



managing God's money

» « A
BIBLICAL
GUIDE » «

Study Guide for Group or Individual Use
Developed by Eternal Perspective Ministries

Based on the book by

RANDY
ALCORN



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Introduction

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Why did you choose to read and study *Managing God's Money*?
2. After perusing the table of contents, what chapters interest you most?
3. Take some time to reflect on the following:

...the central focus of this book is not insurance but *assurance*, not securities but *security*, not trusts but *trust*, not principal but *principles*, not real estate but *real estate*.

It is our prayer that as you study this book you will truly understand the full meaning of this focus statement.



Chapter 1

Starting Right: A Biblical Mind-Set about Money

1. Directly or indirectly, what did Jesus teach the most about?

- a. Heaven
- b. Hell
- c. Money & possessions
- d. Faith
- e. Prayer

Why?

2. Which biblical characters in Chapter One challenged you the most and why? Zacchaeus, John the Baptist, the poor widow, the believers who burned their incantation books, or another?

3. Take time to look over Romans 14:12. Prayerfully and honestly evaluate how you have used your wealth in the past. In light of giving an account to God, what are some changes in your money management that you can make today?





Explore More

Watch this 7-minute video: *Advice about Giving* (www.epm.org/advicegiving)

How would you have responded to the people in the scenario Randy presented?

Chapter 2

Ownership: It All Belongs to God

1. What is the definition of a steward? What must we have an accurate awareness of to understand biblical stewardship?

2. Share three verses from this chapter that emphasize God's ownership of everything.



3. How did you first react when you read the pencil story on page 19? Did this story help you to see God's ownership in a new light?

Explore More

Listen to this 2-minute audio: *Is God really the owner of everything?* (www.epm.org/Godowner)

Randy shares in this clip that we need to be sure that we don't embezzle or misappropriate God's funds He has entrusted to us. Did you find this concept radical or surprising? Why or why not?

Chapter 3

Stewardship: It's under Our Management

1. In this chapter, does Jesus tell us to stay away from earthly wealth? Why or why not?



2. Choose one of the stewardship parables mentioned in this chapter and discuss or journal about how it speaks to you.

3. Currently, on a scale from one to ten (ten being the most faithful) where do you see yourself as a manager of God's assets? What changes can you make to increase this number?



Explore More

Listen to this 2-minute audio: *Stewardship 101* (www.epm.org/stewardship101)

What are the most basic principles of stewardship?

Have you ever prayed, “Lord, this money belongs to you. How would you like me to steward it?”?



Chapter 4

“Money Is Bad”: A False Spirituality

1. Do you agree or disagree with the statement “Money is the root of all evil”? Back up your answer with Scripture.

2. Are you more prone to materialism or asceticism? What is wrong with both views?

3. Meditate on Philippians 4:11-12. Record or share a time in your life that you experienced victory in this area.

Explore More



Watch this 4-minute video: *Is it wrong to spend money on entertainment and leisure?* (www.epm.org/leisure)

What two passages of Scripture does Randy share in response to this question?



Chapter 5

“It’s All about Money”: The False God of Materialism

1. Do you agree with the following statement: “God created us to love people and use things, but materialists love things and use people”? Which way are you currently living?
2. From Romans 12:9-11, what are the steps Paul suggests as a way to counter materialism?
3. Have you ever purchased a material possession with the best of intentions, and ended up hating the possession? Discuss or journal about something you felt God desired you to purchase, and how it won souls for eternity.

Explore More

Listen to this 1-minute audio: *Does materialism hinder contentment?* (www.epm.org/contentment)

Randy says, “When we become tied up in our wealth and assets, we begin to trust in them instead of in the Lord.” When have you experienced this?



Chapter 6

Materialism: Ten Fatal Dangers

1. Look over the Ten Fatal Dangers of Materialism. Which one do you struggle with the most? The least?

2. Read Matthew 6:31-34 and share what effect this Scripture has on your mind-set.

3. Consider the statement: “It’s not how much money we make that grabs hold of our hearts. It’s how much we keep.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Explore More



Listen to this 4-minute audio: *What are the dangers of materialism?* (www.epm.org/materialdangers)

Randy compares materialism to what kind of addiction? Do you agree or disagree?



Chapter 7

Battling Materialism in Christian Families

1. Read Proverbs 22:6. In regards to money and possessions, when does the training of children begin?

2. Read the words of Albert Schweitzer: “There are only three ways to teach a child. The first is by example; the second is by example; the third is by example.” Relate an example from your childhood or your parenting showing how this is true in teaching children about materialism.

3. Have you ever done a “dump” field trip with your family? Share other effective ideas on how to teach children/grandchildren about the importance of storing up treasures for Heaven, rather than storing up wealth.



