



Village Bible Church

Here we go!

We are excited that you are about to embark on Financial Peace University!

VBC has hosted these classes for almost 10 years and we have witnessed how the practical tools taught in FPU make a HUGE impact on our families.

That being said, FPU is also not perfect - there are some philosophical and theological points we would present differently. However, the tremendous impact FPU that has generated is because the materials are presented in a way that is easy to understand, the concepts are practical, the steps are doable and the momentum builds as you move from step to step.

Here's our strategy for the next 9 weeks:

- Biblical Teaching: We'll use Sunday morning sermons to teach **what the Bible says** about money and our responsibility as God's stewards of His resources. And it says a lot — nearly half of Jesus' parables deal with money! Money can be a blessing — when we learn how to manage it God's way. It tends to be a curse when we don't! For, some weeks, we'll provide a supplement to your FPU materials that will further address the VBC view on some of the concepts presented.
- Practical Tools: **We'll use FPU** in our small groups for what it does best — **give us practical tools** to help us become the stewards of God's resources that the Bible calls us to be.

We could all use a generosity and financial tune-up!

If you dedicate the time and energy to do the work that this course asks of you over the next 9 weeks, **we are confident you will be thrilled** with the results. But, you have to do more than just come to the small group and listen — **you must do the work!**

We are praying for you! We are praying that you will utilize this great opportunity to be challenged, to plan, to change... and that together, we will become the stewards God has called us to be and to experience the joy and blessing that results.



Lesson #1: Super Saving

WEALTH

Live like no one else now, so you can live and give like no one else later.

Baby Step 7: Build Wealth and Give



In the first lesson, Dave provides an overview of his "Baby Steps" program to help you get your financial affairs in order. When lesson one is viewed without the context of the entire series, some of Dave's comments could be viewed quite skeptically. In the very last lesson, Dave hits a home run when he talks about Baby Step #7 – Build Wealth and Give. But this is week #1, and some statements that you hear might sound self-centered. If we're not careful, they can be.

In lesson one, Dave says, "And then we hit Baby Step #7, which is where the real fun kicks in. You have no debt at that point. There's nothing left to do but become very wealthy and give a bunch of it away."

1. The reality is that **we're ALREADY very wealthy**. If you make more than \$33,000, you are in the top 1% of the richest people in the world!

We don't need FPU to help us become rich. We need FPU to help us become better stewards of our riches.

We shouldn't wait to be generous with our time, talents and our treasure. God calls us to be steward of all that He has provided at all points in our life.

The American way of managing our money is broken. It's not ok that we live beyond our means (spend more than we make) and carry debt to our death beds. It creates anxiety and places a burden on our families. It inhibits our ability to freely give back to God, from helping others and from experiencing the blessing that flows from generous living that God intends.



2. Becoming a better steward of money will create a financial surplus if all other things held constant. Yes, it's ok to enjoy some of that surplus and spend on yourself. At the same time, it gives us the freedom to be generous – to help others and to invest in God's Kingdom, which has incredible returns. Here are some thoughts to consider before viewing lesson 1:

- a. **Our heart follows our investment.** Are you investing the bulk of your money and energy on your earthly material kingdom or in God's heavenly kingdom?

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - JESUS (Matthew 6:21)

- b. **We can't be double-minded.** We'll either serve God with our money and energy or we'll serve ourselves.

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. - JESUS (Matthew 6:24)

- c. **Invest where you are promised eternal returns.** Our investments in God's kingdom provide us with personal returns FOREVER – not just 30-40 measly years of retirement!

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. - JESUS (Matthew 6:19-20)

3. **"Financial Freedom" isn't always God's plan.** We are not promised prosperity. We are promised suffering.

To you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. - Paul (Philippians 1:29)

Satan hates it when Christians move out and challenge men to come to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 9:16, we are told that Paul was called to suffer for the name of Christ – both physical and psychological. When Paul said, "What will you have me to do, Lord?" he meant it. All bridges were burned; all personal desires were thrown overboard. Cost what it may, Paul would be Christ's true and loyal disciple. The sufferings were great, but the blessings were far greater.

Lesson #1: Super Saving

Banks, Insurance Companies, Realtors, Retailers, Salesmen, Marketers... They're not all bad!

Dave is brash in his advice and humor. It's his personality and part of his communication style. He is also quite dogmatic and practical in his comments and advice.

Dave is hard on almost everyone who makes money selling a product or service – bankers, insurance brokers, retailers, and so forth. The one profession that is spared are realtors – which he happens to be! In all of his brashness, it might seem as if he believes that all people who work in these professions are scam artists trying to rip people off. Let's make a few observations:

- We live in a country that values free-market capitalism.
- Marketing drives a big part of our economy – convincing people they need to buy what one has to sell.
- Our financial system has proven to be one of the most stable financial systems in history.
- Insurance provides us with the ability to protect ourselves from the catastrophic.

