



Money and Relationships

Part 2 Our Relationship with God and Money

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today, we are going to be talking about generosity. So, if you are new to our church, and you're like, *I always pick it on the right Sunday the church wants my money.* No. We want you to have the heart of God. God loves generosity and he calls us to it. We're going to be talking about that today. But before we do, we want to start with a word of prayer.

Father, today, we turn our hearts toward the nations, and we start by praying for Afghanistan, the people of Afghanistan, the turmoil in that nation right now, and our role as a nation in it. I pray for our leaders that they would use discernment and wisdom and strength as they seek to rescue people in that nation, as they seek to rescue citizens of the United State and allies as well as the people of Afghanistan. I pray for our military as they run that airport, as they protect the airport, as they decide who to let through and who to get on planes. As we watch from here, it seems like utter chaos, and we just ask for you to give them strength and courage during this time. We are grateful for them and their leadership there.

For the people of Haiti, as they rebuild and as they seek to not only provide for their daily needs, the physical needs, but as they seek through the future as well.

And for the missionaries, I know many have been rescued from Afghanistan. Many still choose to stay to take the gospel to the people of Afghanistan. Many are in Haiti. Our missionaries over in Haiti, we are grateful for them and ask that you give them wisdom not just for the daily needs, the supplies just for the daily needs, but vision and wisdom for the future and how to best care for the people of Haiti.

And for our church, as we talk today about generosity, that we as a people are able to play a part in the work in Afghanistan, the work in Haiti, and to the nations of the earth. We want to do this well.

We thank you for all of this and it is in the name of Jesus that we pray it. Amen.

When we talked about your relationship with God and money, a lot of times people are going to think this message is coming from the prospective that we need it, we're going into budget, so we need to make sure we meet budget. Every few years, we do a message like this. Some of you went to churches growing up that once a year, they would do a series on stewardship. I don't know, for some reason, a lot of churches chose February for stewardship month. I just want to start by saying how grateful I am that this is a generous church and for your generosity that flows to the people of this church family of this community, of this nation and to the ends of the earth. We say thank you.

Today is not about meeting a budget or getting our needs met here. You have done that, and you have gone above and beyond that we are able to respond in times of crisis to help people here and around the world, so we are grateful.

Last week, we started with Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn, just entering this conversation of money. We looked at that a lot of us have been taught habits – budgets, percentages, to save and give and spend. I love how Shaunti put it last week. That's really step two. Taking a class on the mechanics of budgeting and all that and envelopes and all the different systems that you have, that's a great second step, but the first step is to look at the heart.

Today, we want to learn the heart behind how we handle money. We read last week that Jesus, in Matthew 6, says, "Where your treasure is there your heart will be also." I had more fun with this at the 8:30; let's see how this goes at 10:00 to decide if we do this at 11:30. If you have ever received a speeding ticket in your life, would you raise your hand and keep it raised. Now I want you to, first of all, start right there out in the courtyard, Gathering Place. We're going to start with how fast your hands went up right there. I just looked around and it wasn't just hands going up... Keep them up for a second because I'm going to find out who the biggest criminals in the room are. Not only do your hands go up fast, but there's also a certain level of cockiness some of you sent your hand up with.

If it was 20 mph over the speed limit or less, put your hand down. That's about half the room. If it was 30 mph or less, put your hand down. If it was 40 mph or less, put your hands down. Wait until you hear about the sins of 8:30. I can't believe we don't have six people in jail out of that service. Watch. Are y'all ready? If it was 50 mph or less, put your hands down. Bruce Pettigrew, you are man of God. How many miles over the speed limit? Seventy-five miles an hour!? Oh, he was in a 35-mph zone. I wouldn't let the second piece out, Bruce; that's worse. Did you lose your license or go to jail? He said almost for all those out in the courtyard. Can anybody beat that? What? Carson, what? How fast? Listen, we were going to do a series starting next week called *Armor* where we go through the armor of God. We're going straight to Romans 13 in teaching you how to obey and submit to authority. You're terrible at it.