Explore More



Read this article by Randy: *Changing Christmas in Our Families and in Our Hearts*
(www.epm.org/changingchristmas)

Prayerfully consider some of the ideas for celebrating the holidays that Randy shares. What are some ways that your family can keep Jesus, and not materialism, as the center of Christmas?

What are some successes and failures you and/or your family have experienced in battling materialism during the holidays?

Chapter 8

Rethinking Prosperity Theology (Hint: God Is Not Our Genie)

1. What do you think about the following statement: “Prosperity theology is like chocolate-covered rat poison. Without its truth-coating, many believers wouldn’t swallow its lies.” When was a time in your life that you believed in prosperity theology? Did this chapter correct any misconceptions you had (or have) about this type of thinking?



2. What truth is stated in Matthew 5:45?

3. List a few Bible characters or verses that dispel the health/wealth prosperity theology myth.

Explore More



Watch this 4-minute video: *What is an eternal perspective? And why it doesn't fit with prosperity theology* (www.epm.org/perspective-prosperity)

Complete this sentence that Randy shares: “Any gospel that is truer in North America than in some other place is not ____ ____ _____”

Chapter 9

Two Treasuries, Two Perspectives, Two Masters: Choosing between Two Kingdoms

1. On pages 78-79, Randy write that “Christ’s primary argument against amassing material wealth isn’t that it’s morally wrong but simply that it’s a poor _____.” Why?



2. Read Luke 12:33-34, and list three things you learn from this passage.

3. Have you experienced the truth of these words from Jim Elliot (a missionary martyr): “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose”? Why do these words ring true?



Explore More

Watch this 3-minute video: *More Happy-Making to Give* (www.epm.org/happy-making)

What does Randy say the word “blessed” can be translated as? Have you experienced this in giving to others?



Chapter 10

God's Steward's Eternal Destiny: Heaven

1. List at least three things you learn from Colossians 3:1-4.
2. How is having a proper understanding of Heaven necessary in order to be motivated to be a wise steward?
3. "When we live our present lives in anticipation of our eternal resurrected lives, we will live differently." How have you found this to be true in your own life?

Explore More



Watch this 4-minute video: *How did you come to this realization about Heaven?*
(www.epm.org/realization)

What about Randy's explanation of a physical Heaven on the New Earth excites you?



Chapter 11

God's Steward's Eternal Rewards

1. What truths do James 2:17 and 3:13 state? How easy do you find it to use God's money to do good works for His glory?

2. List three examples of Biblical characters who were motivated by eternal rewards. Do you find this concept difficult to believe? Why or why not?

3. What are three motivations for obeying God?

Agree or disagree: "It is emphatically biblical and appropriate for God's faithful stewards to look forward to his rewards."



Explore More



Listen to this 4-minute audio: *Rewards in Heaven: satisfied or jealous?*
(www.epm.org/rewards-jealous)

What do you think is the main thing that throws people off about the concept of eternal rewards?

Chapter 12

Tithing: The Training Wheels of Giving

1. What is the Bible's first mention of tithing? (See Genesis 14:20) What does tithing mean, and do you find it easy to do?
2. Experientially have you found the following statement true in your life? "Tithing isn't the finish line of giving; it's the starting block." Why or why not?



3. Randy states in this chapter, “Malachi 3 calls it ‘robbing God’ *and* ‘cheating’ him to give less than the tithe *and* to do less freewill giving than he desired them to.” What is your gut reaction to this?



Explore More

Read through Randy’s article “*Profiles of Christians that Rob God*” (www.epm.org/profiles)

Which of the believers profiled do you most identify with?

Chapter 13

Freewill Giving: Overflow of the Grace-Filled Heart

1. What are some other ways, besides giving money, to give?



2. What practical truths can you glean from Proverbs 11:24-25?

3. According to this chapter, what is the reason for God's abundance to believers?



Explore More

Watch this 8-minute video: *The Theology of Generosity* (www.epm.org/theology-generosity)

Randy says that a lack of giving in our lives indicates we aren't grasping what?

Chapter 14

Helping the Poor and Spreading the Gospel: Supporting God's Work with God's Wealth

1. "Ignoring the poor is not an option for the godly." Do you agree or disagree?



2. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 gives a warning. How do you balance reaching out to the lazy without taking away their motivation to be responsible?

3. Do you debate whether it is more important to care for people's physical needs, or their spiritual needs? Jesus commanded his followers to do both! What are some ways you can meet both sets of needs for someone God brings across your path today?

Explore More



Read through Randy's blog post "*Caring for the Needy: What God Says*" (www.epm.org/caringforneedy)

Choose one of the verses that he shares and memorize it over the next week.



