

I WILL DAILY

GENEROSITY

TAKING ONE STEP CLOSER TO JESUS DAILY



WELCOME

Welcome to 30 days of Generosity/Money! Over the next 30 days, we will be navigating through this area each day. Sometimes it be a short video presentation, and some days it will be scripture and questions. Some days we will memorize scripture and other days it will be practical ideas about how to get control of your finances.

This week we are going to be reading a blog each day from a guy named Matt Bell. I have been reading his stuff for the last 7-8 years (he actually lives in the Louisville area). His blogs are called “Matt about Money”.

He also has an end of the week email that highlight some of the best articles on money and finances that he has read during the week – it’s called “Profitable Ideas” and it is worth looking at each week! (Here’s a link to one in March) -

<https://mattaboutmoney.com/2021/03/12/profitable-ideas-the-greatest-show-on-earth-measuring-wealth-and-more/>

[utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+MattAboutMoney+%28Matt+About+Money%29](https://mattaboutmoney.com/2021/03/12/profitable-ideas-the-greatest-show-on-earth-measuring-wealth-and-more/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+MattAboutMoney+%28Matt+About+Money%29)





DAY 1

THE PURPOSE OF MONEY

Early in my journey of learning about money, I noticed a very odd disconnect. On the one hand, it was obvious that there's a ton of personal finance advice readily available. Search on any financial question and within seconds you can find answers.

And yet, lots of people struggle with money.

Why is that? With so much guidance so close at hand, why is successful money management so difficult for so many?

I believe it's because too many people aren't clear about the purpose of their lives.

They're living reactive lives, bouncing from one tempting use of money to another.

The only way to understand the purpose of money is to understand the purpose of life. And the only way to manage money effectively is to orient our use of money around our life purpose.

DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

The English writer Samuel Johnson once said, "People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."

Oh we need instruction, but all the instruction in the world won't do us any good if we're not clear about who we are and what we were designed to be about.

Our culture would have us believe we're consumers. It sounds harmless enough, right? But have you ever looked up the definition? To consume literally means to use up, devour, or spend wastefully. How's that working out for us? The word first came into popular use during the Industrial Revolution, the period roughly between 1880 and 1920 that built the foundation of today's consumer culture.

Our society shifted from agriculture to industry. People went from self-sufficient to income dependent, from making things to buying things. With so many goods spilling off assembly lines, businesses needed people to use stuff up.





WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Consumer is more than a word; it's a worldview. If I'm a consumer, who's the most important person in the world? I am, right? Life is all about me – my pleasure, my comfort, my happiness. If I'm a consumer, where is happiness found? In money and what it can buy. And if I'm a consumer, life is a competition. It's a quest to have more. More than I had last year and more than my neighbors have.

People who study happiness say this is the path that leads in the exact opposite direction of where we'd all like to go. It's like trying to get to New York from Chicago and getting on a westbound train.

They say happiness isn't found in living for ourselves. It's found in living for something bigger than ourselves. It isn't found in loving money and things. It's found in loving people. And it isn't found in living a life of competition. It's found in living a life of contribution.

DAY 1 CONTINUED

To entice us to buy more and more stuff, advertisers began linking products to our identity and happiness. Products became branded, and so did we. No longer were we referred to as citizens or workers. To politicians, the media, and makers of everything from clothing to canned food, we became consumers.

From that point forward, huge sums of money have been spent in an effort to make us believe we are consumers.

REMEMBERING WHO YOU ARE

The good news is that we were not meant to be consumers. The Bible doesn't say that on the sixth day God made consumers who would use up and waste all that He made on the previous five days. It says He made man and woman in His image.

Financially, the Bible describes us as stewards, or managers.



DAY 1 CONTINUED

But I think a lot of people misunderstand that. The word seems heavy, like a burden. It's as if they've been given managerial responsibility over some stuff and misheard the instructions as: "Whatever you do, don't break or lose any of it." Those aren't the instructions we've been given at all.

In the Parable of the Talents, a wealthy man entrusts three servants with his stuff, goes on a long journey, and then returns to see how they did. One servant got the instructions wrong.

He hid what was entrusted to him out of fear and then returned it to his master. He didn't lose or break any of it, but he didn't do anything productive with it either. For his efforts, or lack thereof, he received a harsh rebuke.

The other two servants were different. They turned what had been entrusted to them into something more. For their efforts, they received strong words of affirmation. And then the master entrusted them with more.

Of course, the master represents God; the servants represent us.

THE ART AND JOY OF BEING OURSELVES

We weren't designed to use stuff up. We were designed to create, build, and make something more of what has been entrusted to us.

What is that something more?