Now, all of that to say watch. Don't raise your hand on this next one. If I were to ask you to do the exact same thing we just did with your credit score... I don't think we would see many hands going up. If I were to ask you to do that with your credit card debt... We wouldn't be as braggadocios as we are with our criminal activity. I want you to know Sheriff Rader goes to this church, so I'm assuming the rest of you are Taney County people and Brad's problem. All of that to say, that just proves how sensitive of a topic this is. When we talk about our money and our relationship to it and ultimately our relationship to God, this is something we hold a lot closer. We're not shooting our hands up as fast. That's why Jesus went on in Matthew 6 to say, ***"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money"***

Today, we are going to see money is not the root of all evil. Money is not the root of all kinds of evil. It is the love of money. You cannot love God and love money. If you have a love for money, you cannot have a love for God.

So, what we are going to talk about today is authority. I see it all the time. And I would say most people in here, if I were to ask you if you believe in God, the answer would be yes. But a bigger question that that is: Do you trust God? You say you believe in God, but do you trust him, do you take him at his word for how he tells us? Today, we are going to look at four parts of the heart when it comes to money, the step one. Before we get to habits and what to do and the management of it, we want to deal with the heart of it.

Years ago, I took a psychological profile test; it was like 20 years ago. I was going to a church in Forsyth. Pat Kershaw was on the Pastor Search Committee there. She made Amy and I take this psychological test from Pepperdine University that you ended up getting book about it afterwards about how all your problems in life and your problem areas and this.

They were really weird questions. There were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of questions. There were question like: When you walk by shadows, do you think someone is going to jump out at you? And then I loved this one: Have you ever been eating soup thinking it was poison? These were the type of questions. Anybody here ever think their soup was poison? Yeah, I was thinking, *Oh! Maybe I should. Maybe I didn't know this was an issue.* But then it gives you a report. One of the top things, the top thing it said about my personality and my psyche is that I love authority. I love systems and structures of authority.

Here's what the cool part is. You hear that and you're like, *Oh, so this guy is on a power trip.* No, I actually prefer to be the second, third, fourth in charge. I just like to know who's in charge. Do you know what I'm talking about? I like to know who's in charge, and I like that person to be decisive, and I like that person to be competent, and I like that person to make good decisions. Some of you are thinking about your boss right now. It's hard, right? It's hard following an incompetent person. Many of you go to work every day and your like, *I'm so much brighter than she is. I'm so much brighter than he is.*

And they listed the jobs I should consider. I had already chosen and felt called by God to be a pastor, but the number one thing it said I should be is a military officer. Again, it doesn't matter what my rank is, my personality pulls towards that structure and knowing who's in charge.

I had a great opportunity to experience this. I had forgotten how much I loved this. A few weeks ago, I was able to go to the Garth Brooks concert. You're like, *Oh here he's bragging. Finally going to bring up that he went to Garth Brooks.* I've been waiting 30 years to see Garth Brooks. One of our teach team members, Adam Donyes, knows that I've been waiting for this and he's at Arrow Head Stadium. Adam and Stephanie took Amy and I to the concert.

I told them, "I can't make any promises, but I could get pretty emotional. If *Tomorrow Never Comes* comes out and he sings it to somebody in the audience, I'm probably going to lose it." Adam and I don't really like crying together; we're not that type of friends. But if you don't know Adam, he is a strong person. I guess you know that. He teaches up here a lot. There's sometimes when he's teaching... He is a strong personality.

But here's what I want you to know, and I think you already know this about Adam. He's very competent. He's very sharp. And make no mistake... He told me we were going and it was going to be a 12 hour day. I said I would drive. I picked Adam and Stephanie up. Amy and I were together for 12 hours until we dropped them off. And make no mistake about it, Adam was in charge for all 12 hours. I was driving; all I had to do was hold the wheel. But he was clearly in charge. We get to the stadium, he gets a great parking lot – parking lot E which is right next to the main doors. I pull into a great spot, and I pulled through.

Adam was like, "Uhh, I don't think I would park here." He was trying to be really gentle about it. He points to the space he wants me to park in. I pull up there and not only does he point to the space he wants me to park in, he tells me how to park in that space. He said, "I'd back into that space if I were you. And I did. And then he took us everywhere. I followed him the entire time. He took us through the bowels of Arrowhead Stadium, the locker room, the press room, to our seats. He said, "I don't want to tell you when we're supposed to leave, but we can either leave and be on the highway in two to three minutes or we can leave and be on the highway in two to three hours. I go, "Well, Garth always ends on *The Dance*, so we can leave right after *The Dance*." And then he had an encore with Trish, so I haven't talked to Adam since that day.