Chapter 15

Discipleship: Choosing a Strategic Lifestyle

1. Mark 8:34-37 are strong statements from the Lord Jesus. What does Christ say believers must do?
2. Do you live your life as an “owner” rather than a “manager” of what God owns? Why or why not?
3. Do you live a “simple” self-centered lifestyle, or a strategic Kingdom-centered lifestyle? What is the difference?

Explore More



Listen to this 4-minute audio clip: *How much of my income should I keep for my lifestyle?*
(www.epm.org/lifestyle)

What principles does Randy draw from 1 Timothy 6:17-19 in this clip?



Chapter 16

Debt: Finding Freedom and Wisdom

1. On pages 173-174 there are six points on “What do wise money managers understand about spending and debt?” Which point is the most convicting to you? Which point do you understand and have had victory in?

2. Have you set a budget? Do you write down your expenditures, and are you accountable to another? If not, do you think that it would help you to mature in managing God’s money by beginning such practices?

3. What truth is found in Matthew 6:33? Have you learned to wait upon the Lord instead of impulsive buying?

Explore More



Read through Randy’s article “*Practical Ways to Control Spending*” (www.epm.org/spending-guidelines)

Which guideline most resonated with you?



Chapter 17

Questions and Answers about Debt

1. Romans 13:8 states the one thing believers are to owe. What is it? How can you implement it this week?
2. In this chapter there are three simple rules for credit card usage. Which one do you find most helpful?
3. List the eight steps to get out of debt.
4. If you are currently in debt, which steps will you apply to remedy your situation?





Explore More

Watch this 3-minute video: *Should I tithe or pay off my debt first?* (www.epm.org/tithe-debt)

What is it about withholding giving that makes it a poor way to approach reducing your debt?

Chapter 18

Preparing for the Future: Savings Accounts and Retirement Funds

1. Do you agree with the statement, “It’s wise to give first, save second, and spend last”? Have you chosen this as a way of life?

2. How does 2 Corinthians 8:3-5 encourage or convict you?



3. Is God calling you to liquidate any of your assets for the furtherance of His Kingdom? Share your thoughts.

Explore More



Watch this 4-minute video: *How do I know how much to give and how much to save?*
(www.epm.org/saveorgive)

Have you struggled with the tension between giving and saving?

Chapter 19

Looking for Returns: Gambling or Investing

1. Have you or someone you care about ever had a problem with gambling? State Scripture that warns against this.



2. If you have invested in an IRA, or other investments, have you researched the company's practices? Share any tips or ideas you have for doing this.

3. If you are having difficulty knowing how to invest or save, how can the following verses be an encouragement to you? (Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 15:22; James 1:5)

Explore More



Listen to this 3-minute audio: *Do people sometimes disguise hoarding as investing?*
(www.epm.org/hoarding)

Finish this sentence: "The hoarding mentality appeals to our _____."



Chapter 20

Inheritance or Heritage: What to Leave Behind and What to Send Ahead

1. In regard to inheritances, what warning is given in Proverbs 20:21?
2. Were you uncomfortable reading Randy Alcorn's thoughts on leaving large inheritances to your children? If so, why?
3. John Chrysostom (AD 390) wrote, "If you wish to leave much wealth to your children, leave them in God's care. Do not leave them riches, but virtue and skill." What character traits, values, and skills do you feel strongly about passing on to your children?

Explore More



Watch this 4-minute video: *What about inheritances?* (www.epm.org/inheritances)

Randy asks in the video, "What would you think if you had a financial manager who died and left all your money to his children?" Share your thoughts.



Chapter 21

In the Family: Teaching Children How to Manage God's Money and Possessions

1. "Home is where character is built, habits are developed, and destinies are forged." How does Proverbs 22:6 confirm this message?
2. Choose your favorite verse under the section "How can we help children become generous givers?" (page 223). Memorize it this week.
3. According to Randy, what is the greatest legacy a parent can leave their children? (page 232). What is one practical way you can pass this on to the next generation?

Explore More



Listen to this 4-minute clip: *Do you think the younger generation will learn to be givers?* (www.epm.org/generation-givers)

What does Randy say that the older generation has failed to do in order to teach the younger generation to be givers?



Chapter 22

In the Church: Cultivating a Culture of Stewardship and Giving

1. On page 237, what Scripture is evidence of God's desire for us to let our good deeds shine for his praise? Does this verse help you to understand the importance of sharing what God has done in your life for His glory?

2. If you follow the Word and let your good deeds shine for God's praise, what must you be careful to avoid?

3. Do you fear appearing foolish by taking seriously the New Testament view of money and possessions? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 4:8-13. How do these verses help our perspective?



