

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Unstrapped

PART

2

TITLE

Managing With Clear Instructions

SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19



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Well, it's great to see you family of faith. I hope you've had a great week. It's always great to sing with you and to see you. I pray this time it's really encouraging to you. And then for those of you who are guests with us, welcome. I hope this time is just really helpful to you and that somebody has already said hi to you. If not, I expect that they will after the service and but it is great to see you.

In your Bibles, if you would turn with me to first, let's see, 1st Timothy Chapter 6 and in a moment I'm gonna start reading in verse 6. But this is an amazing little book Paul wrote to his son in the faith and it gives amazing instruction to us. And if you don't have a Bible, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. And if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. If you're wondering, if you are new and you're like, "Who are these people and what do they love and sorta who ... like what makes these people tick?" Well, what makes us tick is a savior. His name is Jesus Christ, and this Bible points our eyes and our hearts to him.

You see, what it says is that God created us with intent, with purpose, that he loves us dearly. In spite of that, that we rebelled against him and we made choices that are contrary to his will as expressed in his word. And there's significant consequences for that sin in our life. That first and foremost, is that we are separated from God. That's a big problem because God is actually our greatest joy. So when we're separated from him, we're left to try to find a substitute. And as a result of that, we are a people, if you're wondering who have tried a lot of different things that the world has to offer in order to fill that void in our heart, we found all of them lacking.

Until one day someone told us about Jesus Christ who came from heaven to Earth. He's the son of God and he died on a cross after living a perfectly righteous life. He took our sin to cross and he died for it so that we wouldn't have to. He was buried in a grave and he rose from the dead three days later, giving us an amazing invitation. And that is it if we would believe in him by admitting we cannot save ourselves, by believing in his accomplishments and confessing him as lord of our life, then he would give us forgiveness of our sin. That he would give us a renewed relationship with him, that we could know him and talk to him, and hear from him, and actually receive his wisdom for every single arena of life.

What a gift. And we're a people who found Jesus to be faithful and to able to do just what he's accomplished. And what we've found in his word is that not only does he speak to us about our soul as Lord of our life, he speaks to us and he gives clarity and direction for every area of our life. And we're in a series, we've started last week and we'll finish next week, and it's on our personal finances. Which is an interesting thing because some of you, you kind of look at me half cock, like what you want? What your angle? and at least you did last week.

And the fact is, is that I believe that everyone in this room wants to be a generous person. We at least want to be known as a generous person. We all know that money does contribute to some significance in life. The fact is, it's true is that we all have experienced significant relationships or events, vacations or things, and it created a really amazing memory with our friends or our family. And so we know that money plays a part in this world, and yet we also know that it's not everything in this world.

We also feel strapped. So many of us financially, is that we feel strapped to the ground. We wanna be generous. We want our money to actually go to things of significance, more significance than simply paying off yesterday's financial decisions. And yet the fact is, is that when you look at our money, even if we make a lot of money, we tend to spend more than we have. So last week we started a series which really says that God has a strategy, he's for us, and that strategy is intended to provide for our needs to protect our heart and then also to glorify his son.

Last week we looked from Matthew Chapter 25 at the foundation of our financial house. It's three clear understandings that every single one of us have to understand it, if you don't understand that, it doesn't matter how you spend your money, you're gonna be in trouble. And those three are simply this, right? Is that God owns everything. He owns it all. In Jesus' parable. He talks about a master has three servants and it says that he entrusted his property to them. It's all his. Oh, we have title deeds, but God owns us and He owns everything that we touch.

The second thing we learned is that God entrusts us with a portion to manage. So it's all his property and through the lever of a job, right, is that God entrust us with a portion, not everything he owns, with a portion of what he has, his property, for us to be able to manage in order to take care of her needs, but also to glorify his son. And so he tells us to manage these resources, absolutely conscious of his character and his concerns over the world as his representatives, as his stewards, his managers of his resources.

And then the third thing we learned is that God, he inspects our management as a gauge of spiritual life. In that parable, it says that when the master came back, it says that each one stood before him and settled their accounts. We looked at this, this is gonna happen for every one of us, is that every single day that we live, we're one day closer to stand before the king of the universe and giving account for everything that we've done in life. All of our stewardship of our time, our talent, our treasure, the truth of God's word, our testimony, everything that we have, we're gonna answer for it. How did we manage these things?