We dropped Adam and Stephanie off at like 2:00 am. I looked at Amy and I said, "That was so refreshing." I can't tell you how much I enjoyed Adam being completely in charge for 12 hours. I'll just tell you, when we go to airports as a family, guess who's in charge? Me. Guess who has to know where the gate is, what time we need to leave, where the bathrooms are on the way to the gate, where the connecting city is. I'm in charge of all of that. And when your kids are very small and you're typing in your advantage number and you're typing in all the details on the kiosk and your kids are wanting to show you trailers from Marvel movies, you're like, "Not right now. Let's get through TSA before we talk about random stuff." So, I'm always on edge. Dads are relating to me right now. You're wondering why your kids are like, "Why is Dad always in such a bad mood on vacation?" It's because we're in charge. And being in charge can be exhausting. But I told Amy I love following people who know what they're doing and are competent.

Many of you have struggled in life with people who can't make decisions when you've worked for them. You don't know if you can even trust them. So, I'm going to ask you the question again. You say you believe in God; do you trust God? The area we will talk about today is one of those things where you can completely trust him and follow him. You can follow him, and you can lay your head on the pillow at night and rest knowing you did the right thing.

Today, what we see with a lot of people is they want to believe in God, but they want to tell you what they think about the scripture. Let me just tell you that what you think about the scripture doesn't change the scripture. This is one of those areas where we need to trust God.

If you have your Bibles, turn to Ecclesiastes 5 and 2 Corinthians 9. We are going to be in both those places today and we're going to be in a lot of other places. We're covering a lot of scripture today as we look at four parts of the heart.

The first heart that we want to see today is **A heart of stewardship**. God owns it all – everything you have. You are not an owner, I am not an owner; I am a steward. I am a manager. I am to care for what God has entrusted to me. We read in Ecclesiastes 5: 18-20. I want you to see all the times in this text where *gift* is referred to. The creator, almighty God, the one we believe in and trust in and follow has gifted us what we have. You're going to see this multiple times.

18 This is what I have observed to be good (Solomon Says): **that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor...** The word *toilsome* there means grueling. Life upon the earth and our work can be challenging and grueling and seem to never come to an end. **...under the sun during the few days of life...** So, the few days of life, a theme throughout all of scripture, but the brevity of life – it's a vapor, it's a mist, like a breath. But this is where it starts. The creator of the universe is also the sustainer of it. He gives you the very breath you take now. **...God has given them...** So, start there. He's given you your life. He sustains your life. **...for this is their lot. 19 Moreover, when God...** Now, he didn't just give you your life. When God **...gives someone wealth and possessions...**

If you get time today, I want you to go on YouTube and type in [jimmystewartshenandoah](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jimmystewartshenandoah). It's a great movie. It's a 22 second clip of him praying at the table. I can't quote the prayer exactly, but it goes something like this. "God, we worked hard for this food. We sweat for it, we labored for it. We're dog bone tired getting off there, but we thank you nonetheless for what you have provided." The whole emphasis of the prayer is on what they did and he's misunderstanding stewardship in that movie, that it all comes from God.

He gives wealth and possessions and then not only that but **...and the ability to enjoy them...** I love how Shaunti pulled that out last week to say yes, we should save for the future, yes, we should put something away for days when it may be difficult. That's a good thing to do, the scripture teaches that. That's wisdom. But she said, "Don't overlook enjoying the good gifts that God gives you now. Don't be so obsessed with retirement, don't be so obsessed with the future, don't be so obsessed with your 401k that you don't enjoy the food and drink that's on your table this very day. He not only gives this to you, he wants you to enjoy them." **...to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. 20 They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.** Do you know what he's saying here? When you understand ownership, that it all is God's and it comes to you from him, he keeps you occupied with him, not the stuff. You stay occupied, glad, you delight in the creator more than his creation. We're called to care for his creation, we're called to worship the creator.

