

GOD'S BLESSING OF BEING COMMITTED TO AN EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

LEADER'S GUIDE

For Lesson 15



Providing "GOD'S NEW LIFESTYLE OF FINANCIAL FREEDOM"

This lesson presents a special challenge to you as the group guide.

You as a dedicated church member should make a special effort to bless, encourage, and challenge your church leaders with an application of this lesson for your church.

A wise financial record system is important for local churches.

People give, and then what happens? It may seem like the money simply disappears. Often there is little to show for the donations of God's faithful ones. The members' trust must be guarded by faithful church leaders.

Church records should be accurate and honest. God's Blessings of Financial Freedom for churches requires a clear exposure and explanation of all finances at a quarterly members meeting.

Materials have been prepared to help churches plan and report. Encourage your leaders to create an atmosphere of trust and unity in your local church through good record keeping and reporting.

And spur the members of your group on to make profitable changes in their families. It is easy to criticize others and not make our own changes.

THE LEADER'S HOME PREPARATION

Praise the Lord for how He has walked with you through these meetings and helped you develop in new skills and deepened relationships within your group.

You have worked through a lot of Biblical financial principles already. We laid the foundation in the early lessons, moved on to specific financial principles and after this lesson will broaden our scope again as we consider how all of this will influence our lives and the lives of our family and of future generations.

The first 5 lessons were about "preparing for how to obtain God's Blessings of Financial Freedom"; Lesson 6 contained the "Great Experiment"; Lessons 7 – 15 covered "practicing Biblical financial principles"; Lessons 16-20 deal with "The Whole New Lifestyle."

Prepare well as your work through these steps:

1) Pray

"Lord Jesus, help me to be honest in my own weaknesses in the area of recordkeeping. I want to be an example. Help me as I seek to put these principles into action in my own life and family. Let me approach this lesson with joy for how You show us Your ways in Your Word. Even when they

require discipline. Don't let me be a hypocrite and make others think I'm doing it all right. Help me to receive everything from Your Word into my own life so that I can bring glory to You.

- 2) **Read** this lesson thoroughly and thoughtfully.
- 3) **Study** this Lesson Guide and think through what is most important to emphasize with your group.
- 4) Don't just look up the answers to the quizzes, but **answer** all questions in the lesson yourself.
- 5) **Discuss** the material with a spouse or friend. What is difficult for them in this material?
- 6) **Pray**

"Loving God, use me in this meeting to share insights that I have gained during my preparation. I don't want to be a robot. I want to share what You are doing in my life through all of these lessons. Enable me! Make my weakness Your strength."

LESSON PRESENTATION

TOTAL anticipated lesson time is 2 hours

Have you been starting your meetings with testimonies? This is important. If we don't expect God to do anything then we don't need to allow time for people to tell what God is doing in their lives, but if we serve a living God...

Begin with testimonies!

You have already been meeting for many weeks. Ask how the Lord is changing hearts through this material. What has spoken to a specific need in their lives in this area of freedom or bondage? What work is God doing in them right now?

*PRAYER TIME – Ask for people who want to share a struggle in their lives, specifically in this area of learning to trust the Lord and live according to His principles. Ask them not to **tell** the group about it, but to **pray** about it audibly and then for one or two other people to pray for that person immediately.*

This lesson is covered in 7 parts.

You will notice that nowhere in the lesson is an exact plan laid out for how you should keep records of your finances. As you move through the lesson encourage everyone to make a beginning, or to improve what they are doing. You may find someone in your group who is very detail oriented. Another person may have no mind for detail at all. Each of them can function within their personality and abilities. We need the "detail" people to share what they do, or their ideas, without having an attitude of superiority. Look for people to share these things, but make sure even those who have never done anything to keep records are encouraged to start doing something—as a faithful steward before God. Encourage them to start small and—be faithful.

At the close pass out Lesson 16.

LESSON GUIDE

It is not possible to have revival on a national level without men in that nation understanding the need for accountability on a personal level. This lesson outlines the standards of transparency and trustworthiness that are necessary for leadership in business, ministry, family, and churches. Focusing on the goal of reducing financial expenses, this lesson explains why we should implement a responsible record system and not just a budget. This lesson also exhorts us to count the cost ahead of time, evaluate assets and investments from God's perspective, and keep accountable to the books! Truly, as stewards who will one day give an account to God, faithfulness is one of the most important qualities we can master.