And what he tells us in that parable is that our management, how we manage, it's a gauge, it's an indicator of our spiritual life. In other words, that the person who yields to Jesus Christ, who's conscious of his character and his concerns, and who's absolutely passionate about him coming back, that they're gonna manage those resources a little bit differently than somebody who doesn't care if he's coming back, who's inconsiderate of his concerns and character, and who's not yielded to Christ.

So what we wanna do today is we wanna look at what God's word tells us about how then are we just spend the money. What are the actual instructions in the Bible when it comes to managing God's property? So let me pray for us. Okay. Our father in heaven, we love you and we need you. And I pray now that you would give us wisdom and understanding as we open your Word. Would you help us to find interest in what we read? Would you cause our hearts to lean in and not to resist what you say here? Even though this confronts what feels like a core value in every single one of our hearts, I pray, father, that you would help us to see that you are committed to our good. We love you and we need you. And I prayed all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So verse 6, this is what it says, it says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing with these, we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, and to many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some of wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many paintings."

And then it's interesting, he's talking about finances and it's almost as if Paul takes a step back and he says, "Now listen Timothy, you wanna be a man of God. And a man of God knows what he flees. He knows what he's to pursue and he knows what he fights for, and he fights for noble things in the earth." And then for whatever reason, God stirs Paul's Heart to go back, to circle back around the finances.

And so this is what he says in verse 17, he says, "And as for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They're to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life."

Now, what I wanna ask you to do is to do what is probably feeling right now as unnatural. And that is instead of to resist or to see this as a yellow light that you need to go ahead and start pumping the brakes, I wanna encourage you to remember that there is nobody who has ever walked the face of the earth that is more committed to you than Jesus Christ. And Jesus by his spirit, has inspired a man to write this for our benefit, has preserved this for thousands of years and it is relevant and pertinent to our lives.

And if you're wondering, "Well, what? Okay, that's great about the Bible. What's your agenda?" My agenda is to teach you what he says, and that's it. So what we find in this passage is he instructs us as managers in two particular areas. The first is this, is that God instructs us to guard our heart. He instructs us to guard our heart. Proverbs chapter 4 says, he says, "Above all things, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life." What that means is this, is that the capacity for joy is not outside of us, it's within us. And Jesus knows this.

He knows that you can have absolutely perfect circumstances, but if your heart is not right, you will not be content or joyful. However, he also knows that if your heart is so full of him, that your circumstances can be absolutely unraveling and you can still know contentment and peace, and joy. And so he starts and he addresses the heart. I love this about God. He always goes first to the heart.

Now in the Bible, there's another book, it's called Ephesians. And that book is written by the same man, his name is Paul. And Paul, wrote them a letter. It was a church in Ephesus, like this Providence, right? Well, there was a church in its city called Ephesus, and he wanted to write them, and so he did. Well, that church had a pastor and that pastor's name is Timothy. And so, what he's doing here, he's written the entire church a letter, but then he's also written their leader, their pastor a letter. And he's instructed them on what to look for, how to shepherd them, what to teach them, how to care for them, because Timothy has been his spiritual son in the faith for many, many years.

And it's interesting that when you get to chapter 6 in this book, Paul feels compelled to warn Timothy about evil men who will come into the church and actually begin to teach a different doctrine. And he says that there's some characteristics that you can look for in these false teachers. And if you understand the characteristics, well, there's a good chance that you'll be able to unveil the camouflage that is the false teacher. And you'll notice in verse 5 that the very last characteristic of a false teacher that he gives is that these people imagine godliness as a means for economic gain.

Now, I want you to think about this for a second. This is actually our entire economy. It's the economy of the world. We find something that people want and what people love, and somebody will say, we should create a market around that. Whether that's popcorn, right? Who likes popcorn, popcorn? All right, well, someone selling popcorn now, right? Why? Because you love it. You're gonna buy it. The entire economy works under Jesus' principle without them even knowing, and that is that where our heart is. there our treasure is going to be also.

Well, there's some people though, and they look and they go, "You know what? If it's true that people will spend their money and what they love, and Christians love God and godliness, then we can probably make a killing off their desire for godliness. You know what we can do? We can sell water, call it holy. Put it in little jars and they'll buy it because they wanna be godly. We can overprice on a Bible cause they're all gonna want one.

