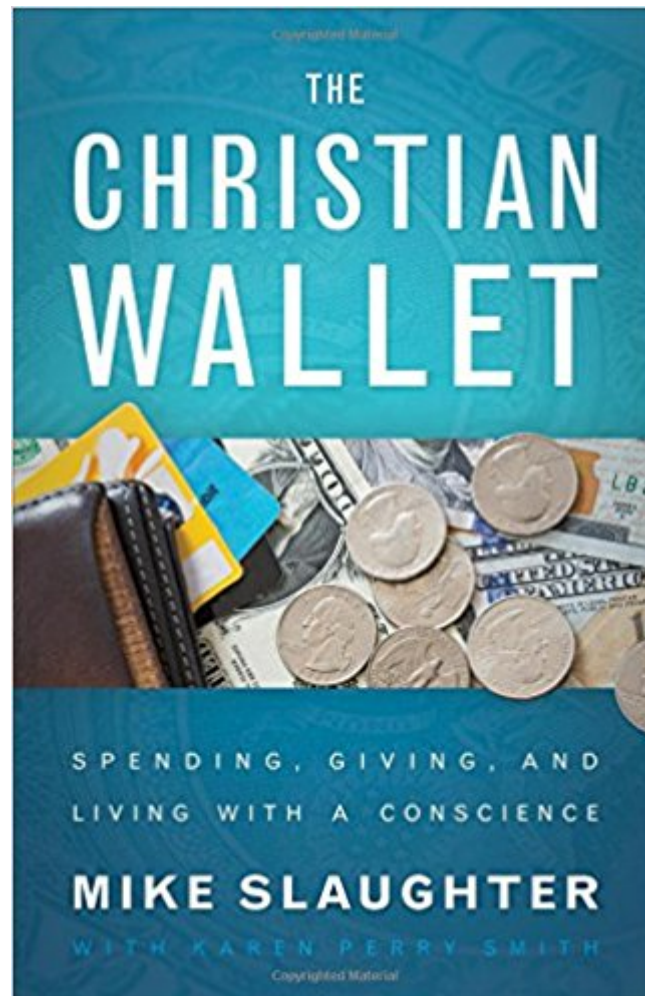




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The Christian Wallet: Spending, Giving, And Living With A Conscience



Synopsis

Every Christian knows that we are called to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. But what about our wallet? We are asked to open it every Sunday when the offering basket comes by and are told that giving is a way of being a "good steward," but what about spending money at a restaurant or grocery store? Best-selling author Mike Slaughter offers a comprehensive look at how Christians use their money in *The Christian Wallet*. Slaughter explores today's culture of consumerism and the impact of what we buy, asking difficult questions about morality and money. *The Christian Wallet* helps Christians grapple with important questions about stewardship: how we spend, how we live, how we save, how we give, and what it all means. Questions for individual or group study are also included with each chapter.

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Customer Reviews

“The Christian Wallet goes beyond the usual concerns of skimpy offerings to delve deep into the hows and whys of spending, giving, and living in the twenty-first century. The result is a book that will engage your conscience, clarify your thinking, and change the way you think about just about everything. I’m already living differently as a result of reading this book. It packs a wallop through real-life stories, Mike’s personal revelations, and pointed connections with our impact on the earth’s limited resources.”
—REBEKAH SIMON-PETER, church leadership consultant and author of *The Jew Named Jesus* and *Green Church*
“Mike Slaughter is one of the most gifted church leaders in America. Mike shows in this book that he

understands not only the Christian wallet but most importantly the Christian heart. This book is a true gift to those of us who cherish Christian stewardship. — J. CLIF CHRISTOPHER, President, Horizons Stewardship Co. — “Helpful resources, compelling research, and motivating stories make this a practical, thought-provoking, and often entertaining book.” — Publishers Weekly

Mike Slaughter is the lead pastor at Ginghamburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio. Under his leadership, Ginghamburg became known as an early innovator of small group ministry and a leader in global mission efforts. A frequently sought-after speaker, he is the author of many books, including *Dare to Dream*, *Hijacked*, *Change the World*, *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday*, and *Upside Living in a Downside Economy*. Karen Perry Smith is Executive Director of Church Operations at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church.

Reverend Slaughter makes his points regarding Christian giving without subjecting the reader to an onslaught of guilt. He has definite views on the need and extent of giving especially to the church, but expresses those views in a non-judgemental fashion.

