



# MONEYLIFE

personal finance study

WITH FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

*MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study Student Manual*

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# WELCOME!

We are so thankful that you have decided to participate in *Crown's MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study*. God has used the principles you are about to learn in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who have taken Crown's financial studies. We've learned that people benefit most when they are faithful to complete the following:

**1. Homework** Complete the homework in writing. The homework questions are designed to take about 15 minutes each day to complete. Space for your answers is provided in the downloadable PDF for each lesson. If a married couple takes the study together, the husband and wife can either use separate PDFs or they can work together using one PDF.

**2. Scripture Memory and Meditation** Memorize and meditate on one of three assigned passages from the Bible each sessions. Individually recite the verse(s) you memorized throughout the week. This will help you remember the most important principles.

**3. Practical Application** Complete practical financial exercises, such as creating a spending or debt repayment plan. Most of these exercises will be done online using the new *MoneyLife® Planner™*. Downloadable forms are also available at <https://www.crown.org/resources/category/personal-finance/>. We strongly encourage married couples to complete the practical application exercises together, especially those related to building a budget.

**4. Prayer** Use the Prayer Log to keep track of requests and answers to prayers throughout this course. Your faithfulness to complete the homework in each session (i.e. Bible study, Scripture memorization, and the practical application exercises) will help you receive the maximum benefit from this course.

This course promises to help you overcome financial temptations and challenges to gain a life of meaning and purpose. But in order for that promise to be fulfilled, you have a part to play and so does God. Your part is to learn and apply the lessons faithfully and to work through the practical application exercises. God's part is to give you strength, insight and wisdom as you make the journey.

Again, we are very grateful for your participation in the *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study*. We pray that the Lord will bless you in every way as you learn His financial principles.

God is faithful,



Chuck Bentley

CEO, Crown Financial Ministries

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study* is to help participants grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, increase their knowledge of His financial principles and learn to apply them to their personal financial decisions. This process will lead you to a life of meaning and purpose and eternal joy.

## FINANCIAL POLICY

- Crown Financial Ministries does not endorse, recommend or sell any financial investments. No one may use their affiliation with Crown to promote or influence the sale of any financial products or services. Please report any violation of this policy to us using the phone number or email address at [www.crown.org/contact-us/](http://www.crown.org/contact-us/).
- Crown's *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study* does not give specific investment advice. No one may use his or her affiliation with Crown to give specific investment advice.
- There are several organizations that train financial planners to counsel from a biblical perspective. To learn more about these organizations, please contact Crown's Client Services team ([clientservices@crowns.org](mailto:clientservices@crowns.org) or 800-722-1976).
- This study is affordably priced because we do not want cost to be an obstacle to people who desire to participate. If you find the study valuable and want to help make it available to others, visit [crown.org](http://crown.org) to make a tax-deductible gift to Crown Financial Ministries.

## YOUR MONEYLIFE® STUDY EXPERIENCE

The *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study* is designed to take up to **10 sessions** to complete. However, we realize the some groups might have limited time to devote to this study. Examples of four-, six-, or eight-sessions studies are recommended below. These are only suggestions, and your group may choose different modules to suit particular needs. In addition, the order in which the modules are studied can be changed as needed.

As a group, chart the course you will take. Then indicate the modules you will include in your study by numbering the modules in the column marked **“My Group’s Study.”**

Regardless of the modules that you chose, it is important that the first week include an orientation for students recommended in Chapter One. Further, if a student is comfortable using a personal budgeting program other than those in the *MoneyLife® Planner*, students should not be required to switch.

| SESSIONS # | MODULE          | 4-SESSIONS STUDY | 6-SESSIONS STUDY | 8-SESSIONS STUDY | MY GROUP'S STUDY |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1          | Unwavering Hope |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| 2          | The Plan        |                  | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 3          | Ditching Debt   | ✓                | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 4          | Save It         | ✓                | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 5          | Investing       |                  |                  | ✓                |                  |
| 6          | Good Work       |                  | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 7          | Generous Living | ✓                | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 8          | Pay It Forward  |                  |                  | ✓                |                  |
| 9          | Truly Rich      | ✓                | ✓                | ✓                |                  |
| 10         | The Choice      |                  |                  |                  |                  |

## FORMAT OF THIS STUDY

### Prior to meeting in your group each sessions:

- Memorize one of three Scripture passages for the sessions. We have elected to use the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible, though at times, a different version has been selected for its particular wording or emphasis.
- Complete the practical application assignments. For many of these assignments, you'll use our new online tools. See the *MoneyLife® Planner™* section below for more information on these applications. Married couples should complete these practical assignments together, especially those related to building a family budget.
- Answer each day's homework questions. Be sure to review the articles contained in the homework section to dig deeper on a variety of topics related to each sessions's subject.
- Preview the sessions's selection from the teaching DVD.
- Be sure to read the sessions chapter notes. These notes have been designed to provide additional insight into the chapter's subject and to set the stage for your group discussion time.
- Pray for your own journey during the course of this study and for the other members of your group!