We can get on TV and you know what we can do? We can actually say that God has bestowed upon us prophetic abilities and we will pray prophetic blessings on everyone that gives us \$1,000. And you know what we'll call that \$1,000 so that they'll buy it? We'll call it faith seed. Seed that goes into the ground, go ahead and plant this. Go and give me a better suit and a nicer watch, and then God will restore all this a hundred fold to you." We've gotten so crazy. People will say, "You know what we need, I need a private jet to get the gospel around the world."

And so justifiably, some of you are on edge right now. All right? There's one of those guys, he's up on the stage right now and he's talking about money. And I say justifiably for two reasons. One is because people have given a lot of examples to not be trustworthy. And the second is God Almighty, put it in the scripture and said, "Be on guard. Be alert. Identify if this is who you're listening to." So you should. I know it feels so odd to be telling that I feel very uncomfortable for three weeks and literally. I'm not enjoying any of this series, to be totally honest with you, okay? Because I know they didn't teaching this. I'm commanding you to question me.

Is he one of those people? And yet I'm also a Sheppard at heart. And what we have just read within this scripture is that as a people of God, we're at risk, there is a snare, a temptation, there's harmful desires. And as a shepherd, I have to be able to tell you those things. And so what I would simply ask you to do is trust only that which I can plainly show you in the Bible because the only thing I'm after today is greater faith in you towards him. That's it, okay. There's no commitment card on your chair. It's not coming, okay? There's no unveiling. I want faith. I'm praying for faith in all of us towards what God says. That's it.

Now, it's interesting that Paul could have overcompensated, right? He could have said, "You know what? We're the people of God. Christians don't live for gain. We live for God, but he didn't do that. Instead, what did he tell us to do? He told us to run after greater gain than greed, and what is that? It's godliness with contentment is great gain. You see what he's saying there? He's saying, no, don't run away from gain. Christians live for the greatest gain. It just so happens that's not greed. Having a content heart, because it is so full of God that it is freed from greed is priceless.

Why is it priceless? Why is God being so big in our heart? His promise is so worthy and weigh in our heart that it creates a freedom in our heart not to have to run after our greedy heart. What is it about God being in us that frees us from this endless pursuit of being rich? Why is it such a protection? Why is it priceless? Well, he tells us first is because contentment protects us from distraction. Just imagine being in an art gallery walking around, and you see a guy who's clearly not an employee taking art off the wall, placing it under his arm and walking around as if it's his. And you're absolutely intrigued by this, and so you walk up to him, you're like, "What are you doing?" He goes, "Oh, I'm an art collector," "But you know they're not gonna let you out of the doors with those, right?"

This is what Paul is saying. God is not gonna let you out the doors with your wealth or your cars, or your house. It all stays. That's what he says. We brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. He's saying, "Ooh, friends, don't be distracted. It's such a distracting world, we're bombarded by constant advertisement. Don't be distracted, for there are things that you are supposed to collect on the earth that will matter when you leave and money is not one of them."

Proverbs 16:16 says, "How much better to get wisdom than gold." On that day when you stand before God, you will prefer that your heart was full of wisdom, that your pockets were full of gold. I promise you. Proverbs 22:1 it says, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, character, integrity, honesty." That's a greater and more weighty treasure on that day when you stand before him. At the end of our reading at verse 19 it says, "To be generous, storing up treasure for the future life."

There are certain things that when you stand before God that you're gonna be so glad that you have and the only thing you're gonna have is what you brought in your heart. And so, contentment, it protects us from all these distractions, it also protects us from destruction. He says, "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, a snare, many senseless and harmless desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction." It's pretty stunning.

You see, he had Paul said to us there, "Hey, listen, those who desire to worship Satan, or hey, those who desire to hurt women, those who desire to abuse children fall into temptation, a snare, harmful desires, ruined destruction." We would have no resistance to that whatsoever. Would we? We'll be like, "Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yes, we totally agree with that." But it's amazing what Paul does here. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul places what seems to be a core value in every one of our hearts as that temptation, that trap, that desire that's gonna take us down, the love of riches.

Let me just ask you, if given the choice, would you prefer to be rich or poor? It comes standard, doesn't it? Isn't it amazing that he places something that no one had to teach us? Into that equation, it says the desire for this, desire for riches, to be rich, it's amazing that he does this. You see, it's sorta like this mouse, right? Every single one of us thinks that we are gonna be the one person, is the exception on the earth. They can jump on this snare, a trap, this temptation that God Almighty looks and he says, "I promise you, this is death."

