God's Word, pray for contentment, and so on.

You don't have to give away thousands of dollars to do something radically honest. You can make the choice each day to seek the contentment and security God offers rather than place your trust in the temporary protection of worldly wealth.



1. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-05-21-found-money-returned_n.htm.