The Bible says we were designed to live not just for something more, but for someone more – God. So, the first purpose of money is to use it in ways that glorify God.

The Bible says the second most important priority in life is to love others. It never says that money or things are inherently bad. It just teaches us not to love money or things, but to love people. So, the second purpose of money is to use it in ways that strengthen our relationships with others. And the Bible says we've all been given certain talents and passions in order to make a difference with our lives. So, the third purpose of money is to use it in ways that enable us to make our unique and meaningful contribution to the world.

Let me say it again. The three overarching purposes of our lives are to love God, love others, and make a God-glorifying difference with our God-given talents, passions, and resources. So those are the three main purposes of money: Use it to love God, love others, and make a God-glorifying impact. They are the guiding principles for how we are to use money—the path toward the most meaningful experience with money that's possible.

Tomorrow, we'll look more specifically at how the Bible teaches us to use money in the pursuit of those purposes. If you were to honestly evaluate your current use of money, how well does it line up with these three purposes?





This is the purpose of our lives—to love God, love others, and make our unique, God-ordained contribution to the world. That gives us the big picture of how to align our use of money with what truly matters. We’re getting more specific by looking at how knowing the purpose of money can guide our day-to-day financial priorities. Whenever money starts getting a little too complicated, it’s helpful to get back to the basics by remembering that there are only five things we can do with money:

1. Spend it
2. Use it for debt payments
3. Save it
4. Invest it
5. Give it away

Very often, when money gets messy for someone, it’s because they’ve gotten these priorities out of whack.

DAY 2

SETTING FINANCIAL PRIORITIES: A FRAMEWORK FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

It’s easy to make managing money more complicated than it needs to be. That’s because money isn’t just an objective “means of exchange” as the dictionary defines it. Money is wrapped up in our emotions – our hopes, dreams, and fears. And our use of it is strongly influenced by the many messages of our consumer culture.

KNOWING OUR PURPOSE GUIDES OUR PRIORITIES

WHEN CULTURE CALLS THE SHOTS

The order above is the one advocated by our consumer culture. Whenever money comes into our lives, our cultural conditioning leads us to think first about what we can spend it on – what to do for fun, how much clothing we can buy, where we can go on vacation.

When spending comes first, debt always seems to come along for the ride. There’s a financed vehicle in the driveway, a balance on a credit card or two.



DAY 2 CONTINUED

If there's any money left over, we might save and invest some. And if anything is left over after all that, we might give some away.

This order explains a lot about why so many people have so much debt, so little savings, and more than their share of stress.

A BETTER WAY TO PRIORITIZE

Here's the order that works much better:

1. Give some
2. Save some
3. Invest some
4. Then see how much you can afford to spend on housing, transportation, and all the rest.
5. Have no debt except a reasonable mortgage

HITTING THE MONEY RESET BUTTON

This order is much easier to teach to young people who haven't started getting their first full-time salary yet. But what if you're already out there and your money's all messed up because you've been following our culture's plan?

Use a Cash Flow Plan to hit the reset button. Fill in the "Now" columns to see where you're at. And use my Recommended Cash Flow Guidelines (on the same page as my Cash Flow Plan) to fill in the "Goal" columns with an ideal plan.*

Then start moving toward the ideal. It probably won't happen overnight. There may be some credit card debt to ditch and a car payment to lose. It may take some rethinking about how you spend on groceries, clothing, entertainment, and everything else. But the framework of give, save, invest, spend, and be cautious with debt is the simplest and most effective way of doing the whole money thing I've ever found.

Move toward it and you'll move toward a financial life that works amazingly well

*<https://mattaboutmoney.com/resources/>





THE DETAILS ABOUT BIBLICAL GENEROSITY

Understanding our biblical financial identity (we're stewards or wise builders) and pursuing our God-given purposes (to love God, love others, and to use our God-given gifts and passions to make a God-glorifying impact) lead to a distinct set of day-to-day financial priorities that make all the difference in how effectively and joyfully we manage money. At the top of the priority list is generosity.

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops."
– Proverbs 3:9

Firstfruits means first portion. Crops? Well, another translation uses the word "increase." In other words, our first priority for any money we receive—salary, commissions, gifts, an inheritance, etc.—is Christ-centered giving. In God's economy, we aren't all instructed to give the same dollar amount; we're taught to give based on a percentage of the money we receive.

"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you." – Deuteronomy 16:17

DAY 3 - GIVE SOME

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MONEY

On day 1, we looked at what the Bible teaches about our biblical financial identity, purpose, earning, and planning. Today, we're taking a closer look at what the Bible says about generosity.