And we tell all our buddies, "Hey, hold my crackers. I'm gonna go get some cheese." And we tread all over that trap thinking that we're gonna be the exception to the rule. It is so hard to believe this, but it's true. He goes on. He says, "Love of money is the root of all kinds of evils." Look at this next picture. If you and I went for a walk and we were walking through this forest, typically when you walk through a forest, you look down only not to trip, but you're amazed at what you see up. And this is the same and the world of finances and the world of greed. This is what he's saying.

He says that the roots, that the root system of everything that we look at go, that's wrong. Exploitation of others. Unfair wages, stealing, theft, greed, all these trees that line-up in our culture. Do you know that there's a central root system for every single one of those? We typically look it over these things and we just step over the roots because the roots are boring. What he says though is this, is that every single sin when it comes to finances has the same root structure and it's greed. It's the love of money.

Some of it you struggle with this, you're like, "But I love money. What do I do?" The only way to conquer a love for money is to find a way to love something that's better than money, and the only thing going that's better than money is God. That's why the Bible says that he's the treasure of the redeemed and the question is, do you actually believe this? He goes on, he says, "Through this craving, some of wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." It's an interesting word, pang, what's a pang? A pang is an intense anxiety.

Did you know that some of you are absolutely bombarded with anxiety and the primary reason is greed? It's a love of money. It's either you have it and you don't wanna lose it, or one day you had it and you have to have it again. Or maybe you've never had it, but you're absolutely sold that it is the path to your joy, and so it creates such a restlessness in your heart. This is one of the destructions of a love for money.

Now, we need to be very, very careful here. Okay? We need to be very careful here because many noble endeavors on this earth require an enormous amount of capital. So for example, right, when God condemns a desire to be rich, he's not condemning businesses that build up a cash reserve. He's not condemning families that build up a cash reserve called savings. He's not condemning employees to take a job that provides a higher salary than the one that they have now.

It's true that in every one of those cases, greedy ambition may be in play, but there's also the possibility that there's the desire to build a manufacturing plant that requires capital or to employ more people, or to give a scholarship, or to send a missionary, or to fund a ministry. You see, there's many noble endeavors requiring capital. The question is not, is having cash, is having money. The problem, the question is always, why do you want it? What are you gonna do with it if you have it? Is your heart full of God?

See, if your heart is full of God, then you can take money and you can leverage it for His glory, for the good of people, to help people. And so we see here that God instructs us to guard our heart. And the second thing is he instructs us to be generous. He instructs us to be generous. Now what I hope that you're gonna see in this is that literally, every single instruction the Bible has on what you do at the money is actually ... it's like a raft that's floating down a river called generosity.

There is nothing that he's gonna ask you to do, whether it's saving, whether it's giving, whether it's taxes, whether it's to care for your family, generosity. He wants us to be generous. And so, what you find here, it's interesting. Paul writes verses 6-10 to those who want to be rich and then he writes for 17, 18 and 19 to those who are. If you go online, you can go, there's all kinds of these websites, right? Global Rich List is one of them. You can go there and you can type in your salary, just what you make.



You can compare it to the population in the entire world and what you're gonna find very quickly is nearly every single person in this room qualifies for when it says 'and for the rich', he's talking about us. The problem is that our greed, it camouflages itself through comparison. We always look at other people and say, "Well, I don't have that much, and so clearly, I'm not greedy because that person does this or that person has this."

And so what's interesting, what he does here, the first thing that he does to those who have money, he says, "All right, oh by the way, let's go back to the heart." He says, "Don't be haughty, right? No smug sense of superiority. If you have cash reserve or if you have a good job," and second he says, "And guard your heart. Don't set your hope on those riches, but set it on God because God is the one who richly gives us everything to enjoy."

Because now that I've done with the heart, now this is what I want you to do. If you have money, this is what I want you to do. And what he does is he tells us to do the one thing that exposes the camouflage of greed, and that is give. He tells him to give. He says, look, he says, "Do good, be rich in good works. Be Generous and be ready to share. Be ready to share." See if it is true that the love of money is the root of all evils, then it's also true that the love of giving away money protects us from all kinds of evils.

And so what you find is God's instructions, all of them, I believe they can be condensed down into three different categories or even I show you this last week, right? One is to give generously, one is to save wisely and the other's the live appropriately. And I believe it's in that order, at least from what you see within the scriptures. And so, what I wanna do is to walk through each one of these very briefly, show you a few passages and each one of them. And then I wanna finish with a few applications.

