

God's direction for spending, saving, giving, investing and getting out of debt.

YOUR MONEY COUNTS



CompassFinancialMinistry.org



Your Money Counts - 2020 Edition

Copyright © 1996 by Compass—*finances God's way*TM. All rights reserved.

Revisions and New Chapter © 2011 by Howard L. Dayton, Jr.

All rights reserved. Revisions and New Chapter © 2020 by Howard L. Dayton, Jr. All rights reserved.

Some of this material previously appeared in *Your Money: Frustration or Freedom?* Published by Tyndale House Publishers, copyright © 1979 by Howard L. Dayton, Jr.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from The Living Bible, copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked amp are taken from the Amplified New Testament, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1987 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

(The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 95-83819

ISBN 978-0-9831331-0-0

Printed in the United States of America

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible

Compass—finances God's way, does not recommend any investments. No one is authorized to use affiliation with Compass to promote the sale of any investments or financial services.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

One	The Problem	7
Two	The Answer	9
Three	God's Part—The Foundation	15
Four	Our Part—Good and Faithful	25
Five	Debt—Act Your Own Wage	31
Six	Getting Out of Debt	39
Seven	Counsel—A Triple-Braided Cord	51
Eight	Honesty—Absolutely	59
Nine	Giving—What Is Your Attitude?	69
Ten	Work—Who Is Your Real Boss?	81
Eleven	Investing—Steady Plodding	95
Twelve	The One Guaranteed Investment	109
Thirteen	Children—The ABC's of Money	113
Fourteen	Budget—Keep Abreast of the Facts	123
Fifteen	Standard of Living—How Shall We Then Live?	133
Sixteen	Perspective—What's Really Important	141
Seventeen	Crisis	149
Eighteen	Finishing Well	161
Nineteen	Summing It All Up	171
	Questions and Answers	177
	Endnotes	186

THREE

GOD'S PART

The Foundation



On a rainy November morning, Allen and Jean Hitchcock arrived at my office to work through their financial problems in an attempt to save their marriage.

Allen and Jean were Christians, but they had never been exposed to the Bible's perspective on money and possessions. They appreciated their beautiful two-story brick house in suburban Orlando, their two late-model automobiles and their other possessions. Both felt that they had worked hard for what they had and that they had earned the right to enjoy "the good life." However, after financial pressures threatened their standard of living, their lack of contentment surfaced in a major

marital crisis. A serious lack of communication existed about their family finances. Allen and Jean each had their own opinions on how to spend the family income, and they had never been able to discuss the subject without ending up in an argument.

They were close to losing everything to their creditors. That, coupled with the possibility of divorce, had jarred them from their complacency. So when I sat down with Allen and Jean on the Friday after Thanksgiving, they were motivated to learn what the Bible says about money.

The Bible teaches there are two distinct parts to the handling of our money: the part God plays and the part we play. I believe most of the confusion relating to the handling of money arises from the fact that these two parts are not clearly understood.

Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength.

King David,
1 Chronicles 29:11-12, TLB

God's part is the foundation of contentment. In Scripture, God calls Himself by more than 250 names. The name that best describes God's part in the area of money is Master. This is the most important chapter of the entire book because how we view God determines how we live. For example, after losing his children and all his possessions, Job was still able to worship God. He knew the Lord and the Lord's role as Master of those possessions. Similarly, Moses forsook the treasures of Egypt and chose to suffer mistreatment with the

people of God. Both Job and Moses knew the Lord and accepted His role as Master.

Let's examine what the Bible has to say about God's part in three crucial areas: ownership, control and provision.

OWNERSHIP

The Bible clearly states that God is sole owner of everything. *The earth*

is the Lord's, and all it contains (Psalm 24:1). Scripture even reveals specific items God owns. Leviticus 25:23 identifies Him as owner of all the land: *The land . . . shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine.* Haggai 2:8 reveals that *'the silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts.* And in Psalm 50:10, the Lord tells us: *For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.*

The Lord is the Creator of all things, and He has never transferred the ownership of His creation to people. In Colossians 1:17 we are told that *in Him all things hold together.* At this very moment the Lord literally holds everything together by His power. Recognizing God's ownership is critical in allowing Jesus Christ to become the Lord of our money and possessions.

Ownership or Lordship?

