

HUMBLE BEREANS

Many years ago, during our daily devotion time, my wife asked me to teach our family what I had learned about running my own business in the event anything were to happen to me and they would need to carry on in my absence. I began to share, and one morning session turned into many morning sessions as I realized God had taught me many lessons about money and finances while serving in our local church and being a self-employed businessman.

I also was receiving requests from families who were using Math-U-See to develop a personal finance or consumer math program. Using what I learned from teaching my own family, drawing from my years as a math teacher, and depending on God, I began pulling together the Stewardship Curriculum in 2008. I later revised and updated this content in 2018.

This course is based on my experiences in seeking to apply Scripture to my personal finances and in my business dealings. When Peter was questioned by the religious leaders, he responded, “We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20)

We want God to help us to be faithful stewards of His treasure that He has given us. We were designed and created to love and serve God. This work of seeking first His kingdom and serving God with our time, talents, and treasure begins in our hearts. Consequently, half of the content in this curriculum will be devoted to the spiritual development of our heart relationship with God.

The second half of the course focuses on becoming faithful stewards of our treasure and learning how to manage it according to principles outlined in the eternal Word of God. So, while we are reading and studying Scripture, we are also practically applying what we are learning to decisions related to our time, talents, gifts, and possessions - in other words, our treasure.

Read it Yourself

When I list a particular passage, I hope you will read the Scripture yourself. If you need more information, prayerfully read the chapter from which it was taken to learn more about the context. In reading and meditating on the same passage, you may draw a different conclusion or feel led to apply it in a different manner. Please do!

It is my hope that we will each seek God and be “Bereans” as we come to the sacred texts. May we each be open to how the Spirit of God would have us apply the eternal principles of His Word.

“That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul’s message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.” (Acts 17:10–12 NLT)

As a father, I not only taught my sons what I had learned; I also learned with them and from them. One important dimension I discovered was that, as my own sons grew in their walk with God, they sometimes disagreed with my conclusions. My calling as my sons' dad is not to "lord it over" those in my care, but rather to encourage them and build them up. Sadly, when push came to shove, I was often resistant to different ways of thinking AND took their comments personally, and conflict ensued. Many of our family "discussions" ended up with me asking the forgiveness of my wife and sons.

"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many.'" (Matthew 20:25–28 NLT)

My authority as the father is not to have the final say, but to use my authority in a positive way:

"The authority that the Lord has given me [is] for building up and not for tearing down."
(2 Corinthians 13:10)

It is my earnest hope that this collection of devotionals will stimulate dialogue between parents and children as they discuss issues of finance and examine them in the light of the eternal principles found in God's Word.

As you teach your children biblical principles, be careful that you make a distinction between your opinion and God's truth as taught in the revealed Word of God. May I remind you how easy it is to misuse our authority as parents to become a bully pulpit for our own ideas when it should be God's ideas we are pursuing. Take your family to God and His Word, for "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35 KJV)

Prayer

Give us the same spirit as those saints in Berea who received the Word with all readiness of mind and examined the Scriptures daily. Help us to be soft-hearted, humble, and teachable as we search the inspired Word as families. Teach us by Your Good Spirit. Amen.

Note:

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READING THE WORD OF GOD

When I was enrolled in seminary, I began attending a small church nearby. As I worshiped there, I became impressed with the depth and knowledge of Scripture by the pastor and the members of this fellowship. I learned that most of the church members made a practice of reading the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation each calendar year. After a few weeks, I determined to join them in this daily discipline.

I found a small yellow schedule in a book rack at the back of the church. On September 20, 1976, I began reading in the book of Joel and have continued this habit ever since. Reading a portion of God's eternal Word is the best discipline I have developed as a born-again Christian. I have listed many benefits of reading the Word of God daily in another study and hope you will be inspired to read God's Word yourself.

To help you develop this daily regimen, I have compiled two charts which begin on September 1 and continue through May 17 of the next year. The first is for reading through the entire New Testament. The second is for the Old Testament, which covers most of the historical content from Genesis through 2 Samuel, plus Proverbs, six chapters of Daniel, and twenty-five Psalms. The decision is yours whether you choose to follow one chart and read one chapter a day from the New Testament or employ both charts and read two chapters, one from the New Testament and one from the Old Testament.