And so first we look at give generously, give generously. Why is it so important? Well, listen, God is the greatest giver, John 3:16, what does it say? "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." When we believe in him, He gives us forgiveness, He gives his righteousness, he gives us adoption into his family. He gives us his spirit. He gives us his word. He's a giver. He's the greatest giver. And he's simply saying that my people are gonna reflect me and they're gonna do so by giving.

Now, giving is different than generosity. Giving is what we do, generosity's the manner in which we do it. Is that you can give begrudgingly, can't you? But you can't be generous begrudgingly. So what he tells us to do is I want you to give, this is first, I want you to be givers because I'm a giver, and the manner in which you're gonna be a giver is you're gonna be generous. Now, what does generous look like? And he talks about a few different ways that we're generous. First is that we give by priority or we give first, all right?

Proverbs 3:9e it says, “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce.” You see when God looked to give us something, he didn’t walk around and he goes, “Now, what can we part with that we don’t really need around here?” He didn’t give us the leftovers of heaven. All right, we done everything we need and heaven. Is there anything else to share? Anything else to ... no. He gave us the Prince of Heaven. He gave us the best of heaven. He gave us Jesus Christ, His only begotten son. And so he gives us this priority and he says, “One of the things that makes us a generous giver is that we look and we say, “Before I do anything else, I wanna be a giver. I wanna give because God gifts and so we honor the Lord with our wealth.””

The second way that we’re generous is that we give proportionally. You say, “Well, how much is it? I don’t have very much, so I can’t be generous.” Well, in Luke chapter 21 there was a widow gives two small copper coins says. It was a less than everyone else gave in terms of quantity and yet Jesus says she gave more than everybody else. Proportionally, proportionally. God’s word says, “You must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you,” and God told us, like he gave us the system of how do you understand proportion, and so he calls it a tithe, a tithe.

Malachi 3:10 he says this, he says, “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse.” A tithe is 10%, and if 10% of a little money and 10% of a lot of money is a different amount of money and yet it’s proportional. It’s proportional. It’s interesting that God could have done the tithes very differently. Have you ever thought about this? Like he’s not poor that the needs the 10%. He could have given us 90 of what he intended to, kept 10 for himself. Why did he do it that way?

Now what he did was he said, “Look, here’s a bag of candy. It has a hundred candies in it. I’m gonna give you all a hundred candies. Now I’m gonna tell you that I want you to prove to me and to yourself that I’m your greatest treasure by giving 10 back.” He didn’t have to do that, and he could’ve just kept 10 said, “Here’s 90, do what you want.” He gave us a proportional model to actually prioritize Him in our life.

Well, then there’s a third way that we’re supposed to be generous and that is that we’re supposed to give cheerfully. The Bible says, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. To not give begrudgingly but cheerfully.” And this is what happens, right? You find somebody who is a giver at heart and they give out of their best. They give proportionally and they give cheerfully, and let me tell you something about that person. You wanna spend time with them. They’ll be a happy person. They are contented person. You’re gonna go, “THIS is a generous person.”

Now, what if we’re strapped though? He say, “Okay, I see that, I see that within the scriptures, but here’s the deal. I spend 105% and have financial commitments for 110% of everything that I earn. So what am I supposed to do?” Well, some people are gonna resist what I’m about to tell you. All right. And my email is Brian@pray.org and you can just let me know, and I’ll write back and I say, “I totally get it. Totally understand it.” Because some of you are gonna say, “You know what? God says this. He goes, go ahead and put me to the test. Gimme the whole tithe and I wanna right now and I’ll show you.” So just trust him. Just give 10%.

Some people though it may take a little bit of time in order to get to the place to where they've made so many financial commitments in their life that to say, "I'm gonna have to default on other commitments that I've made, but if I have a little bit of time." I believe that God loves us more than he loves her money. Because it's all his anyway. And so, what I would encourage you is to think about it like a really heavy airplane. At first, the only thing you can do is get the plane moving, as you're trying to take cargo and throw it out so that you can actually take flight. Okay?

And so, it may be that what you need to do is you need to start with 1% for three months and just say, "Okay, I'm going to start with one. I'm gonna start low, I'm gonna aim higher." Some of you, it may be that you can do that right now. You can do the whole thing, right? That that's up to you. That's between you and the Lord. I just believe that God gives us grace. Two years ago, this amazing woman walked up to me and says, "I just want you to know you've never preached on this. I've never heard this, but I've been reading in the scriptures and I've been alive now for over six decades, and I've never given. And I wanna give, but I can't."