DESIGNED FOR GENEROSITY

There are two Truths that sum up a biblical perspective on generosity: We were made in God's image and God is endlessly generous. Is it any wonder that modern day researchers have found that the happiest people are generous people? To live generously is to live in concert with our God-given design.



DAY 3 CONTINUED

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” – 1 Corinthians 16:2

God started His Old Testament followers with a tithe, or 10 percent.

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” – Leviticus 27:30

In the New Testament, it's clear that God doesn't want us following His teaching in a mechanical manner as if checking off boxes on a to-do list. He wants our hearts involved.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” – Matthew 23:23

Still, Jesus didn't say to forget about the tithe. Just as with Old Testament teachings about murder and adultery, He taught His followers to move from a legalistic adherence to the letter of the law to a more heartfelt expression of the spirit of the law.

Coming at it from that perspective can have a profound impact on how we experience verses such as Matthew 6:21.

“Where your treasure is there too will be your heart.”

That isn't a specific instruction. It's broad and far-reaching, challenging us to consider what will happen to our heart if we use money in this way or that. One very positive implication is that consistently, generously supporting God's work continuously orients our hearts toward Him and what He cares about, including:

- Reaching those who don't know Him.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” – Matthew 28:18-20

- Providing for the poor.

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.” – Proverbs 19:17

- Supporting teachers of His Word.

“Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.” – Galatians 6:6

Throughout the New Testament, references to the tithe are few, while exhortations toward generous living are many. Ten percent becomes a reference point—the biblical, historical starting point, but not the intended stopping point.



DAY 3 CONTINUED

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” – 2 Corinthians 8:7

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. – 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Perhaps most challenging of all, at a time when the prosperity gospel is leading so many astray, are the many reminders of the blessings that flow from living generously.

“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” – Proverbs 11:24-25
It’s just how things work in God’s economy. When we live the generous lives God intended for us, the Inventor of generosity sends blessings back to us.

Still, we need to keep our motives in check. We are not to give in order to receive something back.

“Who has ever given to God that God should repay them?” – Romans 11:35
Our giving is best motivated by gratitude—because of all that God has done for us.

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. – 1 Chronicles 29:14

Ultimately, generosity as an act of worship.

So, what does the Bible say about generosity? Quite a bit. But here’s the bottom line: We were made in God’s image and God is endlessly generous. That means we were designed to live generously as well.





DAY 4 - SAVE SOME

NOW'S THE TIME... TO GET YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNTS SET UP RIGHT

I'm guessing that most of us have a some day/one day list. Projects we'd like to get to if we could ever just find the time. Right now, with so many of us unable to do so many of the things we usually do, we actually do have the time to get to some of those projects. A good starting point is to get your savings accounts set up for maximum effectiveness

DON'T MINGLE YOUR MONEY

Step one for your savings is to open a separate savings account. What I've found is that if you consider some of the money in your checking account to be savings, that money leaks. I don't know where it goes, but it disappears. It gets used for who knows what.

The most effective way to build savings is to have a separate, dedicated savings account. You could open an account at the bank or credit union where you have a checking account. Or, you may find a better interest rate at an online bank. The important thing is to open an account.

THE FIRST SAVINGS ACCOUNT

The first savings account to open is for emergencies. As we're seeing today in dramatic fashion, life can change quickly. Many people who may have thought their jobs were secure are now out of work, and the loss of our income is one of the most severe financial emergencies any of us could experience.

I agree with the common advice to build and maintain an emergency fund that could cover three to six months' worth of essential living expenses.



DAY 4 CONTINUED

Three months' worth should be enough for someone who has relatively few breakable moving parts to their life, such as someone who is single, lives in an apartment, and has in-demand job skills and training. However, if you're married, have some kids, and own a house, now you've got a lot more riding on your income. You need more in your emergency fund.

If you're just getting started with an emergency fund, one of the best steps you could take is to set up a monthly automatic transfer from your checking account to this savings account. Even \$50 per month would be a great start. And if you get some money from the government as part of the \$2 trillion CARES Act, use that to jump start your emergency fund.

ADDITIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Once you have an emergency fund, the next step is to create periodic bills and expenses savings accounts. Saving for periodic bills and expenses only requires that you take certain monthly budgeted amounts and put that money into savings each month until the bill or expense needs to be paid.

Examples of periodic bills or expenses include a semi-annual vehicle insurance premium, an annual home insurance bill, Christmas gifts, vacations, and property taxes (if you pay that bill outside of your mortgage payment).

"One-twelfth of the annual cost of each such item should be part of your monthly budget, but because you don't actually pay that amount each month, transfer it to a savings account. That way, when the bill or expense needs to be paid, the money will be readily available.