Do bankers, insurance brokers, car salesmen, doctors, and coffee shops offer high-profit, low-value products that they hope we'll buy? Sure. Do they also offer high-value great products that we derive great benefits from? Yes.

The reality is that there are unethical business practices in every profession. There are also a lot of great people who operate ethically and compassionately in these professions. These people offer products that don't simply generate a profit, but are highly desired and useful to the buyer!

Let's be careful to not assume the worst about these professions, and yet also be wise so we don't succumb to great marketing strategies, but rather to carefully evaluate our purchases with a more discerning eye.



Lesson #1: Super Saving

Dave gives great practical advice about getting out of debt and saving for the future. He'll be the first to tell you he's not an investment advisor.

Can I really expect a 12% return?

When Dave says you can expect to make a 12% return on your investments, he's using a real number that's based on the historical average annual return of the S&P 500 which has indeed been 12%. (The S&P 500 gauges the performance of the stocks of the 500 largest, most stable companies in the New York Stock Exchange—it's often considered the most accurate measure of the stock market as a whole.)

However, **a better measurement is the compound annual growth rate** (also known as the annualized return). This is the actual rate of return someone's investments will grow and **is about 10%**.

- For the last 12 months (2017), the S&P's returned 21.93%
- For the last 5 years (2013-2017), the S&P's average is 16.28% (15.82% annualized)
- For the last 10 years (2008-2017), the S&P's average is 10.41% (8.49% annualized)
- For the last 20 years (1998-2017), the S&P's average is 8.81% (7.15% annualized)
- For the last 30 years (1988-2017), the S&P's average is 12.20% (10.72% annualized)

Do the research yourself: www.moneychimp.com/features/market_cagr.htm



The Key = Start Investing 15% Soon!

Will your investments make 8%? 10% 12? The reality is that compound interest is pretty amazing at any of these levels.

The key is that you start investing 15% of your gross income as soon you can make it through Baby Steps 1, 2 & 3 – and do it for the long haul.

Get Help

Seriously consider working with a trustworthy investment professional who can help you find the right mix of investments. But the value of a professional doesn't end there.





All investments will have ups and downs, and the downs are scary times for investors. Many react by pulling their money out of their investments—that's exactly what millions of investors did as the market plunged in 2008. But that only made their losses permanent. If they'd stuck with their investments, like Dave advises, their value would have risen along with the stock market over the next two years. This is yet another value of a professional—they can help you keep your cool in tough times and focus on the long term.

In fact, increasing your investments during down markets may help drive total return on investment in your portfolio. It's important not to be scared by the short-term, or to chase performance spikes. Remember, investing is a marathon—it takes endurance, patience, and willpower, but it will pay off in the end.



Financial Reality Check

Financial peace is closer than you think! But before we get started, let's put a stake in the ground where your current finances stand. This is information you're going to look back on five years from now, and you'll be amazed at how far you've come! Answer the questions below, and be honest!

	What's your total non-mortgage debt? <i>This includes any money you owe on anything, including student loans, credit cards, car loans, second mortgages, home equity loans, etc. This is the total of everything except a first mortgage.</i>	TOTAL																																																																													
	How much "liquid" cash do you have available? <i>This is the cash you could get your hands on immediately like savings, checking and money market accounts. This does not include home equity lines of credit, cash advances or retirement funds.</i>	TOTAL																																																																													
	How many open credit card accounts do you have? <i>Remember, even if you pay off a card, the account is still open. To truly be rid of it forever, you must formally request that the credit company or bank officially close the account.</i>	TOTAL																																																																													
	On a scale of 1-10, rate the following emotions in regard to your personal finances:																																																																														
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Small Group Costs: The costs are relatively small per person, but do add up when carried churchwide. Accordingly, if you're able to offset our costs, that is much appreciated. Your small group leader will have an envelope to collect contributions for small group material and for childcare. You can also give online at www.villagebible.org/give

If you're experiencing financial hardship, however, we don't want costs to be a barrier. *It's more important that they are in a group and that each person has a copy of the study than to collect a donation from you to offset our costs.* God always takes care of the money one way or another!

For those who are able to assist with the costs, the estimated costs for our small group this year are:

SMALL GROUP STUDY MATERIALS: \$20 per person, per semester. This cost covers production of our Acts study and Financial Peace University.

CHILDCARE: \$5 per family per night = \$75 per semester for those who utilize childcare at the small group. You are welcome to give \$5 each week, or to pay it all upfront so you don't have to remember each week!