So this is what I decided. I just want you to know I sold my house and the next Sunday will be the very first Sunday that I can give to anything in my life. I'm so excited about it." But you know what? It took her a significant amount of time when she made that decision to sell the house and where did he get out of that place? And so, let me just encourage you just to look at where God desires. He cares first for your heart. And one other question here. Does it all have to go to the church? This is an interesting one. People always ask like, "What about K-Love? Can we just give it to K-Love or FCA like the church? I mean how much do you really want Brian?"

And let me just say it this way. Okay. All I can tell you is this, is that when I opened up Matthew 25, what you see is that God really cares about poor people. And when I look at the sixth chapter of Galatians and acts chapter 4, he really cares about the church because the church is not only where we get fed, the church is also his mechanism that he's established in order to fulfill his mission of glorifying his son to the ends of the earth. And so, what I see within the scriptures is this, is that our gifts are to be brought to where we are fed spiritually, where we see God accomplishing his mission and where people have physical need. I would simply say that and then say, now you go take that to the Lord and do what he tells you to do.

The second category is to save wisely. And let me just tell you that the reason I would encourage you to save wisely is so you can be generous later. It costs a whole lot of money later not to save now. Go buy a car, you don't save anything. Wait for the tires to fall off. You don't have any extra money because you have no savings. And suddenly tires become much more expensive because now you've got to put them on a credit card if you have one. And now those tires are a lot more expensive than the tires themselves.

There's something about saving. You remember in John 12, Mary, she takes this amazing ointment, this oil and pours it over Jesus' feet and He was like, "What are you doing?" And Jesus is, "She's done a beautiful, amazing thing. Every time people speak about what I have done on the cross, they're gonna speak about her generosity to pour her oil over my feet." And one thing that we never think about in that story is this, what if she had spent everything a week before? What if she had gone and sold all the oil, and bought a wonderful wardrobe, and then it was time to be generous, she had nothing to be generous with.

Isn't it amazing that she saved and then she saw something of greater value than the ointment and she says, "I need to part with it now. This is of value." You cannot give that kind of sacrifice unless you save wisely. Proverbs 21 says, "There is precious treasure and oil in the house of the wise, but of fools falls it up." And so the fact is in life there are seasons of abundance and scarcity, and so it's better and wise to gather in abundance, to prepare for scarcity. How much? Well, the Bible doesn't tell us, but many wise people would say 10% why? Because Christmas and car maintenance, and a new roof is coming.

And then the last thing is this, to live appropriately. Living appropriately protects our generosity. I'm out of time, so I'm gonna have to shut this down. But the fact is, there's some areas where God tells us very specifically, one of them is that we're supposed to lower our standard of living so that we can give, so that we can save, but then also so that we can pay our taxes, also to provide for our family. You see this in Matthew 22:21 and you also see this in 1st Timothy 5:8, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his own household, he's denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

We're also so supposed to pay off our debts, right? The wicked borrows but does not pay back. And then there's one other category that may surprise you and that is enjoyment. He says that he richly provides us everything for our enjoyment. If you're married, you should go on a date and dates cost money, but they're fun, right? Vacation is important. Doesn't have to be opulent, but enjoyment. And so, I would encourage you to live appropriately.

So let me just end this way, okay. Let me encourage you to sit under the Bible and not over the Bible. See, the Bible is not a chamber where we come to hear the echo of her own desires. See, our judgments of the Bible lack the strength of law, a single piece of dust off its pages, much less a word from its page. It is the word of God that cuts as quickly as it heals.

And if the word of God says that we're at risk, then we're at risk. If the word of God attributes greed, fighting, power to generosity, then let's bend our lives around generosity. If the Bible tells us that we need to trust Jesus, then we need to trust Jesus. And if the Bible tells us that we need to get help and find counselors in our finances, then we need to get help and find counselors in our finances. I wanna encourage you to sit under the Bible and all of these ways. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your love for us and pray God, that you would give us grace and understanding. We look to you and we consider it an absolute joy to know that you have loved us enough, not only to save us, but to instruct us on a way that will glorify you and that will bring good to us and to the people around us. And I pray, Father, that you would guard each of our hearts, that you would help us to see that you're for us and not against us. God, as we even as we give now out of our heart and worship, and of our resources in an offering, we pray that you would be honored and glorified in all these ways. We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen.



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