In our household, we used to use Capital One for this type of savings. Not only does the online bank pay a decent interest rate, but it allows for multiple accounts that you can name for each intended purpose. I really like that. When you go online to look at your balance, you can see how much is in your vacation fund, your vehicle insurance account, etc.

In an effort to simplify our financial lives, we recently closed that account and transferred all such savings to Vanguard where we have another account. This savings is now in a money market fund. We can't separate it out into dedicated accounts for each purpose, so I use a spreadsheet to keep track of how much of the total is earmarked for each item.

Putting money into savings each month for periodic bills and expenses is one of the best money moves we've ever made.

Take it to heart: "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has." – Proverbs 21:20

Take action: If you don't have a dedicated savings account, open one today. Bonus points if you set up a monthly automatic transfer from your checking account to this savings account.





DAY 5 - INVEST SOME

TWO STEPS TOWARD A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO INVESTING

As with most financial topics, there are biblical principles that should guide our investing, but many of the specifics are left to us to figure out, hopefully motivated by a heart to consider how a good steward would invest. Earlier, we looked at some reasons to invest. Today, we'll start to build a more detailed framework.

To figure out what a biblical approach to investing might look like, think about a spectrum of ways to invest. At one end are people who don't invest. They're confused by the terminology. "Exchange-traded funds." "Asset allocation." What does it all mean? Or maybe they're scared to invest. Just look at what happened between the end of 2007 and early 2009. The market lost half its value. Half!

On the other end are people who are excited by headlines about people making a fortune investing in Bitcoin, Tesla, or whatever else is the hot investment of the day. Investing looks like an easy path to quick riches.

I think you'd agree that neither approach is healthy. In both cases, there are spiritual issues at work, and there are practical issues.

TAKE IT SLOW

For those who are scared or confused, it may help to read, reflect on, and memorize what God's Word has to say about His provision (Matthew 6:25-34) and protection (Isaiah 41:10), and about seeking His wisdom (James 1:5).



DAY 5 CONTINUED

And there may be practical issues at work, such as a need to understand that putting money in a bank savings account is unlikely to beat inflation, to learn about the power of compounding, and to review some market history, seeing that while the market moves through cycles of growth and decline, times of growth have tended to last longer than times of decline and they've added more value than times of decline have taken away.

Those eager to make a fast fortune in the market would also benefit from time in the Word, seeing that while wealth is not described as inherently evil, we are cautioned against being eager to gain it (Proverbs 28:20).

Here's a foundational investment-related verse to memorize:
"Steady plodding brings prosperity; hasty speculation brings poverty." – Proverbs 21:5 (TLB)

That's a great starting point for developing a biblically-informed approach to investing.

PLAN TO SUCCEED

With that slow and steady mindset in place, a good next step would be to create a plan. Planning is encouraged in the same proverb we just read, only in a different translation of the Bible:

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." – Proverbs 21:5 (NIV)

Do you have an investment plan? That would include specific investment goals you're trying to achieve — perhaps an amount of money you're trying to have in an investment portfolio by a certain age for retirement, or a specific sum in a 529 plan account by the time each of your kids turns 18.

If not, run some numbers using this Fidelity calculator* for retirement (Premium members of Sound Mind Investing have access to an even more powerful calculator) and this SavingForCollege.com calculator** for college. With the retirement calculator, after answering just six questions, you'll get some feedback as to whether you're on track. If not, you can make some adjustments to some of the variables.

I recommend being somewhat conservative with your assumptions. For example, it'll list your "planning age." That's the polite way of saying, "anticipated age of death." I'd encourage using age 95. I'd rather that you plan for a long life and have some money left over rather than not having enough to live on. The calculator will also ask for your "retirement age." If you plan to work past the traditional retirement age — say to age 70 — I'd encourage you to plan more conservatively by using a retirement age a year or two younger. More people than ever are saying they plan to retire later than age 65. However, most people still retire around that age or earlier, often because of health issues or the need to care for a loved one. With the college savings calculator, if you have more than one college-bound child, use the calculator one child at a time.

Taking these two steps — adopting a slow and steady mindset for investing and starting to put a plan together by running some numbers will be a great start toward putting into practice a biblically-informed approach to investing.

*<https://www.fidelity.com/calculators-tools/fidelity-retirement-score-tool>

**<https://www.savingforcollege.com/calculators/college-savings-calculator>





DAY 6 - HOW MUCH CAN I AFFORD

NOW'S THE TIME... TO MANAGE YOUR RECURRING BILLS

If your family is anything like mine, your nights and weekends are freer than they've been in a long time. Like so many families, we tend to run pretty hard, with each of our kids involved in sports, music, church, or other activities. Now that so much is on hold, I've been enjoying the extra family time, and I've been knocking off several items that have been on my long-term to-do list.