Great resource and I'm using it for my stewardship season

The Christian Wallet by Mike Slaughter offers a lot of advice that is very similar to the financial advice doled out by The Total Money Makeover financial author, Dave Ramsey. If you've read The Total Money Makeover by Dave Ramsey you can probably do without reading The Christian Wallet. If you haven't, well, then this is a good read if you want to start living more Christ-like with your money. Slaughter encourages us all to keep the teachings of Christ in mind as we earn, save, and spend our money. He discusses our consumerism culture and the pressure to keep up with our peers and neighbors. He discusses charitable giving and tithing. He also shares financial advice about saving for emergencies and retirement. The end of each chapter also includes provoking questions to help you think about your financial situation. I didn't agree with everything Slaughter said but overall, it is a solid financial resource.

There are countless books out there about being generous and wise with our money — faithful stewardship, missional giving, debt reduction, etc. Mike Slaughter has written a few of those himself. What sets The Christian Wallet apart is its deeper, more holistic

approach to how Christians use and view money. Slaughter covers everything from paying taxes to tipping in restaurants, giving to panhandlers, buying fair-trade, and the question of how much income, square footage, or stuff is “enough.” While the budgeting/debt reduction chapter may be similar to what you get with Dave Ramsey, Slaughter’s approach is not focused on personal wealth but on living responsibly and ethically in the world, so that our use of money reflects the Christian values of compassion, generosity, community, and justice.

Stewardship is one of Mike Slaughter’s best topics. I work professionally in nonprofit financial management, and this is a must-have resource for individuals seeking to match their understanding of financial matters with a more holistic view of stewardship. So often, as Christians, we spend all of our time focusing on how our management of our resources impacts us or directly impacts the world...Slaughter’s deep dive into the indirect ramifications of our financial decision making is very refreshing and thought provoking.

This is a great addition to the financial planning/stewarding of God’s resources literature. Here’s a review/interview I did with Mike Slaughter about the book: Mike Slaughter Interview: The Christian Wallet

This summer I was in Ohio for my nephew’s wedding. One night I was reading The Christian Wallet by Mike Slaughter (yes, that’s my summer reading, I am a total nerd for this stuff). I suddenly realized that I was somewhere close to the fourth largest United Methodist Church in these United States. Coming in “fourth” translates to 5,000 weekly attendees. Just how close was Bellbrook to Ginghamburg Church? 40 minutes you say MapQuest? I’m there! And so I went to hear Mike Slaughter, the founding pastor of Ginghamburg UMC and prolific author of such well-known books as Christmas is Not Your Birthday and Change the World. Since 2005, Ginghamburg has invested over \$8 million in sustainable relief projects in Darfur, Sudan and South Sudan. Wow. Lucky me, I ran into Rev. Slaughter after the early morning service and - after I told him all about you, my awesome readers - he graciously agreed to do a phone interview with me about his newest book, The Christian Wallet.

Alert: This blog post is a tad bit longer than most. Stick with me!

The Christian Wallet has three sections: How We Spend (consumerism, how to budget, how to avoid debt); How We Give (tithing, investing, taxes); and How We Live (thinking about how we spend our time, where we live, and living simply). This book offers a holistic view of money and the way it can bind or free us.

My initial couple of questions to Mike (I can call him “Mike,” right?

Maybe that should have been my first question.) were, “Why this book? Why now?” Mike’s response was that “40% of Jesus’s parables talk about money or possessions. “Where your treasure (money) is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:21). Money matters. Money matters for churches. Although I’ve written a number of books on this topic (Shiny Gods, Upside Living in a Downside Economy, etc.), John Knox Press came and asked me to delve even deeper into the topic. They wanted me to look at the spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of how we spend. He continued, “And why now? Because debt is one of the biggest oppressors that people face in this consumerist society. And people of faith are not immune to falling into debt.” Rev. Mike Slaughter The ethics of spending are another reason this has now become an important issue for Mike. He pointed to an example in his book: When he was teaching in Vietnam in 2013 he had a beautiful, custom silk suit made for \$200. Feeling pretty good about it, he later told one of his young staffers about his great buy. The staffer’s response? “For that price, you have to wonder if the suit was made by child laborers or in some unsafe or unhealthy environment.” Mike was jarred into the realization that Christian wallets have global implications. When asked what a congregation can do to develop a culture of generosity, Mike answered, “Learn how to talk about money. We know people are already doing just that – take a look at the PBS ratings when Suze Orman is on. Check out all the books on money and investments. Folks are paying advisors to help them navigate financial waters. People are already talking about money. Our job is to help them heal and release for their maximum God potential.” Slaughter continued, “It’s important that we empower people to live debt free. It’s important that people be liberated to become generous. Churches tend to guilt people because of what they [churches] don’t have | but money follows mission. Tell the story of where people’s financial investment is going.” One way Ginghamburg tells their story is through “Kingdom Investor Dinners.” Folks who give \$1,000 or more to the church are invited to a BBQ dinner in May to hear how they are making a difference in the life of Ginghamburg and the community. Mike says that he has seen people’s “investment in mission” double and triple as a result of these dinners. Somewhat surprisingly, given Ginghamburg’s \$5.3 million budget, Slaughter follows a fairly conventional calendar when he speaks about money. Many of the books that he’s written on the topic come from the sermon series he does starting