This is why the covenant that was made with Israel... We read this in Proverbs 3: 9-10 **9 Honor the Lord with your wealth...** Remember the Lord with your wealth. Remember that it all came from him and comes from him. **...with the first fruits of all your crops...** You bring the first fruits to the storehouse, this is recognition of the fact that God owns it all. **10 ...then your barns will be filled to overflowing...** and this was a sign of blessing to the children of Israel **...and your vats will brim over with new wine.**

I have several friends in this church that have given me defining moments. Over the last 20 years, they get this ownership and stewardship issue. I have one friend who told me years ago when we were starting the church, "Ted, I just want to make sure you're clear on something." I said, "What's that?" He goes, "Everything I own, everything I have, is yours." And I was like what? He goes, "If I have something you need or something you want, say the word and it's yours." Anybody have any friends like that? I want to ask how many of you are like that? I couldn't even process where he was coming from. He was like, "Everything I have, it's yours." Do you know why he was able to say that? It's because he realizes everything he has isn't his. Everything he had wasn't owned by him. His name may have been on the title at the bank or on the title in his safe, but God owns it all and gave it to him. He understood "I'm not just the one who receives the blessings of God, I'm a conduit for it. I'm a channel for it. It comes to me and goes through me."

This is the type of guy you have to be very careful around. Some of you know who I'm talking about, some of you don't and that's okay because it's one of the best parts of a steward when they are secretive about it, when they give in quiet. He's the type that you can't comment on anything in life because he will provide it for you. We were driving down the road one day in the fall here in the Ozarks. The trees were popping. I mean the reds and the orange and the yellow. My wife loves fall, and if you don't love fall, you cannot be friends with my wife; that's how much she loves fall. I was telling him that and joking with him and I said, "Look at these trees, they're beautiful." That's all I'm saying. I'm complimenting the trees, God's creation. My friend dials up the phone and orders four red maple trees delivered to my house. I'm like, "What are you doing?" He said, "Well, you said you like them." I like that Escalade coming my way right here. But you can't call that out because...

Those are big picture ones. In the first service, my friend who has been a part of this church, one of the founding members of this church, part of the group that got Woodland Hills started, Jon Jenkins. I was building a shed in my backyard probably 19 years ago now. He has this beautiful wood level that he brought over. I had one of those \$20.00 aluminum ones. He goes, "Here. You can't really build a big structure with a tiny level, use this one." Y'all, 19 years later, that level is still in my garage. Every time I walk by it, I go, "That's Jon's. I feel terrible. I should probably give it back to him"

I will say this. A couple of times in the first few years of having it I would go, "Jon, I've got your level, I've got to get it to you." And do you know what he said? He said, "Hey, it's yours; don't worry about it. I don't want it." He texted me after the first service. I have to tell you what he texted me. This is so great. He said, "I've been blessed with more than I need. The level is yours. I think ten years is the statute of limitations on ownership. And I said, "You are a generous friend; I would like you to come over to my garage and pick out something really nice for yourself." And he goes, "Well, Ty is needing a car; do you have any of those in your garage right now?" And I said, "Have a great day, Jon. Be blessed."

I'm just going to put this up there and I want you to start mimicking this picture. I don't even have to say a word once this comes up. Just start doing what this picture tells you to do. (picture of the seagulls in Finding Nemo). Mine. Mine. Mine. What does God hear when we're saying mine, mine, mine? Some of us have this tight grip on our stuff and our possessions that God has given us to enjoy, and that God has given us to bless other with.

Every pastor I know has this illustration. I've heard probably a dozen times from different pastors, and I love it. The illustration of French fries. Do you remember taking your young children...? Some of you are doing it right now, but our kids are older now. You take a three-year-old through the drive-thru and you get them a Happy Meal. You deliver the Happy Meal to the back. You're a mile away from McDonalds and you just want one of the fries and you reach back and what does your kid say? "Mine." You know what you want to do. You want to go over the Central Bank, which is right across the parking lot from McDonalds. You want to take out the maximum amount they let you, \$600.00, go back through the drive thru, fill the back seat with French fries as a lesson to this unemployed three-year-old who has nothing, who owns nothing. "Everything I've given you is from me, your dad. How dare you use the word mine. It's not yours."

But how many of us have that attitude with God? It's mine. You have a family member in need? It's mine. If I give it to you, I won't have it to give later." Don't say to a friend, don't say to a family member, don't say to neighbor, "Come back tomorrow," when you have it with you to give now.