Financially, this is a great time to review all of your monthly bills. A few phone calls could end up saving you a lot of money.

If you've lost your job because of the pandemic, many companies are providing relief—from mortgage providers to those providing automobile loans to credit card companies. Call them to see what they can do to ease your financial burden. Just be sure to understand the terms.

For example, if payments could be suspended, will interest continue to accrue?

If you're still gainfully employed, there's money to be saved as well. Here's where to look.

WHICH BILLS TO REVIEW

I hate monthly bills and am hesitant to take on obligations that require ongoing payments. Cash flow is king. The more monthly financial commitments we take on, the less that's available for enjoyable things like vacations and important things like saving and investing.

Of course, many such bills are unavoidable. So, at very least, we should be intentional about managing them. And it's amazing how much can be saved just by asking or shopping for a better price. Here are some of the most common monthly financial commitments to review periodically, especially now when we have more time on our hands.



DAY 6 CONTINUED

Insurance. If it's been a while since you've asked other companies for a quote for you home, vehicle, or liability insurance, now's the time. Since our oldest child now has his learner's permit and will soon have a driver's license, I called our insurance company to see how much our rate will increase. The short answer? A lot! So, I'm using that impending change as motivation to shop around and see if other companies offer lower-cost policies. It also reminded me that we have a \$10,000 deductible on our homeowner's insurance.

With several neighbors experiencing storm damage to their roofs in recent years, I wonder how long we can dodge that bullet. So, I'm comparing homeowner's policies that have a lower deductible.

Phone service. Do you still have a landline? Is it time to drop it? And how much are you paying for cell phone service? Some providers have a tool on their web site where you can see if you're on their most cost-effective plan based on your usage. If you are paying a monthly lease charge for one or more phones, be sure to know when those lease payments should end. With some providers, you have to make a decision at that point about paying off the phone. If you don't let them know, you may end up paying more than you need to. And does your provider offer a discount if you put your monthly payment on auto pay? Check to see.

TV. This includes cable and streaming services. We've been on Spectrum's lowest cost cable service in order to get local channels, and we subscribe to Sling TV, mostly for sports channels. We also subscribe to Netflix.

Between Spectrum and Sling, we've been paying \$67.94. However, at the beginning of this year, Sling upped its price by about \$5 per month and I just noticed that Spectrum has bumped its price up by almost \$10 per month. So, I did a little looking around and it looks like a \$50 per month subscription to YouTube TV would enable us to drop Spectrum and Sling, saving us about \$34 per month. I just signed up for a two-week free trial for YouTube TV to check it out. Which services to you subscribe to?

If you subscribe to Netflix, did you know it offers an \$8.99 per month plan? You can only watch on one screen at a time, so if you have multiple people in your household who tend to use the service at the same time, that might not work for you. But if you've been paying \$12.99 per month, you might not have realized a lower cost plan is available.

Home security. We've been long-time ADT customers and with some degree of regularity, the company tries to up our monthly monitoring cost. I've found that a simple phone call is all it takes for them to keep the rate as it has been.

On its own, each monthly bill may not seem like a very big deal. But added together, they amount to a lot of money. Take a little time to review your monthly bills, give each service provider a call, and see if you could save some money. My guess is that you could save a lot more than you might think.

Take it to heart: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?" – Luke 16:10-12





Debts

DAY 7 - NO DEBT

DETERMINING YOUR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE DAY

As you prepare to celebrate our country's Independence Day this week, why not take a few minutes to figure out your financial independence day? If you have any debt other than a reasonable mortgage, that's the day when you will be completely out of that debt. If the only debt you have is a mortgage, that's the day you'll be completely out of all debt.

There are two key steps here. First, running some numbers on my Accelerated Debt Payoff Calculator*. And second, working your plan.

RUNNING THE NUMBERS

This step should only take about 30 minutes at the most. Enter the details of your debts, starting with your lowest balance debt. The calculator assumes that when your first debt is paid off, you will roll the full amount you were paying on that debt into your next lowest-balance debt.

Do you see the box below the 10th row, the one where it says, "Enter a monthly dollar amount you can add to your debt payoff plan"? This is where you can run some helpful what-if scenarios. Try entering \$25 the first time through. The calculator assumes you'll add that amount to your lowest balance debt (so be sure to do that!). Then try \$50 or \$75 or more.