1. BECOME ACCOUNTABLE TO A WISE RECORD SYSTEM

pp. 1–2 > 10 min <

EZRA – A man who protected assets by detailed accounting

Follow Ezra's example! Cover each of these 3 opening Bible verses with a question for the group. Make sure as you look at these points that people know the story about Ezra and who he was and what he was doing. If it is not familiar to everyone, ask somebody to give a brief summary (or do it yourself).

God entrusts wealth – (Ezra 8:25, 28-29) (see also Deut. 8:11, 17-18 And Deut. 28:1-14)

What does it mean that God "entrusts" us with goods? How is that different from "gives"?

Stewardship requires Faithfulness – (1 Cor. 4:2)

How can YOU be a faithful steward? Right now—here in Ukraine.

Detailed Accounting is Required – (Ezra 8:34)

Why did Ezra go to all the trouble to record everything that arrived in Jerusalem with them? What purpose did it serve?

2. WHO SHOULD PAY THE BILLS?

pp. 3–5 > 15 min < Personal Evaluation

There are **2** copies of this personal evaluation in the lesson. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. It is to bring about a mutual understanding of finances and record keeping in the family.

Both spouses should have completed this. Ask: Were you successful in accomplishing this with your spouse?

Did you husbands successfully predict what your wife would write down? Did you have great differences in how you viewed the handling of finances? What did you learn from doing this together? Who in your family pays most of the bills? Why is that?

Open it up for a brief discussion of what they learned from doing this evaluation and sharing together.

LADIES GROUPS: You can ask what the interaction was if some of the husbands filled out the evaluation also. Otherwise take time to read through it and discuss very briefly what they think would be most helpful in handling finances together. Single women can join in this discussion. We all have observed some of the things that have happened with our parents or other families.

YOUTH GROUPS: Spend some time discussing the importance of having agreement between husband and wife on how finances are handled. Emphasize that Biblically the husband should take the responsibility and leadership in finances, but it should be done not as a dictator, but as a team leader. The goal is to work together.

3. TEN REASONS WHY WE MUST HAVE AN EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

pp. 6–10 > 50 min <

Let us begin with a Biblical reminder of how God's blessings come. We are going to review our Financial Freedom Bible verses from Deut. 8:11, 17-18.

Note that Deuteronomy begins with "*Beware that you forget NOT*". Forgetting NOT means remember and this requires a wise record system. Take time for the following:

- Repeat these verses as a group at least 3 times
- Next ask capable individuals to repeat it alone – ask 3 individuals
- Then have the group repeat it once more.

Cover these 10 reasons well – take time

Make sure as you walk through all of this you emphasize how accountability refers to all of God's gifts to us, not just money. This is important. Take a moment to have someone read the last paragraph under Point 1: "An accounting system is the basis for personal inventory and self-examination. If our accounting system only involves material possessions, we will be like the Christians in the Laodicean church." You want to motivate the individuals in your group to be accountable in all areas as you work through this lesson.

NOTE: Your group will quickly pick up that record keeping means 'paper work'. Paper work is a bit repugnant to many of us. But God required that the Israelite leaders were diligent in reading and writing. In ancient times this requirement of God became an outstanding feature of being God's people, who followed God's purposes for blessing.

God wants to transmit these blessings to us through Bible reading, meditation – – – and then – – – through meditation and application to our daily needs.

One little problem – FORGETFULNESS!

There we have it – God is very jealous that we keep records of what He is teaching us, and His blessings – so let us get busy.

Your job today as a guide is to bring a joyful longing into your people to keep a record of God's blessings.

As a child of God each one should experience a unique blessing weekly —and then share that blessing with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the whole body of Christ.

Be assured that one who shall always walk faithfully in God's presence, always ready to give Him an account of his/her actions, shall never be separated from God by consenting to sin.

~ Thomas Aquinas

4. BE ACCOUNTABLE TO RECORD KEEPING

p. 11 > 10 min <

Record keeping, as we have already noted, is not limited to finances. There are so many areas of life in which we can benefit by having a written plan, a written record, something that holds us accountable. Check and see to what extent various individuals have already followed God's purposes for blessing.

Challenge everyone to see record keeping as a tool to being a better steward and a more effective Christian, even though it takes time. Anything that sharpens our focus will ultimately save time—and money. We need to use those records to rejoice in the Lord and all He has entrusted us with.