### When you come to your sessions group meeting, you'll:

- Share your memorized Scripture passage with the group if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Watch a video selection from the teaching DVD. Each sessions's lesson contains an inspirational story and teaching from Crown's CEO Chuck Bentley.
- Discuss the video, the sessions homework questions and practical application assignments, as well as the chapter notes.
- Pray for one another!



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# MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Planner<sup>™</sup>

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Rather than providing you with an assortment of worksheets to fill out by hand, we have created a collection of online applications designed to assist you in your financial journey. These tools are practical, easy to use and can be adapted to your life's unique circumstances. If you prefer other financial software or online budgeting tools, feel free to use whatever works best for you.

## MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Indicator

You can't get where you want to be if you don't know where you are. After taking a brief survey about your finances, the *MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Indicator* will provide you with a snapshot of your current financial health, as well as a breakdown of where you stand in nine key areas related to your financial actions and attitudes.

## MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Budget<sup>™</sup>

Designed for those of us who've ever battled with a spreadsheet and lost, the *MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Budget<sup>™</sup>* helps you create a usable, flexible spending plan for your real life. First, we'll ask you some simple questions about your income, giving and spending habits. Then, armed with knowledge and lots of practical tips, we'll help you create a spending plan to achieve your short- and long-term financial goals.

## MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Tracker<sup>™</sup>

Have you ever wondered where your money goes each month? The *MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Tracker<sup>™</sup>* is a simple tool that allows you to keep track of all your daily income and spending.. As transactions are recorded, you'll see how your real-world spending compares with your *MoneyLife<sup>®</sup> Budget<sup>™</sup>* in each category of spending. This information will then empower you to make thoughtful decisions so that your spending syncs with your spending plan.

In addition, you'll have access to an array of financial calculators and worksheets, as well as a library of articles to aid in your financial planning.

Visit [crown.org/planner](https://crown.org/planner) to get started today.



## STUDY OBJECTIVES AND FACILITATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Crown has designed this *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study* to be led by a group member serving as facilitator during group meetings. Though one person can serve as facilitator during the entire study, we believe it can be beneficial for the group if the responsibility to lead the class is passed to a new facilitator each sessions.

As the facilitator (even if you're just serving for the sessions), it's important that you understand a few key aspects of the *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study*.

### Objectives of the Study

1. Invite people to enter into a closer relationship with Christ. Luke 16:11 expresses the correlation between the way we handle our money and resources and the quality of our fellowship with the Lord: ***"If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"***
2. Challenge each person to invite Jesus Christ to be his or her Lord. We believe money is the primary competitor with Christ for the lordship of our lives. Jesus said, ***"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money"*** (Matthew 6:24).
3. Provide an opportunity for the development of high-trust fellowship among the participants.
4. Help small group members put their financial houses in order and achieve lives of meaning and purpose.

## The Primary Responsibilities of the Facilitator

1. Unconditionally love and encourage the other members of the group. People are more receptive to spiritual truth when they have been loved. People want to know how much you care before they care how much you know.
2. Hold the other members of the group accountable to:
  - Start and finish on time.
  - Participate and share experiences.
  - Honor one another by being concise.
3. Be a model of faithfulness. Facilitators must be faithful to arrive early, pray consistently for the other group members, know the memory verses each sessions and have their homework and practical application assignments prepared in advance.

## INFORMATION FACILITATORS NEED TO KNOW

1. **Teaching DVD:** During class each sessions, you will play a segment of the teaching DVD. There are 11 segments on the DVD—one for each sessions of the study and a bonus section entitled *Lifted Up*. The teaching segment sets the theme for the sessions's discussion and provides instruction on the topic. After viewing the video, take time to answer any questions the participants may have.