That moves us to the **heart of contentment**. This is what we deal with when our desire outruns our possessions. We read this in Ecclesiastes 5 again. **10 Whoever loves money...** So, see it there again, it's the love of money. **...never has enough...** The person who loves money will never have enough vehicles, they'll never have the latest gadget enough. They'll be so bored with the latest device they got six months ago they will be ready for the next one. **...whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.**

This is why the Apostle Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6: 6-10, **6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.** That's why when we pray, we are to pray "give us this day our annual bread." No, that's not what it says. "Give us this day our daily bread and we will be content." **9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.** And here it is again. I want you to see this. It's not money, it's not entrepreneurship that's the problem, it's not a desire to build a business. That's not the issue; it's the love of money that affects your relationship with God because you can't love both God and money, you can't serve both God and money. That plunges us into all kinds of evil. **10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

Verse 17 reads, **17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth...** Have a 401k, just don't put your hope in it. Have savings for the future, just don't put your hope in it. Have a pension, just don't put your hope in it. Look forward to that Social Security check, just don't put our hope in it. **...which is so uncertain.** I think I'm going to get a Social Security check in 20 years. Maybe... It's uncertain. It's not guaranteed. **...but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.** It's all throughout scripture.

So, it's the heart of stewardship, the heart of contentment. As we move toward giving, I'm going to encourage you to turn to 2 Corinthians 9. We are to do all this giving with **a heart of cheerfulness**. We don't use guilt and shame at this church to get people to give. We don't do that with volunteers either.

We don't tell you, "Money is tight, and volunteers are tight. We used to give your kids five Gold Fish crackers when they came into the class; we're down to two per kid." We don't do any of that stuff here. That's icky. But we want you, when you give, to give with such joy and excitement. And when you're giving with joy, it really settles those first two that we looked at. You understand who owns it all. You're not stressed about *I can't give it now. If I give it now, I won't have anything to give later.* That's that scarcity mindset that many of us deal with.

We got back from a trip to Alaska last week. I was able to lead a fishing trip disguised as a marriage retreat. I always want to encourage you to do it. We had folks from our church that were there, and it was like the last salmon run of the summer. I don't feel I deal with the scarcity mindset, but I guess the fisherman in me just came out. We would stand there on the bank of the Kenai River right there at the resort that we stayed at. And just one right after another, 24 hours a day, these fish are running and I'm just sitting there. They'd say, "Hey, you ready to eat?" And I'm like, "No, there are fish right here." I would wake up in the morning... I can't explain it to you. I was panicky. I was like, "Why are my waders not on yet; I should be out there." The owner would go, "Do you want breakfast?" I'd be like... I didn't say this on the outside, but on the inside, I was like, *NO! we've got to get out there because we've missed thousands of fish in the last hour.*

I think that's how a lot of us deal with all of this. We don't find joy in giving because we're like, "If I give it, I won't have it." That's not at all the mentality of a disciple of Jesus. By the way, if you love that word discipleship, and you're always talking about going deeper and getting deeper in the Word and diving in, I encourage you, go deep with this topic and the topic of generosity. I can tell a lot about how much of a disciple of Jesus you are by your level of cheerfulness and contentment and your desire to give with a joyful heart.

We read that in 2 Corinthians 9: 6-7, **6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly... It's the person who has the scarcity mindset. "I gotta be out there. I gotta get while the getting is good." ...and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** Guess what? Unless something major happens, the salmon run is going to happen again next year. I may or may not be there, but I know where to go if I need it. **7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion...** So, there's this level of spontaneity involved with giving. Cheerful giving is, "I see a need, I'm going to meet it right now." So, give what you decided to give **...for God loves a cheerful giver.**

So, be content, know who owns it all, just be a manager of it, give with cheerfulness and then give as we've been talking about with generosity. This is the key. And I would pray this is for every single person in here. Every person watching. Every person outside. That we would have **a heart of generosity.**

Continuing in 2 Corinthians 9, **10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower...** There it is again. It all comes from God. **...and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.** So, get that. It's not just a physical blessing that we're receiving from our generosity, but there's a spiritual blessing. Watch what happens when we understand stewardship and when we understand contentment and when we are cheerful in our giving to the

people around us. Not just the people that you're giving to, not just the family member that you're helping, but those around them. **11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion...** There it is, that spontaneity that when a need presents itself, you're ready to respond and to give.

