

GETTING STARTED IN STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

Your congregation will benefit from a blueprint for a comprehensive financial stewardship ministry that serves each participant within the congregation and community.

Step One: Gather resources to build your plan.

Step Two: The leadership of your church should cast the vision to the church; this will give a baseline understanding of the ministry that will follow. (Focus on the idea of what you want *for* your congregation, not *from* them.) Communicate what you want the congregation to experience as a result of good financial stewardship: strong faith, solid marriages, generosity, saving, living on a plan, debt free, total financial freedom, etc.

Step Three: Gather mature, generous, believers to train as coaches for your ministry.

Step Four: Launch a coaches training group.

Step Five: Ministry launch. Start small groups that study God's Word on financial stewardship.

Step Six: Develop and use other ministry outlets that fit the culture of your congregation. Examples: small groups, Sunday school, children, youth, young adult, counseling, benevolence, community outreach, estate planning, creative giving, preaching series, capital campaign, etc.

CENTRAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Understand that money is a powerful thing. It can become the idol that makes it harder to enter the Kingdom than for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle...or that can cause us to build bigger barns to store our surplus only to be labeled by God as “fools”.

Understand that our culture assigns money god-like powers. The culture says, “Money is all powerful, it makes things happen” The culture says, “Money provides ultimate security” On paper my future may seem monetarily secure but earthly treasurers are subject to rust, moths, and thieves—not to mention economic downturn.

Understand that the best way to break money’s hold is to be generous with it. The act of giving money away in God honoring ways dramatically breaks the hold it can otherwise have on us—while blessing the receiver and providing the giver a joy found in no other way.

Understand that money and possessions are simply entrustments. God is the owner, we are trustees. Trustees have the responsibility to use the resources entrusted to them in ways that the owner has designated, not in ways that satisfy the trustee’s whims.

Understand that sacrifice is often blessing in disguise. Maybe Jim Elliot said it best, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Think of your own example of giving up something that seemed like a sacrifice at the time only to have it become, often unexpectedly, a blessing in disguise.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

1. The objective of the ministry is life transformation, not increased giving.
2. Rostered leadership, staff, and laity, must be on board and supportive of the ministry, helping to cast the vision.
3. The ministry is for everyone, not just those living with financial difficulty or financial excess. Ensure you are balanced in your stewardship ministry.
 - **Struggling:** Families who have difficulty paying their essential bills.
 - **Stable:** Families who are one paycheck away from struggling.
 - **Solid:** Families who are going where they want to go financially.

- **Surpluses:** Families who have been blessed with a significant surplus of resources.
4. Stewardship ministry must include three elements: teaching the “why and what” and training in the “how” and providing support and encouragement.