

a freedom 5:one white paper

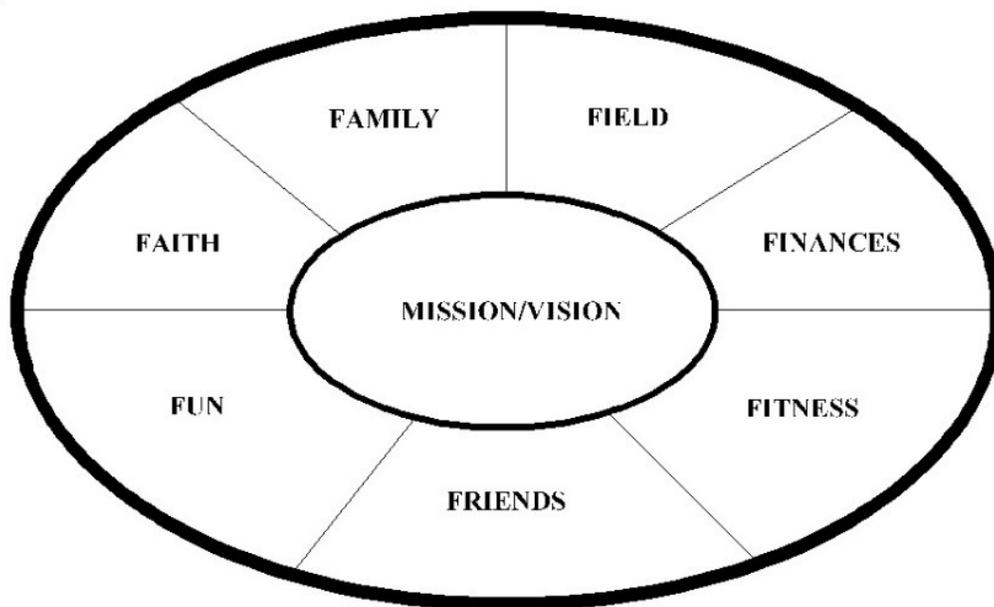
Why Local Church Leadership Should Add a
Financial Health Program to Their
Discipleship Program

Freedom 5:one Ministries

7/1/1/2024

1) Executive Summary

The Christian families entrusted to your church are your most valuable asset, and their well-being is the key to reaching your objectives as a church and impacting the world for Christ. When we use the word family we are talking about households in many forms- married, single, childless, or with children) Whatever you can do to help this group get healthy financially is paramount to your church's vision. One discipleship model identifies key life areas they face and are foundational areas for your discipleship system.



But what if, after careful evaluation, you discovered that many of your families struggle with a common issue in one of the areas? Would you address it?

We suggest that many of your members may be struggling with personal finances (some on the income side and some on the management side). We recognize that every church is different and that generalities never address the needs of the whole community. But after a decade of helping families with personal financial health concerns, we believe there is an opportunity to strengthen the financial health of our Christian families worldwide.

2) The financial health needs of the general population are most likely represented in your church.

PEOPLE HAVE FINANCIAL STRESS

1. #1 cause of divorce is unresolved conflict. Finances at top of list of what couples fighting about.
2. Families drowning in consumer debt.
3. 70% of American living paycheck to paycheck (Wall Street Journal)
4. 2 of 3 families do not have a working budget (Gallup)
5. Christians are giving 1-2% of their income (on average)
6. Most U.S. workers reaching retirement age are not prepared
7. Many families and individuals are living with a lot of financial stress

We are an American-based ministry whose research has an American slant. Americans, in general, are dealing with much financial stress (see chart on this page). We observe that many of the economic needs of the public also exist in the families in the local church and, therefore, need to be addressed.

The scope of need is the most compelling statistic for us and was a primary reason we started our ministry in the first place. 70% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, and 66% do not have a working budget (we assume that these stats describe many of the same people). And this sample data of the general population probably somewhat represents your church. If this were true of your church- that two-thirds of your staff were working with a lot of financial pressure and no plan, would you address it?

As we research financial issues in other countries, we find many overlapping financial issues independent of nationality. Having financially healthy Christian families will enable them to be more focused on the ministry around them in your community and fulfill their part of

the Great Commission.

The Gallup polling group conducted a well-being survey of over 100 million people worldwide. It released its findings in the book *Wellbeing at Work* by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter. In this survey, they discovered five key well-being areas desired by most participants. The overarching result of their research project is that there is a global desire for well-being. These are the five areas that people around the world are wanting:

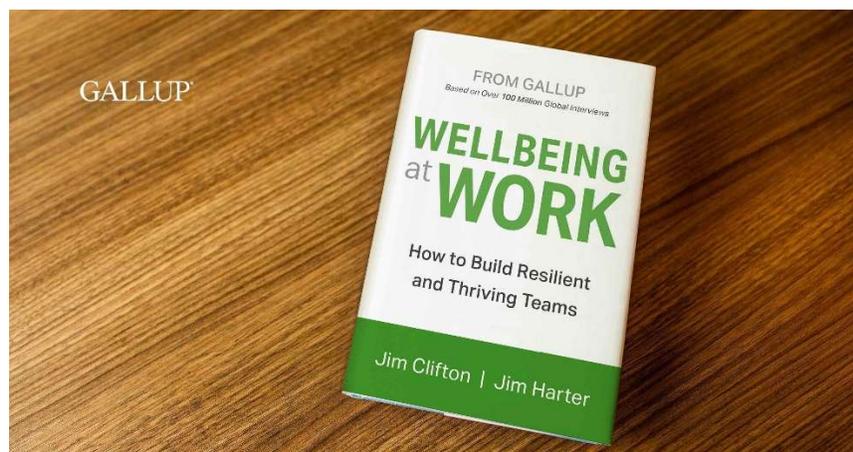
Career well-being- you like where you work.

Social well-being- you have friends and people who care about you.

Physical well-being- you have enough energy and good health to do what you need to

Community well-being- you like where you live.

Financial well-being- you have enough resources to live your life and manage them well.



3) We must address the financial management side of the financial health of the Christian family.

Since 2010, our team has been working with hundreds of families worldwide, primarily in NW Arkansas, where we are based. Over the years, we have coined a phrase that captures the outcome of our coaching: We want our clients to become “Generous Stewards.” This idea is birthed in practical experience and a Biblical mindset about money. God owns everything, and we are but the manager (steward) of the resources He puts in our charge.

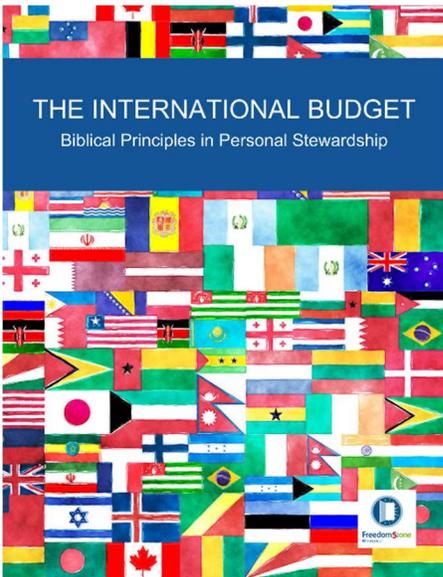
A Generous Steward is:

1. **God-Centered** in their approach to finances. To be God-Centered is to recognize that He is indeed the owner, and as the owner, His opinion and perspective are paramount. Another way to be God-centered in our finances is an issue of Lordship, where we give Him the right to rule in this area.
2. **Generous** toward the causes of the Lord. All believers are responsible for chipping in to fund the causes of Christ. Our experience with families has been that sometimes their finances are off because their giving is off. We must model and participate in generosity.
3. **Well-managed** in their finances. The last area is the practical nuts and bolts of creating a system and managing your resources. We have identified five key areas that will lead to financial success if managed well.

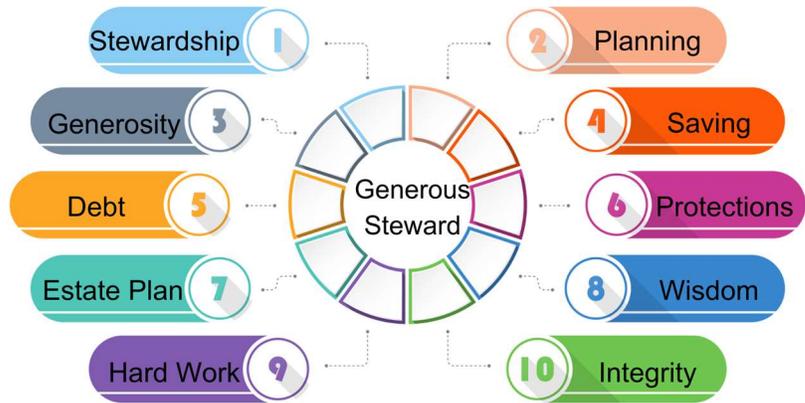


4. **Growing in their Biblical worldview in their finances.** The Bible has a lot to say about finances, and we need to grow in our understanding of what God has to say about

managing our money and possessions. The resource below is a deep dive into the book of Proverbs to examine Biblical principles in personal stewardship. It is available on www.freedom5one.com in the church section.