Each small group member should have a copy of the teaching DVD. Members should use their personal copy to preview the sessions's material, and the group should also watch it together during the sessions meeting. If a student does not have access to the internet to complete the practical budgeting tools found online, Facilitators can make copies of similar forms for the student. These forms are available on Crown's website at <https://www.crown.org/resources/>.

2. **Group Size:** The preferred number of members in a group varies, depending on how many married couples and how many individuals participate. Eight to 10 members in a group is ideal (but not mandatory). We recommend that you limit the size of the group because the group dynamic can be compromised if the group is too large.
3. **Meeting Time and Place:** The *MoneyLife® Personal Finance Study* is designed for groups to meet for one hour once a sessions. However, each

group is different and you may find it takes an hour and a half to two hours. The time and day the group meets should be the one most convenient for the participants. Groups may meet anywhere—in homes, offices or churches—but homes often provide a more comfortable setting.

4. **Meeting Frequency:** The MoneyLife Personal Finance Study is designed to be flexible to best meet the needs of each individual group. It therefore is designed in "sessions" rather than in time periods such as weeks. While it is recommended that a group complete all sessions, the study does offer recommendations on which sections to use for groups that would prefer to run shorter programs (see page 7). Please use this information to choose the curriculum best suited to the needs of your team.
5. **Bible Verses:** Each session has 3 different Bible verses. This is being offered to give the student a choice to pick the one verse that best relates to them. Instruct the group to pick the one verse that resonates most and commit that to memory.
6. **Course Facilitation:** One unique aspect of the MoneyLife Personal Finance Study is that it is designed to allow for the rotation of facilitators. While many groups might prefer to have a single facilitator, others might find that each individual brings a unique skill set to facilitation that just might create a much more diverse and rich experience for all group members. Explore this option with your group. Since some people prefer not be in that seat, no one should be required to take on this role. However, some groups might find this opportunity as a tremendous chance to share and experience growth.
7. **Video Answer Key:** Each session has fill in the blank questions specific to that video. For the convenience of the group, the answer key to all these questions are located in the back of the book.
8. **Promoting Financial Products and Services:** Again, no one may use his or her affiliation with Crown Financial Ministries to promote or influence the sale of any investment, financial product or other professional service.

## HOW TO CONDUCT *THE* STUDY

1. Class should open and close in prayer.
2. Give each member the opportunity to recite the Scripture he or she has chosen to memorize. Scriptures are to be memorized in the version used in the Crown materials, so as to add consistency to the group's mutual efforts.
3. Confirm that the practical application assignments have been completed.

4. Play the teaching DVD segment for the sessions's lesson.
5. Conduct the group discussion. The discussion should proceed as follows:
  - Different group members should read the Scriptures for a particular day's homework.
  - Proceed in a circle, asking each person (or couple) to answer all the questions for that day's homework. If the answer to a question is obvious, it is not necessary for more than one person to answer the question.
  - Group discussions are confidential. What's talked about in the small group should not leave the small group.
6. No one should be required to disclose the details of his or her financial situation.
7. Share prayer requests with one another. (It may be a good idea to have one person write them down, so they can be emailed to the group during the sessions.)
8. Close the meeting in prayer. Do your best to start and stop class on time. It shows respect for all members of the group and is a good way to practice stewarding your time. There is, of course, no reason that fellowship among group members needs to end when the meeting does.

## SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS

There are two common dangers to avoid with small group discussion. The first is when the facilitator does all or most of the talking. This sometimes happens when a facilitator feels it is his or her responsibility to fill “dead air” during a discussion. Do your best to resist this temptation. Group dynamics work much better when all group members are taking part in the discussion. In some cases, it’s not the facilitator, but a particularly outspoken group member who dominates the conversation. One of the facilitator’s chief responsibilities is to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to get in on the discussion. For this reason, it may be necessary to steer the conversation in such a way that everyone has the chance to participate by asking questions like, “Has everyone shared their insights for this question?”

The second danger to avoid is the loss of control. Some groups have such great camaraderie that individual conversations spring up naturally among group members during group discussion time. Or the group discussion as a whole ends up off topic and down a rabbit trail, so to speak. As the facilitator, it’s your responsibility to help the group’s discussion stay on track. Manage the group by politely saying something like, “We can talk about that after class. Let’s honor everyone’s time by completing this session’s discussion.”

It has been our observation through years of training leaders for our small groups that the best leaders are those who talk the least, who draw out responses from all participants in the group and who demonstrate a compassionate commitment to serve the needs of the students.

