



CROWN FINANCIAL
MINISTRIES
True Financial Freedom

CROWN

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special report



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IN THIS REPORT

What can Crown do for your church?

In a 2004 survey of Crown small group study graduates throughout the U.S., participants reported dramatic increases in saving and giving and dramatic reductions in debt. The results of this latest survey were similar to those of other Crown graduate surveys in the past. The conclusion? Crown does work, and it can work for your church as well!1

Testimonies

Four Crown graduates share how God used the biblical principles in the small group Bible study to change their lives2

Crown graduates report major life changes

The October 2004 issue of Crown's *Money Matters* newsletter included a brief mention of a recent e-mail survey of Crown *Biblical Financial Study* graduates.

This Crown Special Report provides a more in-depth look at the survey, which measured the impact of the Crown program on graduates' lives.

The electronic online questionnaire surveyed graduates from around the country. These individuals were made aware of the survey through their churches, e-mails, and Crown's newsletter and radio programs. Five churches qualified for individual reports on the impact of the Crown program among their membership. Those churches were:

- **First Evangelical Free Church**, Fullerton, California;

- **St. Thomas More Catholic Church**, Houston, Texas;
- **StoneCreek Church**, Alpharetta, Georgia;
- **St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church**, Winter Park, Florida; and
- **Rose Drive Friends Church**, Yorba Linda, California.

The survey results in this report are based on responses from 1,429 people from a total of 513 churches in 42 states. The results were collected from April to June of 2004, and participants shared the impact, over time, of what they had learned through Crown training.

Results from the 1,429 respondents yielded some encouraging news, including figures on reductions in personal debt (excluding mortgage and business loans).

Within three years of graduation from the Crown small group Bible study, the average respondent had reduced his or her personal debt from approximately \$15,500 to \$9,600, a decrease of 38 percent.

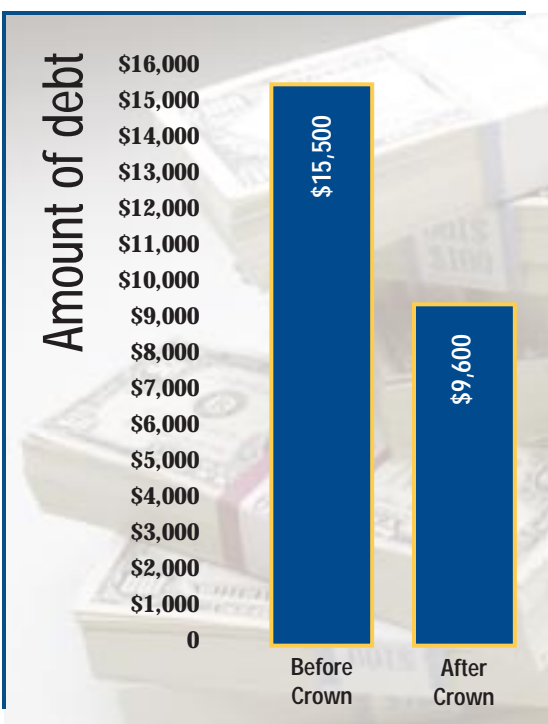
A total of 33 percent reported that they now have no personal debt, up from 17 percent prior to completing the survey.

Savings and investments were another key area considered in the survey. Since going through Crown training, almost half of the 1,429 respondents had increased their savings and investments significantly.

The average savings/investment amount before completing the study was approximately \$44,000.

Current savings after an average of three years were calculated to be \$69,700, a 58 percent increase.

This is very encouraging because 43 percent had only completed the study in the last year and a half and many younger couples had purchased homes during this time.



Other results from the electronic online survey of Crown small group Bible study graduates were as follows.

Testimonies

Church and total charitable giving per year

Church giving per year for the average respondent increased by 70 percent, from an approximate amount of \$4,300 per year prior to the study to an estimated current amount of \$7,300 per year. Twenty-one percent reported giving of more than \$10,000 per year, versus nine percent prior to the study.

The percentage of people giving 10 percent or more rose from 35.7 percent to 63.9 percent of the 1,429 respondents, representing a 28.2 percent increase in the number of persons tithing. Of these, the number giving more than 10 percent rose from 13.2 percent to 32.5 percent of the total sample.

Total charitable giving per year increased by 71 percent, from an estimated \$4,780 per year prior to participating in the study to \$8,200 over the average elapsed time of three years following graduation from the study.

Service per week

Respondents increased their time given to the church from an estimated 3.1 hours per week to approximately 4.6 hours per week, a 47 percent increase.

Prayer and Bible reading per week

Increases in frequency of prayer were reported by 46 percent of respondents, and 64 percent reported an increase in Bible reading.