Personal Commitment to Effective Record Keeping

Make it happen! This is step 15. Fourteen steps have been completed. What does that mean? It means that we are departing from financial bondage! It means that God has begun to shower blessings. How do we know? How can we remember? Only by keeping records. Notice in the commitment there is opportunity to write down a person whom we are willing to be accountable to, and also a date "to be completed by". Each person needs to think at least what is the minimum of record keeping they need to organize, and

when will they do that by. Usually if we do not give ourselves a time limit, it does not happen. This is all a part of making a real commitment, not just a “maybe someday” idea. Let us sign it first and then pray.

Who wishes to pray that God will make us successful in making a new step of accountability?

5. WHAT ITEMS ARE CONTAINED IN GOD’S RECORDS?

p. 12 > 15 min < Basic Quiz Number 15

Surprise – God is a record keeper – *and sure enough* – there is your name in the Lamb’s book of Life. Isn’t it great? None of this atheism stuff, being left to our own wits, survival of the strongest, etc.

We have a caring Heavenly Father, One who loves. We have a Jesus who said “I desire mercy.” We have the Holy Spirit who will give us rest.

How about covering each point with a 30-second praise and gratitude prayer?

Answers:

1. **A** Names of Believers
2. **E** Physical features
3. **G** Every Godly work
4. **F** Every spoken word
5. **H** Money given to God
6. **D** All of our tears
7. **C** Hairs of our head
8. **B** Names of Stars
9. **I** Those who fear God

6. WHEN DID GOD REQUIRE ACCURATE ACCOUNTING?

p. 13 > 10 min < Advanced Quiz Number 15

This is a unique and challenging quiz. After you have shared answers together and everyone has corrected their paper, ask which example most impacted them. Is God interested in details?

Then share the

Answers:

1. **E** Widow
2. **G** Gideon
3. **A** Daniel
4. **B** Naaman
5. **C** Abraham
6. **H** Noah
7. **F** Peter
8. **D** Andrew

7. HOW DOES GOD ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE RECORD KEEPING?

p. 14 > 10 min < Comprehensive Quiz Number 15

When all are ready with their completed quiz share the answers.

- Answers:** 1. **F** Moses 2. **H** Jesus 3. **A** Elijah 4. **J** David 5. **B** Josiah 6. **I** Joash 7. **D** Ahasuerus
8. **C** Joseph 9. **G** Matthew 10. **E** Nehemiah.

Ask for identification: With which Bible person did they feel that their own personal experience or life situation would have some similarities?

What was most helpful in this last section?

Distribute Lesson #16 and encourage everyone as usual to read and fill it out prior to the next meeting. As you preview this lesson explain the need for time to discuss various practical applications of God’s financial freedom lifestyle. Even if there is a need to come extra early and stay a bit late. It is easy to say, “We don’t have time”, but developing a whole new lifestyle of experiencing God’s Financial Blessings simply takes time. This is God’s principle-- “take time for me, Jesus the Christ, first”. So here is a way to practice it!

Have the group pay special attention to TWO SPECIFIC HOME ACTIVITIES:

- a) Complete the chart on page 11. Fill out the personal earnings and expenses your wife has (or you as a wife). NOTE for youth groups. Challenge them to interview a wife and see if they can come up with their own statistics.
- b) Basic Quiz Number 16 (p. 13) This quiz is to be done with your children or other young friends. Give them the Bible and tell them to read 2 Kings 4:8-37. Then fill out the answers. Talk to them about how much blessing this lady received because she wanted to be hospitable and help a man of God. Discuss how you might be able to do something like that in your home—even if you can't build an extra room in your apartment!

Be ready to share at the next session about the openings God gave you.

Close in prayer

“Thank You Lord Jesus for the gift of writing. Thank you Father for your Holy Word. We have been blessed with wonderful books and much wisdom, all communicated in writing. Help us to become a writer for our family’s descendants. You have accomplished so much in our lifetime. I want to be a steward of your goodness and share it with future generations. Help me to keep accurate records of your goodness. Amen.”

Contact Information for God’s Blessing of Financial Freedom

General info, Training, follow-up, help – Vera Lavrinenko – 096 254 33 24

Orders for paper materials – lessons, guides, posters, magnets, banners – Ivanka Dubenchuk – 096 103 98 77

For electronic materials on FF Website <http://svoboda.sytes.net> – Ivan Onishuk