Explore More

Listen to this 4-minute audio: *Should my giving be kept secret?* (www.epm.org/giving-secret)

What advice does Randy give to those sharing their giving stories?



Conclusion

Money Management and an Eternal Investment Mentality

1. In order to manage God's money well, we must truly believe it's _____.
2. After completing this study, did you take the time to sign a Title Deed? (A copy is included on page 243 of the book, and on page 31 of this study guide.)
3. Are you ready to say no to the American dream and yes to the Kingdom dreams of the risen Christ? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel that you now have a greater understanding of this quote?

...the central focus of this book is not insurance but *assurance*, not securities but *security*, not trusts but *trust*, not principal but *principles*, not real estate but *real estate*.

Why or why not?



TITLE DEED

Date: _____

I hereby acknowledge God's ownership of me and all "my" money and possessions, as well as everything else I've ever imagined I own—including my family and loved ones.

Instead of seeing myself as the ultimate recipient, I will see myself as God's delivery person. I will enjoy what he intends me to keep and cheerfully let go of what he intends me to share or give away.

From this point forward, I will think of all these assets as his to do with as he wishes. I will ask God to help me understand the Bible's instruction about stewardship and how he wishes me to manage and invest his assets to further his Kingdom.

I realize this will mean surrendering some temporary treasures and downsizing my earthly kingdom. In doing so, I will upsize God's Kingdom and gain eternal treasures. This will decrease my worry and guilt and increase my eternal perspective, joy, and contentment, and deepen my love for Jesus, my savior and King. I do this for his glory and the good of all.

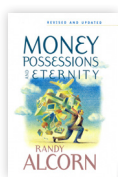
Signed: _____

Witness: _____



List of Helpful Resources

Books and DVDs from Randy



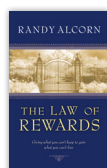
Many of the principles and issues raised in this book are developed in more detail in *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, a biblical and practical treatment of financial stewardship.

Learn more and read an excerpt at www.epm.org/mpe.



Randy deals specifically with the subject of giving in his little book *The Treasure Principle*, which has sold over 1.3 million copies.

Learn more and read an excerpt at www.epm.org/treasure.



In *The Law of Rewards*, Randy addresses the biggest misconception Christians have about giving: that when we give money away to a church or ministry, or to help the needy, it's gone.

Learn more and read an excerpt at www.epm.org/tlor.



A six-DVD set of Randy Alcorn teaching twelve one-hour classes on "A Theology of Money" is available from Eternal Perspective Ministries: www.epm.org/moneyclass.

More Recommended Reading

Money: The Currency of Christian Hedonism by John Piper (This material is chapter seven in Piper's *Desiring God*. The full text of the chapter is available online: www.desiringgod.org/dg/id162.htm)

Rich in Every Way: Everything God Says About Money and Possessions, Gene Getz

Stott on Stewardship: Ten Principles of Christian Giving, John R.W. Stott.

For additional recommended resources, see www.epm.org/recommended-stewardship-resources

Sermons by Randy

The Treasure Principle (audio and video): www.epm.org/treasuresolidrock

Investing in Eternity: Financial Stewardship and Eternal Rewards (audio): www.epm.org/investingclarus



There are many more articles and audio and video resources related to money and giving on EPM's website at www.epm.org/resources/money-giving.





eternal perspective ministries

with author Randy Alcorn

Eternal Perspective Ministries (EPM) is a Bible-believing, Christ-centered nonprofit organization with two goals:

- to teach the principles of God's Word, emphasizing an eternal viewpoint;
- to reach the needy in Christ's name, calling attention to the needs of the unreached, unfed, unsupported, unborn, unreconciled, and untrained.

EPM is the recipient of the author royalties from Randy Alcorn's books, and 100% are given away for ministry purposes: 90% to other worthy Christian organizations and 10% to EPM to help offset the costs related to the writing/researching/editing of the books, as well as to help facilitate the giving away of our books to people all over the world. We love that God uses Randy's books to change people's lives in two ways: through the reading of his words and through the giving away of his royalties.

You can order all of Randy's books and products at www.epm.org/store. (The EPM website also has many free resources, including articles, audio, video, pastors' kits, and more.) When you purchase Randy's books from EPM, the profits go directly to support the work of the ministry and fund our operating expenses.

Several times a year, EPM produces *Eternal Perspectives*, a full-color magazine filled with thought-provoking and informative articles. EPM also sends a periodic email newsletter with the latest news about Randy's books, projects, and speaking events, as well as special promotions from EPM. You can subscribe at www.epm.org/subscribe.

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So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
— 2 Corinthians 4:18