mid-October culminating with the church's commitment service the Sunday before Thanksgiving. "Spent" will be this year's theme and in previous years it's been "The Christian Wallet," "Shiny Gods," or "Money Matters." But it's not just about the stewardship series. It's also about giving people financial tools throughout the year with classes like Financial Peace University. It's also telling the story about where money goes through Mission Moments, testimonies, and videos. People want to give to something. As he emphasizes, "Money follows mission, not budget." All this seems to come naturally for someone who "never had to overcome a fear of preaching or speaking about money." Mike attributes his lack of fear to the way he was discipled. A self-described "young 24-year old" when he finished seminary, Mike was fortunate to have an Asbury Seminary professor who talked specifically about money and the "danger of debt and the need for investment." The class still shapes the way he looks at and talks about money. Seminaries take note.

We wrapped up our conversation hoping that this book will find traction. And it should. When I first met Mike in June he agreed that this book could be categorized as "Financial Peace University from a Wesleyan perspective." The Christian Wallet is a great new addition to the pantheon of books about faith, finances, and making generosity possible. John Knox press is getting ready to offer a free leader's discussion guide to go with the book. You'll be the first to get a link when it comes out. I strongly urge you to get the conversation started and offer this book as a small group study in the fall. As Slaughter says, it's "not a quick read." It's to be studied, discussed, and should lead to substantial changes in the way people of faith relate holistically to money. Slaughter ends his book with "Eight Christian Wallet Principles" each of which could individually be utilized for discussion purposes. I'll finish with one of my favorites and one of the hardest to fully embrace, "All of my wallet's contents, every single penny, come from God. I am the steward, not the owner." Thanks to Mike Slaughter for writing The Christian Wallet to challenge people of faith to live God-filled lives and for helping us navigate with common sense and hope one of the issues that so rightly or wrongly dominates our lives.

Cesie Delve Scheuermann is a consultant in stewardship, development, and grant writing. Over the past decade, while working as a volunteer and part-time

consultant, she helped raise over \$2.5 million dollars for numerous non-profit organizations. She wants you to know that if you Google "Christian Wallet," you can see many "real" Christian wallets on the internet. She served as the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference Lay Leader from 2008-2012. Her position with the Conference is funded through a generous grant from the Collins Foundation; she is available to consult with churches in Oregon and Idaho. You can reach her at inspiringgenerosity@gmail.com or on Facebook at [...]. If someone has forwarded this to you and you would like to subscribe to "Inspiring Generosity," [click here](#). Miss an issue? [Click here](#).

THE CHRISTIAN WALLET is both a timely book, given the public's growing desire for finding greater satisfaction in a simpler, more fulfilling life, and a timeless book, in that it challenges the pointless materialism and consumerism that have burdened Western culture for centuries. Despite the book's title, I would recommend it as reading material even for those who do not consider themselves Christian. While those seeking religious counsel may get somewhat more out of the book, many of the lessons it teaches are applicable to everyone's life. Its advice is practical from a financial perspective, and also spiritual in a general sense. Lasting satisfaction is not found in a jumble of unnecessary purchases and wasteful spending. THE CHRISTIAN WALLET can both improve the reader's true standard of living and help them make the world a better place for everyone through the judicious use of their resources.

Mike Slaughter moves beyond debt reduction and creating a personal budget to the motives that compel people to spend and live. The Christian Wallet is a refreshing look at how and why followers of Jesus use their resources. Slaughter challenges the reader to consider personal practices that have impact on the global community. More than information, The Christian Wallet shares real life stories of personal transformation.

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