Daily prayer increased from 44.8 percent to 71.6 percent of respondents. And daily Bible reading rose from 16.6 percent to 27.6 percent of respondents.

Marital relationships

Among 1,112 married respondents, 873 reported that their relationship with their spouse had been strengthened or greatly strengthened since completing the study, for a total of 78 percent.

Relationship with Christ

Although some 57 percent of respondents already reported a close walk with the Lord, another 34.4 percent reported improvement in their relationship with Christ following graduation from the study. This resulted in a total of 91.5 percent who reported a close walk with Christ.

Slightly less than one percent of respondents were non-believers but attending church (11 out of 1,429) at the time they began the study. All 11 of this group of small group graduates reported a current belief in Christ and a close walk with the Lord.

Age ranges of study participants

<input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 19	00.1%	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 49	35.2%
<input type="checkbox"/> 20 to 29	07.0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 59	21.8%
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 39	26.7%	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 plus	09.2%

Years since respondents attended the Crown study

<input type="checkbox"/> <1 year	16.5%	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years ago	10.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year ago	26.0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years ago	07.7%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years ago	16.8%	<input type="checkbox"/> 5+ years	21.1%

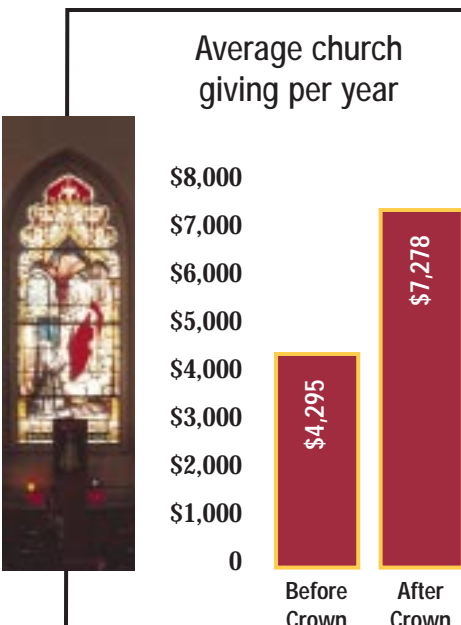
The average graduate responding to the survey was married with children, mid-40s in age, between \$60,000 and \$80,000 in income, and had graduated from the Crown small group study an average of three years prior to responding to the survey. Computing an average graduate profile from the survey, key financial changes estimated to be possible in the average elapsed time of three years were as follows.

Financial changes *	Percent change
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal debt	-38%
<input type="checkbox"/> Savings/investments	+58%
<input type="checkbox"/> Church giving	+70%
<input type="checkbox"/> Total charitable giving	+71%

Service/marital/spiritual changes **	Percent change
<input type="checkbox"/> Time/service to church	47%
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequency of prayer	46%
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible reading frequency	64%
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital relationship strengthened	78%
<input type="checkbox"/> Closer relationship with Christ	35%

(91.5% reported a close walk with the Lord)

* Financial key changes extrapolated from average respondent profile
 ** Percentage of respondents who reported improvement/increase



Several years ago, we lived from paycheck to paycheck and did not give 10 percent. After going through Crown's Bible study, we decided to do two things: live on a budget and turn our finances over to God, beginning with our tithe. In only a few months we were amazed that our checking account had a surplus and we were paying all our bills on time! God continues to bless us. We are able to weather emergencies which would have been impossible before we took the Bible study. Your ministry has changed our lives!

Craig and Carol, Ohio

God has blessed us so much through your Bible study. I expected a lot of frustration and discouragement from facing our financial reality, but what God did for our marriage and for my emotional wellness was miraculous! I am unexpectedly and delightfully encouraged and motivated to serve God more faithfully, give more generously, to spend less, and to give more. I will teach our children God's financial principles this summer. I feel more financially free than I have ever felt and truly blessed by God!

Lestie, Idaho

God gave me direction through the Crown small group Bible study. I was ready to give up on life because I thought God had given up on me, despite His display of compassion through others. Now I not only have a desire to live, but I understand the direction in which I should go. Thank God!

Maud, Florida

About the survey

The reported findings are the result of an open-access online survey conducted internally by the staff of Crown Financial Ministries and are limited to the graduates of the Crown *Biblical Financial Study* who chose to participate and had availability to Internet access.

Participants were not screened or randomly chosen, and responses may reflect bias toward or against the small group study in which they participated.

Specific financial results are calculated from the median amounts extrapolated from the categorical responses actually submitted by the participants.

Financial results are an approximation of the changes that may be possible by future participants. Results may vary by individual household and time elapsed since completing the Crown small group study.