If we are going to be genuine followers of Christ, we must transfer the ownership of our possessions to the Lord. *No one . . . can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions* (Luke 14:33). In my experience, I have found that the Lord will sometimes test us by asking that we be willing to relinquish the very possession that is dearest to us.

Scripture's most vivid example of this is when the Lord told Abraham, *Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac . . . and offer him there as a burnt offering* (Genesis 22:2). When Abraham obeyed, demonstrating his willingness to give up his most prized possession, God provided a substitute ram for the offering, and Isaac was not harmed.

Outstanding author Larry Burkett observed, "When we acknowledge God's ownership, every spending decision becomes a spiritual decision. No longer do we ask, 'Lord, what do You want me to do with *my* money?' The question is restated, 'Lord, what do You want me to do with *Your* money?'" When we have this perspective, spending and saving decisions are equally as spiritual as giving decisions.

The First Step Toward Contentment

To learn to be content, you must recognize God as the owner of all your possessions. If you believe you own even a single possession, then the circumstances affecting it will be reflected in your attitude. If something favorable happens to it, then you will be happy. But if something bad occurs, you will be discontented.

After Jim Seneff went through the exercise of transferring ownership of everything he possessed to God, he bought a new car. It was just two days old when a young person drove into the side of it. Jim's first reaction was, "Well, God, I don't know why You want a dent in the side of Your new car, but You certainly have a big one!" Similarly, when John Wesley learned that his home had been destroyed by fire, he exclaimed, "The Lord's house burned. One less responsibility for me!"

Yet it is not easy to maintain this perspective consistently. It is far too easy to think that the possessions we have and the money we earn are entirely the result of our skills and achievements. We find it difficult not to believe we have earned the right to their ownership. *I am the master of my fate*, the humanist says. *I alone own my possessions*. Obviously, this view of ownership is the prevailing one in our culture.

Giving up ownership is not easy, nor is it a once-and-for-all transaction. We constantly need to be reminded that God owns all our possessions.

CONTROL

The second responsibility God has retained is ultimate control of every event that occurs upon the earth. Examine several of the names of God in Scripture: Master, Almighty, Creator, Shepherd, Lord of lords and King of kings. It's obvious who is in charge:

We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength.

(1 Chronicles 29:11-12, TLB)

Psalm 135:6 reads, *Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth*. And in Daniel 4:34-35 King Nebuchadnezzar stated, *I praised the Most High . . . He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'* (NIV).

The Lord is in control of even difficult circumstances. *I am the Lord, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these* (Isaiah 45:6-7). It is important for the child of God to realize that his

heavenly Father orchestrates even seemingly devastating circumstances for ultimate good in the lives of the godly. *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

The Lord allows difficult circumstances to enter our lives for at least three reasons: (1) to develop our character, (2) to accomplish His intentions, and (3) to lovingly discipline us when needed. We will examine this in greater detail in Chapter 17—Crisis.

PROVISION

The third element of God's part is that He has promised to provide our needs. *Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all things [food and clothing] shall be added unto you* (Matthew 6:33, KJV). In Genesis 22:14, God is spoken of as "Jehovah-jireh," which means "the Lord will provide." He takes care of His people, and He does not need a prosperous economy to provide for them. Each day He gave manna to the children of Israel during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Jesus fed 5,000 with only five loaves and two fish.

God is both predictable and unpredictable. He is absolutely predictable in His faithfulness to provide for our needs. What we cannot predict is how the Lord will provide. He uses various and sometimes surprising means of meeting our needs. He may increase our income, provide a gift or stretch our limited resources through money-saving purchases. Regardless of how He chooses to provide for our needs, He is utterly reliable.

First Timothy 6:8 tells us that our needs are food and covering. In other words, there is a difference between needs and wants. A need is a basic necessity of life—food, clothing or shelter. A want is anything more than a need. A steak dinner, a new car and the latest fashions are all wants.

God's part in helping us reach contentment is that He has obligated Himself to provide our needs. However, He has not promised to provide our wants. He promises to provide our needs, and He tells us to be content when these needs are met. *And if we have food and cover, with these we shall be content* (1 Timothy 6:8).

Let me illustrate God's provision with a story.

As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies

gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well-fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with a solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed. If he was hungry, more food was provided, but when he was finished, this particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten.

The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed, instinctively knowing they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful and contented sleep.¹

Similarly, the Lord has given us His guarantee—our “piece of bread.” As we cling to His promises of provision, we can relax and be content. *And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches* (Philippians 4:19). So even if you are in the middle of an extreme financial problem, you can be content because the Lord has promised to feed, clothe and shelter you.

I am convinced that the Lord will provide—at just the right time—the resources necessary for us to fulfill the purpose and calling He has for each of us. This is illustrated in 2 Samuel 12:7-8 when He spoke to David through Nathan the prophet: *Thus says the Lord God of Israel, “It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these.”*

From the life of David we see that God did not provide all the necessary resources for him to be king all at once. They came at the appropriate time, as David needed them. Occasionally, the Lord has withheld resources from *Compass-finances God’s way™*. I sometimes have been confused when this has occurred. Later I discovered that if we had received them too soon, we would not have spent them wisely.

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

The basic reason we fail to recognize God’s part is that we do not understand who God is. We often have no genuine awe for the Lord *who*

stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (Isaiah 51:13). We tend to shrink God down and fit Him into a mold with human abilities and limitations. However, we can expand our vision to capture the true perspective of God by studying what the Bible tells us about Him. The following is but a sample:

Lord of the Universe

The Lord's power is incomprehensible to humans. For example, astronomers estimate more than 100 billion galaxies exist in the universe, each containing billions of stars. The distance from one end of a galaxy to the other is often measured in millions of light years. The enormity of the universe is mindboggling. Isaiah 40:26 reads, *Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number; He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power not one of them is missing.*

Lord of the Nations

Examine the Lord's role and position relative to nations and people. Isaiah 40:21-24 tells us, *Do you not know? Have you not heard? . . . It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. . . . He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted . . . but He merely blows on them, and they wither.*

And from Isaiah 40:15, 17 we read, *Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales . . . All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.*

Lord of the Individual

God is not an aloof, disinterested "force." Rather, He is intimately involved with each of us as individuals. Psalm 139:3-4, 16 reveals, *You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord . . . All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be* (NIV). The Lord is so involved in our lives that He reassures us, *The very hairs of your head are all numbered* (Matthew 10:30). Our heavenly Father is the One who knows us best and loves us the most.

God hung the stars in space, fashioned the earth's towering mountains and mighty oceans, and determined the destiny of nations. Jeremiah observed correctly, *Nothing is too difficult for you* (Jeremiah 32:17). Yet God knows when a sparrow falls to the ground. He is the Lord of the infinite and the infinitesimal.

In summary, let's review what God's part is. He is the owner; He is in control of every circumstance; and He has promised to meet our needs. In other words, God, who created the world and holds it together, is able to perform His responsibilities and keep His promises. However, God's part is only half of the equation. It is the most important part, but it is only half. In the next chapter we will begin to examine the other half, our part.

CONTRAST

Society says: What I possess, I alone own; I alone control my destiny.

Scripture says: What I possess, God owns. He is the sovereign, living God, who controls all events.

At the end of most chapters, after the CONTRAST between society and Scripture, there will be a COMMITMENT section that will give you the opportunity to practice the biblical principle we have just covered. I challenge and encourage you to do the COMMITMENT sections because they will help make the principles a part of your life.

COMMITMENT

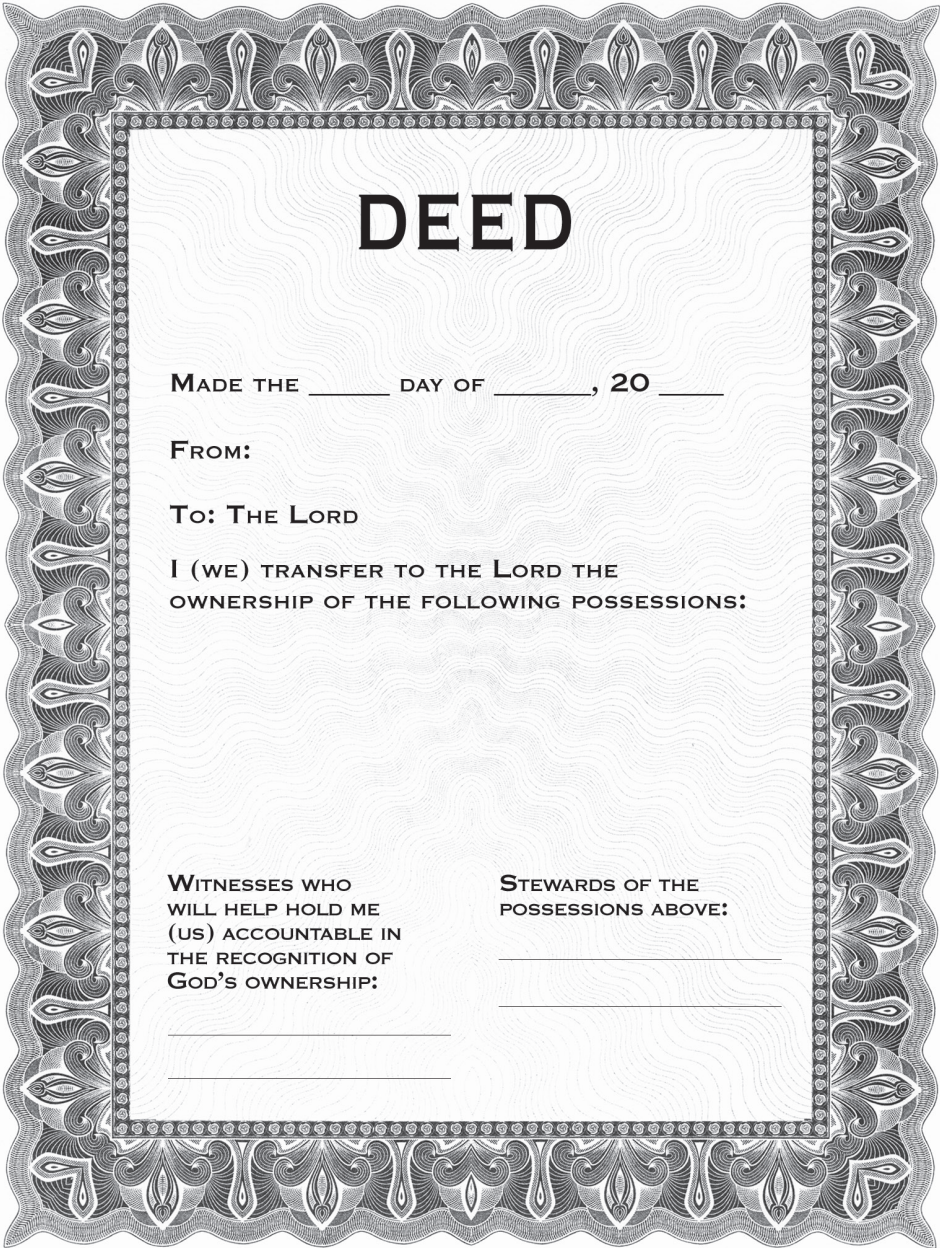
In the Compass small group study, we go through an exercise of transferring the ownership of our possessions to the Lord. We use a deed to do this because a deed is often used to transfer the ownership of property.

When participants in the Compass study complete and sign the deed, they are acknowledging that God is owner of their assets. The exercise is important because we all occasionally forget that God owns everything. We act as if we own it all. By signing the deed, a person establishes a specific time when God's ownership is

acknowledged. Thus, a person can refer to the document repeatedly and recall that God owns everything.

The following will help you complete the deed:

1. Insert today's date.
2. Print your name. You are the one transferring ownership.
3. The Lord is the One receiving the assets.
4. Give prayerful consideration to the possessions you wish to acknowledge God owns. Then list those items.
5. Sign your name.
6. On the lower left-hand corner there is a space for the signature of two witnesses. These friends can help hold you accountable for recognizing God as owner of your possessions.



DEED

MADE THE _____ DAY OF _____, 20 _____

FROM:

TO: THE LORD

**I (WE) TRANSFER TO THE LORD THE
OWNERSHIP OF THE FOLLOWING POSSESSIONS:**

**WITNESSES WHO
WILL HELP HOLD ME
(US) ACCOUNTABLE IN
THE RECOGNITION OF
GOD'S OWNERSHIP:**

**STEWARDS OF THE
POSSESSIONS ABOVE:**