The calculator also assumes you'll do something else that's incredibly helpful—that you'll fix your payments. You see, if you go no further into debt on a particular credit card and make the minimum payments that are required each month, your required minimum payment will decline each month. That isn't kindness on the part of the credit card company; it's math. Your minimum required payment is based on your balance, and if your balance is declining a little each month, that means your minimum payment will decline as well. It declines by such a small amount that most people don't even notice.

*the accelerated debt payoff calculator can be found at:
<https://mattaboutmoney.com/resources/calculators/>



DAY 7 CONTINUED

They get hooked into this declining payment amount and that's what keeps them in debt for just about forever. But fixing your payments on the amount you paid this month will dramatically speed up the process of getting out of debt. So, add whatever you can to the smallest balance debt and be sure to fix your payments on all the rest.

Run enough scenarios to figure it out—your financial independence day. Set a goal for the extra amount you'll come up with to accelerate the payoff of all your debts. Stretch yourself, but also make it doable. Then see what the calculator says about how long that'll take you to finish your plan and figure out from there what that date will be—the month and year of your financial independence.

WORKING YOUR PLAN

Of course, this is the hard part. Hopefully, running some numbers to see how much more quickly you'll be out of debt will serve as a motivator. Then, and I know this is easier said than done, you just have to see the process of getting out of debt as something of a machine. Get it up and running.

Get the flywheel turning. Hit the numbers each month — that fixed minimum plus something extra toward the lowest balance debt, fixed payments on all the rest. When one debt is wiped out, roll the full amount into the next lowest balance debt, and keep going. Get some accountability. Get some small wins. Eventually, you'll feel it. Momentum!

Then one day you'll make your last payment and that will be one sweet day. Believe me. Having worked this process for about four and a half years to wipe out \$20,000 of debt, I know what it feels like to hit that number each month, month after month. And I know what it feels like to make that final payment. Your city may not shoot off fireworks in your honor, but my guess is that your annual financial freedom day celebration will be at least as satisfying as the Fourth of July.



WEEK 2

The next 7 days will be spent watching a video each day that is part of a 7-day devotional series on Generosity in the “You Version” Bible App. You can download the App from your App store (search for “You Version”...it’s a picture of a brown Bible).

After you open up the app, use the “plans” feature at the bottom of your screen and then click on the search (or magnifying glass icon) and type in “Generosity”.

Click on the first “Generosity” listed and you should be at a screen that says “Generosity: A seven-day plan from Pastor Anthony Murray. There are several Bible verses to read, a devotional and a short video. Click on each to watch or read. We will suggest a verse to memorize each day. Give it try to see if you can “hide God’s Word in your heart”!



WEEK 2 DAY 1

GOD IS A GIVER

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: What can you give to someone today?

Memorize: John 3:16..."For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish but will have eternal life"



WEEK 2 DAY 2

RELEASE TO RECEIVE

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: What is holding you back from being generous today?

Memorize: 2 Corinthians 5:17....”Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old is gone and the new is here”



WEEK 2 DAY 3 EVERYTHING COMES FROM GOD

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: Take time to think and reflect on what you are blessed with. Then take time to thank God for blessing you.

Memorize: 1 Chronicles 29:14....”But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”



WEEK 2 DAY 4 EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: Think about how you practice generosity in your life. What does generosity look like in your life? How are you generous? How often are you generous? Who are you generous to?

Memorize: 1 John 3-16-18....”This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with love or speech but with actions and in truth.”



WEEK 2 DAY 5 TIME, GIFTS AND TALENTS

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: Winston Churchill said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”

Memorize: 1 Peter 4:10.... “each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”



WEEK 2 DAY 6

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: Are you holding unforgiveness in your heart?

Today, ask God to create in you a clean heart.

Memorize: Psalm 86:5 "For you, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You."



WEEK 2 DAY 7 IT'S ABOUT YOU

Read the verses listed.

Click on the devotional

Play the video

Read the devotional

Reflection: “Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.” – St. Catherine of Siena

Memorize: Mark 12:30-31....”Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”



WEEK 3 DAY 1 IT'S A HEART ISSUE

READ:

Matthew 6:25-34

25 “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? 27 Can any of you add one moment to his life span[a] by worrying? 28 And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. 30 If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? 31 So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God[b] and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. 34 Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



WEEK 3 DAY 1 IT'S A HEART ISSUE CONTINUED

Luke 6:38

38 Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

Luke 12:15

15 He then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”

Deuteronomy 8:17-20

17 You may say to yourself, ‘My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,’ 18 but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm his covenant he swore to your ancestors, as it is today. 19 If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them, I testify against you today that you will certainly perish. 20 Like the nations the Lord is about to destroy before you, you will perish if you do not obey the Lord your God.



WEEK 3 DAY 1 IT'S A HEART ISSUE CONTINUED

Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honor the Lord with your possessions
and with the first produce of your entire harvest;
10 then your barns will be completely filled,
and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Psalm 24:1-6

A psalm of David.

1 The earth and everything in it,
the world and its inhabitants,
belong to the Lord;

2 for he laid its foundation on the seas
and established it on the rivers.

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?

4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who has not appealed to[a] what is false,
and who has not sworn deceitfully.

5 He will receive blessing from the Lord,
and righteousness[b] from the God of his salvation.

6 Such is the generation of those who inquire of him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.[c]Selah



WEEK 3 DAY 1 IT'S A HEART ISSUE

QUESTIONS:

Do any of these verses challenge you? Which ones? What are the challenges that you feel?

How do these views align with your current view of money?



WEEK 3 DAY 2

OWNER V. MANAGER

Read: Matthew 25:14-30

14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.

15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more.

17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.

18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22 “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’



WEEK 3 DAY 2 OWNER V. MANAGER CONTINUED

23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?

27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest.

28 “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.

29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’



WEEK 3 DAY 2 OWNER V. MANAGER CONTINUED

Questions to think about:

What's the difference between an owner and a manager?
How do you view your "stuff"? As a manager or as owner?

If you viewed yourself as the manager of your stuff instead of as the owner, what would be different in your life?



WEEK 3 DAY 3

JOINING MISSION

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”[a]

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!



WEEK 3 DAY 3 JOINING MISSION CONTINUED

Questions:

What is your experience in giving/generosity?

What gets in the way of your generosity?



WEEK 3 DAY 4

DEBT!

Read:

Romans 12:2

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Question: What does this verse have to do with being in debt?

Read:

Proverbs 22:7

The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is slave to the lender.

Question: Read over this verse a couple of times until you understand it. What does this verse say about debt?

Read:

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law

Question: What does this verse tell you about debt?



WEEK 3 DAY 5

THE DEBT SNOWBALL

There are several really good Biblically based financial education courses that are available to get you started down the path of debt free living. A common method that these classes teach is the “Debt Snowball”. Here’s how the Debt Snowball works...

1. On a sheet of paper, list all of your debts in column 1 in the order of the smallest to the largest.
2. In the 2nd column, list the required minimum payment of each debt.
3. Go through your expenses and determine where you can find some “Extra” money by not buying extras, not eating out, trimming out unnecessary expenses, etc.
4. Take the “extra” money and pay of the smallest debt as fast as possible.
5. Roll the amount you were paying to the smallest debt into the next smallest debt
6. Pay off the next smallest debt as quickly as you can
7. Roll the amount you just paid into the next smallest debt.
8. Continue until your debt is gone.

Question: Are you willing to give this process a try? Then start TODAY!



WEEK 3 DAY 6 CONTENTMENT

Read:

Philippians 4:11-13

1 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Question: On a scale of 1 – 10, where do you rate yourself on contentment? How are contentment and trust connected? What role do both play in your generosity or lack of it?



WEEK 3 DAY 7

TRUST

Read:

Malachi 3:8-12

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.”

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’”

“In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.

Question: Do these verses say that God will take all the bumps and turns out of your life if you are generous? How are contentment and trust connected? What role do both play in your generosity or lack of it?



WEEK 4



give

This week let's try to be generous each day. Pick a way to be generous from the following "Ways to be Generous" list each day and record the details. What did you do? Who did you help? Results?

76 SIMPLE WAYS TO BE GENEROUS

From a blog written by Chloe Wigan

1. Be present, really listen and give someone your complete undivided attention when they're talking to you.
2. Write words of encouragement on post-it notes and stick them random places.
3. Pick up any rubbish that you see at the beach, park or in the street.
4. Tell someone you're grateful for them and why.
5. Hold the door open for someone else.
6. Smile at every single person you come across for the day.
7. Tell someone that they're doing an awesome job.
8. Give someone a meaningful compliment.
9. Make eye contact with people when you talk to them.
10. Bring breakfast or morning tea for the people at your workplace.
11. Call someone you haven't talked to in ages purely to check in with how they are and what's going on with them.



WEEK 4

give

12. When you get paid — give first. It doesn't matter how much. You might like to donate to your favorite charity, a local homeless shelter, the person selling pins outside the supermarket or someone who's doing awesome things.
13. Send someone a card on their Birthday instead of texting or writing on their Facebook wall.
14. Be a daymaker and do something to make someone else's day.
15. Write a glowing review for a podcast you're obsessed with.
16. Buy someone their favorite chocolate for no particular reason.
17. Tell someone who's embarking on something new that you believe in them and know they can do it.
18. When you encounter someone who's wearing a name tag make an effort to use their name when you speak to them. Bonus points for giving them a compliment or saying something nice.
19. Tell someone why you love having them in your life.
20. Use good manners. Please and thank you are simple but appreciated.
21. Put in a good word for someone without being asked to.
22. Share your knowledge on something without asking anything in return.
23. Send someone a letter or card in the mail.
24. Give someone a compliment about something unexpected that you really love about them.