Financial Success



4) We must address the generosity of the Christian family.

The Christian family has unbelievable potential (whether they realize it or not). God has called the Christian family to be His heart in a lost and dying world. They are the city set on a hill that lets their light shine before people in such a way that they see their good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:14–16). This should not stoke arrogance in our hearts; instead, it should cultivate a humble reverence that God would choose to use an imperfect group of people like our families to represent Him on the earth. We are not great, but we serve a great God who loves and cares for the people around us and, for some odd reason, chooses to use us despite our weaknesses and imperfections.

But many Christian families are not doing well from a generosity standpoint (American families are giving 1-3 percent of their finances), and not only does it affect the way they feel about their finances, but it also causes a bottleneck of resources for churches, missions, community needs,

and other needs as well. The Christian family's generosity is strategic on several fronts, and we must address the issue.

Let us say, on the front end, there are many opportunities to give that are clamoring for attention from the Christian family. These giving opportunities are somewhat symbiotic in that the local church, mission agencies, nonprofits, and individuals work together to meet the needs of our world. This paper is not attempting to create competition or divisiveness between the different organizations, but rather to clarify for the Christian family the areas of opportunity to invest their resources. We hope this will greatly help your congregation and maximize their generosity. But we **must** figure out how to get all of the areas funded.

The bottom line is that the worldwide Church is comprised of many parts, and God has been highly creative in how He builds His kingdom. The Christian family is privileged to participate by giving of our time, talent, and treasure (T3). Getting the resources to the right area is difficult, as each major player is ministering to the needs mentioned below. We need to identify **how much** God wants us to give and then pray about **where** He wants us to give **His** money.

Before we get to some of those details. Let's clarify a few things. The Christian family has a responsibility to fund the things of God. Practically, that means they will write a check to some organizations or give cash or items to an individual. There are several organizations where that can meet the needs we listed below. Each organization has a unique calling from the Lord and approaches the task at hand a little differently. Consider these entities:

- The local church
- Mission agencies
- Specialized ministries (like campus ministry and ministry to the poor)
- Nonprofits
- The Christian family gives directly to the needs around them

From our Bible study, we have identified seven areas in the New Testament where the Christian family has an opportunity to meet needs. If you find an eighth, let us know. These areas inform and instruct us as to what the ministry of the Church should be. It spells the word W.E.L.C.O.M.E (with a small improvisation using the second letter of the word “poor ” rather than the first).

- W- Widows and orphans- James 1:27
- E- Elderly parents- I Timothy 5:3-16 (focus vs 8), Mark 7:9-13
- L- The local church- Acts 4:36-37, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Acts 13:1-3 , 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Galatians 6:6-10, I Timothy 5:3-16
- C- Other Christians- Acts 2:43-47, 4:32-35, 6:1-6; 2 Corinthians 8, 2 Corinthians 9, James 2:14-17, 1 John 3:16-18
- O-The poor- Matthew 6:2-4
- M- Missions- 1 Corinthian 9, 3 John 5-8 , Romans 15:22-24, Acts 15:3, Titus 3:13-14, 1 Corinthians 16:5-6
- E- Personal Evangelism and Discipleship- Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Matthew 5:13-16 , Hebrews 13:2, Ephesians 2:10

In his letter to Timothy, Paul captures the essence of individual giving. When you think about the wealth of the Christian family and that we have been blessed to be a blessing, his words to the rich are appropriate for many Christian families. We read in 1 Timothy 6:17–19, “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

We must change the way we distribute the Kingdom's resources. We need to help families reach their giving potential and then allow the Lord to lead them to meet the needs in our world.

5) The Solution- Add a Robust Financial Health Program to the Discipleship Program that Includes One-to-One Coaching, Educational Training Opportunities, Identify Resources for the families, and Ongoing Research

The solution that needs to be considered is adding a robust financial health program to your church. Whether you develop programs yourself or outsource to other services, a comprehensive approach will enable you to take care of your families and give you great insight into how they are doing in this area of financial health.

There are four key elements for such a program.