Can I just say one thing about our church? I say this over and over again. This is what I love. When there is a crisis that hits, we don't have to stand up and wait a week to gather as a church and go, "Hey, an earthquake just hit Haiti; we need you to give today; we are sending money down." It's already there and ready to give. We can respond immediately and as you continue to give well so we can do that, so we can respond to needs in our town and our nation, around the world on every occasion. ...**and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.** It's not for a pat on your back. It's not for people to recognize it and present you with a giant check. That's not what we're doing this for. We are generous people because we want people to return thanksgiving to God because they see, as my friend who gives everything away that he has, that you understand it's not his anyway; it's God's. And when I receive it through this person or through that person, I return thanksgiving to God.

So, how do we do this practically? This comes from a heart of a pastor who loves you and this is not to judge or condemn or to tear you down, but some of you have been a part of this church for years and you've given nothing. I want to encourage you. If you give nothing, start today with something. Now they always get nervous, the counters of the money at the church. I don't ever see this, but they say, "Ted, whenever a message like this happens and then you encourage people to give on the way out, we look like the end of a night at a bar where the waiters are counting their tips. It's just like a pile and a mound of ones and fives." Listen, don't swing by the box today and drop two bucks just so people can see you. That's not it at all. But the way, now days, over 60% of you are giving online. So, there is no need for you to walk around trying to... That's not at all what this is about. They had these shirts years ago. I think we threw some out at our church when we used to pass the buckets. The shirt read, "I give online." Just so people don't judge you as the buckets come by. But that's getting a little weird. But if you give nothing, give something and decide what to give. If you give something, look for more opportunities to give.

I had a professor at Dallas Seminary years ago. His name is Ramesh Richard. This is another defining moment in my life. He taught me about generosity really for the very first time. He made this statement and I never forgot it and it changed a lot about what I wanted to do and be the rest of my life as a follower of Jesus. He said, "Tithing is where generosity begins, not ends. Giving 10% of you income is where generosity begins, not ends." He had all these other things he and his wife decided in their heart to give beyond tithing. One of the things he said and the day he said it, I knew it was from the Lord for me, and I know other students heard it. He said, "My wife and I decided years ago when we got married..." He's obviously much older than I. And I'm a 23-year-old, paying cash through seminary, working two jobs. I know that's what some of you are thinking. This generosity is for people who have made it. The Hebrew term for that is "haaaa." Not true. He said and I'll never forget it... He had a lot of other things I forgot that he and his wife do, but Amy and I decided this is one we wanted to do. He said, "We made the decision that 10% was the bear minimum, but we also made the decision that our mortgage payment would never be higher than our check to the church."

Some of you right now are going, "Is that PMI, taxes and insurance..." If you are in that mode right now, you're on the wrong page. We're talking about the heart of giving. I remember going home and telling Amy, "Let's do that. Let's make that our goal that our mortgage payment..." Can I tell you? When he gave me that, it was something we had to work towards. Today we're not just talking about your giving; we're talking about your living. We're talking about how you spend money so you can be generous. We're talking about how you are content and you don't need the next best thing, the greatest thing, the new technology piece. You can be content to say, "Hey, before I get all excited about spending another \$400.00 on that apple watch or another \$1,000.00 on that phone, what needs need to be met around me?" It will adjust the way you spend money when generosity is your priority.

Eugene Cho puts it this way, "Generosity is what keeps the things we own from owning us." That is the heart of God.

Some of you right now are saying, "I don't have much and it won't make a difference." I'm here to tell you it will make a huge difference in your relationship with God. Whatever you give, hit the give online button and meet the needs of this church family and community and the nation and to the ends of the earth. Hit the give online button now on your way out today. Decide in your heart what you are going to give and let's continue to be a generous church in this community. Let's be a church that when needs pop up around the world, we are able to say as a church we're ready on this occasion to meet this need.

Father, it is in the name of Jesus that I pray for the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day they repent of their sins, confess that Jesus is Lord, believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead that they would be saved.

Thank you for the generosity of this church that has poured out time and time and time again. Continue to use this church. Continue to use each one of us as we decide in our heart to give. Some of us are already giving. Some of us in here are giving sacrificially and I know they are the type to hear a message like this and it's between you and them right now and they're leaning in even more. Bless me Lord so that I can give even more.

There are others who generosity giving has never been a part of their walk with you that today would be the day they decide "I will not love money; I will love you, Lord. I give my heart and my life to you, and I want money to be something that flows through me to bless those around me."

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen