



GENERAL COMMENTS:

Modifying the Leader's Guide: There are numerous ways in which instructors have found it helpful to individualize their Leader's Guide. Following are some of those ways – but the key is for you to do whatever will be helpful to you:

- Remove the pages from the binding and place in a 3-hole binder for ease of page turning
- Highlight or underscore key words
- Use colored marker or stick-on circle to further indicate when to click to next power point.
- Use post-its or write reminders in your Guide – such things as where you should be at certain times, a note at the bottom of the page cueing you what's next, etc. etc.
- Use post-its for updating data (which will change again over time, thus post-its vs. writing them in).
- Add pages for articles, stories, testimonies, etc.

If you haven't already seen the Good \$ense website instructions on how to consolidate all six power point sessions into one presentation, go to www.goodsenseministry.com and select: Ministry Support/Coaches Corner/Teacher - Leader Aids. Please be sure you have the CD available, however, in case of a tech failure!

Preparation: We encourage careful and thorough preparation. It's a long-standing rule of thumb that one needs to practice the material they will teach a minimum of three times before they "own" it. That takes commitment, but you're involved in a great undertaking that changes lives - maybe for eternity.*that's* worth the effort! An excellent "dress rehearsal" could be with your G\$ team and other church leadership and staff.

Don't be overly concerned about looking down to follow the script closely the first few times you teach. You want to be sure to stay "in synch" with the Participant's Guide and the power point presentation. Between looking at their notes and the power point slides, participants probably won't notice the glances you take at your notes. Being familiar with the content and highlighting key words will help you keep on track and avoid sounding like you're reading the script.

Be sure to arrive early to check set-up, make sure all audio/video equipment is working, etc. It is recommended that you have someone available for tech support and to operate lights etc.

Course Format: Although there are pros and cons to each of the potential formats in which the Budget Course can be presented, feedback indicates that presenting the Course for the first time in six sessions is easier on the first-time instructor. Preparing for one week at a time rather than the whole course at once seems to lower the stress level! The distinct advantage of doing the whole course in one day (or an evening followed by a day) is that you don't have the attendance problems that usually accompany a six-week course format.

We are also aware that the hardest session to teach within the time frame of 55 minutes is session one. That also happens to be the session that lays a great deal of important groundwork for the whole course. So, if you are going to present the course in weekly sessions, you may be interested in checking our website under *Ministry Support / Ministry Leader's and Teacher's Aids / Budget Course* – and look at the document entitled "*Seven Session Format*". In this format, we have shortened session one, introduced the written record keeping system into session 2 and added some homework assignments.

Introduction: It's important to set the day up well and create a relaxed atmosphere. Attendees experiencing financial difficulties are often anxious about the course. Having folks introduce themselves to each other and share a hope for the day can help ease the tension they are feeling. Giving a "high five" and telling each other, "You can do it!" can be another helpful technique in setting a relaxed mood... and you may remember that I added a slide that said, "You can do it!" Another very desirable outcome of these activities is that they can build a sense of community which can result in accountability relationships that continue after the course.

Participant Prework: Prework is important and should have been stressed as part of the registration process. Our recommendation is that the pre-work be duplicated (it can be downloaded from our website or simply copied) and distributed at registration. The Participant's Guides can then be distributed on the day of the Course. On the day of the course, you might invite those who have not done the pre-work to meet briefly with you during the first break at which time you can encourage them to make their best estimate of data that they don't have as a result of not doing the Pre-Work and then to update it later.

Use of the Leader's Guide: Reference pages 15-23 (especially pages 18-21) in the Leader's Guide for a review of key information regarding how the Guide is laid out.

COMMENTS DEALING WITH SPECIFIC PAGES OF THE "LEADER'S GUIDE":

Session 1

Please keep in mind that any of the suggested additions adds time to an already very full session. They should not be added if you are strictly limited to a 55-minute time frame (Adult Sunday School for example.)

Page 28: We suggest that your opening introductory comments point out that the course, while called "Budget Course" is about much more than that. It's about values, goals, relationships, spiritual growth and well-being. It's about some of the most profound issues of life and faith. Then, segue into, "It's also about budgeting and whatever your past experience, you can do it! "

Page 30: At the top of the page, you may want to elaborate that when Phil. 4:13 says "you can do everything", that includes having the discipline to bring this arena of your life under control, learning to live within limits, developing confidence in God's provision so as to eliminate stress and worry, being free to be a generous giver, etc. etc. When discussing the slide "Money is a Powerful Thing", you may wish to add that God knew that our relationship to our money would be a challenge for many of us and so the bible is full of advice and warnings about it.

Page 34: Several thoughts on this page:

- You could add the comment that, "Money is a huge issue of life. It's always right there in your face. Most of our waking time is spent either making it, spending it, worrying about it, fighting over it, trying to protect it, etc."
- Note the comment box regarding having seekers in the audience. The Budget Course can be an effective outreach tool given the lack of good information regarding personal finances that most people face. The bible is an excellent economic textbook for believers and non-believers alike.
- After pointing out that money sometimes decides where we'll work, live, etc. you could say, "If money makes those decisions and not prayerful reflection on what God is leading us to do, then money is our god, not God."
- It could be helpful to make a few comments to further set up the video. For example, "See if you can determine how the Industrial Revolution influenced the way materialism and consumerism developed into the forces they are today. What was the Industrial Revolution's challenge to business (how to get people to buy more when they already have everything they need) and how did business respond? (Create a dissatisfied consumer – one who is not satisfied with what they have, even though they have everything they need, and cause them to value consumption more than leisure).

Page 36: The video wrap up is where you could make sure the previous points about the video mentioned under page 34 were clear to folks. Ask, what was the threat posed to business by the Industrial Revolution? How did business respond?

Page 38: To save time on the exercise, you could instruct to share with just one other person, or at most two. This could allow time for the inclusion of the following comments.

As people indicate which myth influenced them the most, you could make some brief comments as to the evidence that these are myths and not truth. For example: "If things brought happiness the United States would be a delirious nation since we have so many things. But statistics on divorce, depression, suicide, and many other facets of life would indicate that things are not bringing us the happiness we are seeking. We'll talk about the myths surrounding debt later but, as for the third myth, the studies are very clear that a little more money does not solve a person's financial problems. Studies show that people at all points along the financial continuum believe that if they had just about 10% more, they'd be in good shape. What's clear is that if a person can't handle what they have, a little additional will just allow them to mishandle that much more."

Page 40: As part of the first paragraph, you could add that perhaps it's not stretching the point to say that we are subject to being brainwashed by the myths. That is, subject to believing a lie in spite of contrary evidence, because it has been repeated so often.

Page 44 through the pearl video: This is a critical section... be sure to give it the time and attention to allow the truth about trusteeship versus ownership to sink into people's hearts.

Page 52: Introduction of the model of one servant and two masters is also a very key part of the course since we keep coming back to the question, "What are you becoming...more faithful or more foolish?" It is a powerful and yet grace-filled approach since the question is posed back to the participant and it is up to them to answer.

Page 58: If you decide to share your testimony, be careful to do so in a way that doesn't carry with it elements of a "prosperity gospel"... that is, that God will always respond in a way that results in our having lots more money etc. Does God sometimes bless materially? Yes. Does He always? No.

Page 60: The point that a budget (or Spending Plan as we now refer to it) is not oppressive but is in fact, freedom producing, is another key point to be sure the participants grasp. This represents a paradigm shift in many people's minds. The statement on page 59 that a budget is the *fundamental* tool in money management is also a key point.

Also, just before talking about the Spending Plan being freedom producing, you may wish to stress more fully the importance of goals in providing the motivation to carry out the plan. Visualizing and remembering the end result can be a powerful motivation. Perhaps you have a personal experience to share in that regard.

Session 2

Page 70: Point out that if they have not done the pre-work, the Goal Sheet is on page 7 of their handout.

Page 72: At the end of the last paragraph on the page add the words; "It's about, are you becoming more faithful or more foolish?"

Page 82: You might add that a 4% raise in just three years results in additional gross income equivalent to almost 25% of the original salary. Three years worth of a 5% raise amounts to almost a third of the original salary.

Page 88: After the Matthew 6 quote, some of Randy Alcorn's thoughts from his book, "The Treasure Principle" could be very effectively interjected. For example, Alcorn makes the point that Jesus' words are not an emotional appeal but are very rational and logical. We should not store up treasure on earth not because it's bad but because it won't last! Wealth will always be lost... either it will leave us or we will leave it (die!). His comments in his book about the fact that we get confused and think earth is our home when really heaven is, are also relevant.

Page 90: Reference 2 Cor. 8:14-15 when discussing giving as a means of achieving economic justice. The aim is that one's plenty would supply the need of others and that "he who gathered much did not have too much and he who gathered little did not have too little." Another good reference is Jer. 22:16, "He plead the cause of the afflicted and needy. Then it was well. Is that not what it means to know me? Declares the Lord."

As you deal with the topic of giving, be sure you are versed on your church's position regarding the tithe. A good response to the often asked question, "Is the tithe on the net or the gross?" could be as follows. Ask the person what their answer is to the question, "How much do you make?" Would it be the amount of their annual salary or would it be that amount minus taxes and other deductions. If their answer is the former (which it almost always is), then that's the amount upon which they should calculate their percentage giving. The real issue, as stated in the teaching, is not gross or net, but "Where's your heart?"

Page 100: Updated script: For example, the United States has one of the lowest savings rates of all developed nations. In fact, in the year 2005 the savings rate was *negative* 0.5%. (Commerce Department statistics as reported on MSNBC on 1/30/06). This represents the only time the savings rate has been negative for the whole year since 1932 and 1933. And bankruptcies in 2005 were 1.78 million, the highest ever.

Session 3

Page 118: Add the credit union as another good place for emergency savings if the person has access to one.

Page 130: Following is a series of updated statistics: 841.2 million credit cards were in use at the beginning of 2004. Total household consumer debt was \$2.8 trillion, up over 11% from the year before. Approximately \$725 billion of that was in credit card debt. Interest paid was approximately \$65 billion. Profit by credit card companies in 2003 estimated at \$20 billion. (Sources: Cardtrak, Federal Reserve, cardweb.com)

Page 136: Just below center page, change the word "satisfy" to "encourage". Credit does not satisfy greed and envy but more likely encourages or feeds them.

Page 142: The point about the psychology of using a credit card and how it can lead to overspending is a key point to be sure your audience understands.

Page 144: Another key point is the second rule – if we only use a credit card for budgeted items, then the money will always be there to pay the entire credit card bill at the end of the month. It's still better, however, to limit the use of a credit card for reasons already explained.

Page 148: Since the 1998 statistic is out of date, don't tie in the example with the statistic. Simply use the example of \$7200 owed at 18% with minimum payment of 2% of balance to show the impact of paying more than the minimum.

Page 150: To demonstrate how to save \$3.33 a day (to free up \$100 per month to accelerate debt repayment) you could bring in some props like a Starbucks cup, a newspaper, a lunch bag, a bottled water container, etc. and speak to how much could be saved on each of those items over a month's time.

General suggestion: At some point ask folks to visualize what they will do with the money that will be freed up once they no longer have debt to repay. Give them a moment or two to think about that and then encourage them to let that be a motivation and encouragement as they move ahead.

Session 4

Page 164: Rather than repeating the "wear me, drink me, drive me" phrase that we have already used, change the wording to read; "The aim of advertising is to make us discontent with what we have and to convince us that happiness lies in that elusive one more thing that will satisfy the hunger in my being, in my very soul."

Page 164: Two great quotes to add here when talking about keeping up with the Jones....

It's not really about greed, (that is, more, for the sake of more) it's pride- I want more than the other person. What other than pride would lead to huge houses with 2 ½ story atrium entries with two adults and one child living in them?
C. S. Lewis

It's the eyes of others that destroy us. If all others were blind, what need would I have for fine clothes and a fine house?
Ben Franklin

Page 166: After stating that materialism is a competing theology you might elaborate by pointing out that, "Materialism by definition states that matter is of the ultimate significance. There is no eternal. In the theology of materialism, the gospel (the "good news") is advertising, the liturgy is consumerism, the temples are shopping malls and the god is money."

Page 168: The I Tim 6 verse is a key verse. It's worth pointing out that often we pay attention to the first part that God "richly supplies us with everything for our enjoyment" and neglect the part about where we are to put our hope and that we are to "do good, be rich in good deeds, and be generous and willing to share."

Just before having folks turn to p.60 in their Participant's Guide, have them take a moment to re-read and reflect on p.59. It contains powerful scripture and other truths. You may elect to walk back over the page with them (it appears on your p.169.)

The "driving your stake lifestyle-wise" concept is another key teaching point to be sure to challenge people about. In one church, participants at the end of the course took home wooden stakes, wrote appropriate scripture on them and drove them into the ground in places where they would see them and be reminded of their desire to 'drive their stake'.

Page 176: One extra mortgage payment a year may sound like a lot but pointing out that that amounts to \$85 per month on a \$1000 mortgage may make it seem more achievable, particularly if you mention that maybe they can take several years to build up to that amount.

Page 184: Be sensitive to the fact that some people in your church may be in the auto dealership business and be sure to make the point out that buying a new, never owned car is not sinful, nor is leasing a car. But from a purely financial standpoint, those are not wise options.

Page 184: No statistics currently appear on this page but some that may prove interesting if time allows to mention them are:

- Nearly 4 in 10 new vehicle buyers owe more on their trade-in than it is worth. 80% of all auto owners currently owe more on their car than it is worth. The average length of a car loan is 58 months with some as long as 80 months. (American Bankers Assoc. Newsbytes 3/26/04)
- A Ford explorer purchased at \$38,900 has an estimated value three years later of \$17,225. That's a depreciation cost of \$21,700 or approximately \$600 per month! (WSJ article 11/11/03)

Page 186: According to www.safecarguide.com (a great website for auto buyers), the average reliable life of a new car is now 13 years and 145,000 miles. The average time at which a new car is traded in is less than 4 years and under 55,000 miles.

Page 188: Precede the slide by saying, "I believe you can pay cash for your next car!" And then acknowledge that most folks think you're somewhere between crazy and misinformed when you say that but you believe it's true and go on to explain.

Page 190: Add homeowners insurance as well as auto insurance when making the point that higher deductibles can save significant premium costs.

Page 194: If your audience warrants mentioning it you can indicate that the National Association of Insurance Commissioners has a free "Shoppers Guide to LTC Insurance". Call 816-842-3600 for a copy.

Page 198: The most recent year for which stats on how much was gambled is 1999 in which the National Gambling Impact Study indicated that on average, Americans legally wagered more than \$630, losing more than \$50 billion in the process. The National Council on Problem Gambling indicates that approximately 3 million persons meet the criteria for pathological gambling and another 6 to 9 million have a serious problem with gambling and are known as "problem gamblers." Seventy percent of US adults report gambling at least once in the past year. Youth and seniors have a higher rate of problem gambling than the population at large.

Page 200: Be sure the instructions are clear on the Individual Activity. Ask if there are any questions before proceeding. You may wish to make a copy of pages 69-80 of the participant's guide for you to have for ready reference if there are any questions. Be sure you've studied those pages beforehand.

Page 200: - Note updated statistics for **PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE – Page 69**

Updated statistics for the cost of feeding a family of two or four can be found at: www.usda.gov/cnpp/using3.html. The costs as of December – 2005 are as follows:

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|---------------------|---|
| Family of 2: | Thrifty = \$307.40 / Low-Cost = \$389.10 / Moderate = \$481.00 / Liberal = \$602.80 |
| Family of 4: | Thrifty = \$444.10 / Low-Cost = \$557.90 / Moderate = \$685.90 / Liberal = \$847.40 |

Session 5

Page 206: When discussing the Spending Plan it may be helpful to refer to the number of the category so participants can easily follow your comments.

Page 218: Note that the word 'margin' may not be understood by everyone. Explain it is the difference between total earnings and total expenditures.

Page 220: Be prepared to respond to the question, "What if the only thing I can cut back on is giving?" A possible response is: It may be possible that your original goal for giving was too ambitious and has to be cut back. However, generally it is not true that giving is the only thing that can be cut back. Keep two things in mind as you prayerfully reflect on whether to cut back on giving. First, what you give is a matter of the heart between you and God. Second, the human mind has no limit to its ability to rationalize. With those things in mind, if you feel at peace about the need to lower your goal at this time and if you desire to give more in the future and have a plan in mind for how that will happen, then go ahead and make the adjustment.

Use your judgment on the allocation of 27 minutes for the Individual Activity. It may be possible for most folks to conclude in less time, but don't rush them. In referencing other resources within the church to help folks, that hopefully includes a cadre of Good \$ense counselors who are trained in counseling with folks, use of the forms, etc. Use caution, however, in overstressing the availability and helpfulness of counselors to the point that everyone asks for one! Encourage folks to use what they have learned in the Course for a month or two and if questions or problems arise, then seek counseling.

Session 6

As you begin this section on Record Keeping (**Page 227**), be sensitive to what a huge, scary thing record keeping is to many people. You may want to make some reassuring comments about your understanding of this and hold out the promise that you are confident that you can make it easier and less time consuming than they believe... and then reiterate that very strongly again on **Page 230**.

Page 234: There is an error on the Spending Record example that is on the power point slide and appears on page 91 of the Participant's Guide. Under 'clothing' the posted expenditures should be \$89 and \$6 for a total of \$95.

Page 246: The exercise of posting a normal day's receipts within a two minute time frame is a very critical piece in our effort to prove that record keeping is simpler and takes less time than participants thought. Help them have an "Aha" experience as they realize how relatively quickly and easily they can record their daily expenses.

As part of the closing, remind participants to go back to the action steps they listed as part of many of their activities and to be sure to implement them in the immediate days ahead. A list of all the actions steps throughout the course is in your packet of information and can be downloaded from the Good \$ense website (www.goodsenseministry.com), under "*Resources*" / "*Resources Supplements*" / "*Budget Course*". Also, remind them that there are good resources in the Appendix and encourage them to review the Appendix contents.