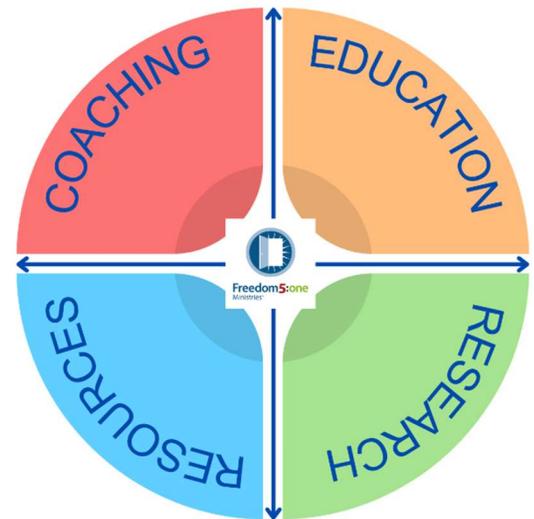
- 1) **Coaching**
- 2) **Education**
- 3) **Resourcing** and
- 4) **Research/Insights.**

Here are some descriptions of what that program might look like.

Financial Coaching

The core program contains personalized 1-1 coaching with families and individuals. Just like one-to-one discipleship helps a person navigate their spiritual growth, personalized attention to help a family work through their specific obstacles towards their financial goals is the fastest route to financial health. The focus should be on helping them become **Generous Stewards**. This means they are 1) God-Centered, 2) Generous towards Kingdom things, 3) Well managed in their finances, 4) Biblical in their thinking about finances

Education



The program should also consist of ongoing educational opportunities. Whether in classes, working cohorts, or from the pulpit, continued exposure to crucial financial concepts helps develop a financially healthy church. The organization can develop or identify educational programs. One pastor we know says, “It’s not what we want from you but what we want for you.”

Resources

Many Bible studies, books, and videos are designed to help the Christian family develop a Christian worldview in personal finances. Identifying and accessing these kinds of tools helps build your staff. As a church, you must locate and make resources available to your families.

Research/Insights

Have you ever wondered how healthy your church is financially speaking? We have developed a brief anonymous survey to give you an excellent feel for that purpose. This is a survey we use with our coaching clients, and we have found it very enlightening to understand how our clients feel about their finances. We have listed the core questions we use to discern how a team is doing. Freedom 5:one can manage this survey for you, or you can do it yourself. If you use the questions we have listed below, we would love to see a copy of your results so that we can add them to our research of churches worldwide.

Example: Financial Wellness Survey (Scale of 1 to 5)

1. I manage my money well.
2. To what degree does your faith affect your financial decisions?
3. How prepared do you feel for an unexpected expense of \$1,000?
4. How prepared are you for retirement?
5. How satisfied are you with your current generosity?
6. How confident are you in your plan to reduce personal debt?
7. How confident are you that you have the right amount of insurance protections?
8. How happy are you with your current spending habits?
9. How well are you following your budget?

10. How often do you feel stress over your finances?
11. How often does financial stress negatively affect your relationships?
12. To what degree do your finances align with your personal life goals?

6) The Benefits

If you adopt this idea of strengthening your team's financial health by implementing a program, you can expect many benefits.

- Stronger Marriages
- More motivated families in service
- More generosity towards your church
- More generosity towards your community and the world
- Less distracted families
- More contented families
- More people impacted for the Lord

7) The Call-To-Action

1. Pray if you think the Lord may encourage you to explore this.
2. Survey your families to determine whether there is a need for or interest in developing this area.
3. Contact our team to brainstorm the idea. If you want to discuss how to institute this kind of program, contact Tim Howington. Tim is the Executive Vice President for Freedom 5:one Ministries. You can contact him at tim.howington@freedom5one.com

8) About Freedom 5:one Ministries

Chris Haas is our Founder. He came to faith in his senior year at the University of Arkansas and graduated with a Finance Degree. After spending a summer at a summer training program with Student Mobilization, he joined the Stu Mo staff team and ministered to college students for ten years. He then began to position himself as a local church pastor and graduated from Dallas

Theological Seminary. Upon graduation, he sensed the Lord leading him to dust off his finance degree and begin to help families with personal finances. Little did he know that God had been preparing him to start a ministry that would be a blend of his heart for families, finances, discipleship, and evangelism.

In 2010, Chris sensed God's leading to create a new ministry to focus on the financial health of God's people. Since then, we have coached hundreds of families. Freedom 5:one Ministries is a life-changing financial education and coaching Ministry! Inspiration comes from God's heart to set His people free, as expressed in Galatians 5:1. *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.* We would love to help you as you take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

www.freedom5one.com

9) Contact us

If this has piqued your interest. Contact our team to brainstorm the idea. If you want to discuss how to institute this kind of program, contact Tim Howington. Tim is the Executive Vice President for Freedom 5:one Ministries. You can contact him at

tim.howington@freedom5one.com