WEEK 4



25. Buy something from a company that is doing awesome stuff in the world eg. Thank You, Who Gives a Crap and Washaway Poverty.
26. If you know someone who's going through a really tough time tell them that you're here for them and that you want to help and give them 3 solid suggestions on how you could do this.
27. Bake something for someone and surprise them with it.
28. Use social media to send words of encouragement to someone.
29. Make someone a cup of tea just because (if they like tea of course!) or make them their favorite hot drink.
30. Offer to do someone something that doesn't benefit you at all.
31. Give someone a gift, not for an occasion, just because you thought they would love it.
32. Make an awesome playlist for someone and give it to them (you could send them a Spotify link or burn it to a CD.)
33. Pass on a book you read and loved for someone else to read or donate it to somewhere that collects books.
34. Write an awesome comment on an article you enjoyed.
35. Create/make/bake something then give it to someone.
36. Donate clothes and belongings you no longer need, want or love.
38. Pay for something for the people behind you in the queue (coffee, ice-cream etc.)



WEEK 4



give

39. Gift someone a book on their Kindle.

40. Be grateful for all that you have to give. As Danielle Laporte put it “When you treasure how much you have – from your good health, free evenings, expertise, a loving soul, a bit of cash – you KNOW you have so much to give. If you’re not feeling generous, try harder to feel grateful.”

41. Send someone an email with no agenda just to tell them that you love what they’re doing.

42. Spend time away from social media, emails, your phone and technology and instead give everyone your full and undivided attention for a particular amount of time.

43. Giving someone space when they need it (the introverts in your life will love you for this!)

44. Volunteer your time to someone else to help them do something.

45. Give blood (if you can).

46. Buy a gift card and give it to someone.

47. Tell someone “you’re awesome!”

48. Purchase some extra groceries when you’re shopping and put them in the food bank in the supermarket.

49. Wash someone else’s car.

50. Share on social media about a person/product/book/experience that you truly loved.

51. Go to someone’s house and cook for them.

52. Give someone a tutorial of something you know how to do that they don’t, and be super patient with them as you talk them through it.



WEEK 4

give

53. Celebrate someone else. Make them a cake or send a card. For their birthday, some exciting news, an achievement or just because they're awesome.
54. Give someone flowers (just because!)
55. Write someone a letter and send it to them (here's an awesome resource with templates to help get you started.)
56. Do the dishes when someone else has cooked something for you.
57. Send postcards to people, just because.
58. Sell something you don't use anymore and give the money to a worthwhile cause.
59. Forgive someone who has done you wrong and let go of the anger and resentment towards them.
60. Forgive yourself for not being perfect, screwing up, failing, or doing something you shouldn't have. Give yourself permission to be human.
61. Tell your parents, grandparents (or any significant people in your life) how they've influenced you and why you're grateful for them.
62. Truly support someone and be there for them in their time of need.
63. Give the people you're out for dinner with your full and undivided attention by not going on your phone.
64. Eat at a social enterprise restaurant. Delicious food for a good cause is AWESOME. [This one](#) is my favourite.



WEEK 4

give

65. When someone shares something with you that they're really excited about or proud of, meet them with their enthusiasm and truly celebrate with them.
66. Package up your leftovers to send home with your dinner guests.
67. Ask someone what the BEST part of their day was and give them your undivided attention when they tell you about it.
68. Bake something super delicious and take it somewhere to share it with people.
69. Buy an extra copy of a book you're getting to give someone else.
70. Buy a meal for someone.
71. Send someone a voice clip instead of a text message.
72. When someone in your life is sick and not feeling good, take them over some movies to watch.
73. Dedicate an hour (or 3 or even a whole day) to someone else (to help them or to just be there for them).
74. Take care of yourself first so you can give to others and be generous from a place of overflow and not lack.
75. Tell someone that they make the world a better place and truly mean it.
76. When someone does something kind and generous for you, accept it with gratitude and thanks.



WEEK 4 DAY 1



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 2



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 3



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 4



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 5



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 6



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?



WEEK 4 DAY 7



Pick something from the generous list and try your best to look for opportunities throughout your day to do it.

What did you choose?

How hard was it to find the opportunity to do that generous thing?

What did you do?

What were the results (for you and/or for others)?

