



Transcript

Part 1 - "We the People..."

Andy Stanley

Let me begin by welcoming all of those who are joining us online from all over the country, and more and more from all over the world—twenty-five or thirty different countries, and some places where you're not supposed to be watching, but you are anyway. And I won't say your country out loud and let somebody knock on your door during the service, but we're so glad that you've joined us from all over the world. It's pretty exciting. Today we're beginning a brand new series, Recovery Road, and I have to answer the question that I have been asked over the last few days—pretty much through cyberspace connections—and that is: Andy, why in the world would you stop preaching the gospel, or why in the world would you depart from Scripture and get into something that's so political? And so, the reason we're doing this series is I feel like my responsibility as a pastor, in fact, I feel like every pastor's responsibility is that when things in culture or when things in a country or when things in a community or a city, when issues or things evolve that cross, or I should say intersect, with Scripture, we have to talk about it.

That doesn't mean we should become the "current events church," you know every week I look at what's going on, current events, and come in here and try to comment on it. You're not interested in that and I don't even have a—I'm not smart enough to do that. But every once in a while there's something big, and we just have to hit the pause button and go you know what, our responsibility, as those who open God's Word for other people, is to say, Oh guess what, by the way, you have an opinion and you have an opinion, and Jesus has an opinion. And I've just got to tell you, here are his opinions on these things. And what's so fascinating, is in the current discussion that is going on in our country now in terms of finances, political debate, and all this stuff, Jesus has spoken into this. So it's my responsibility to bring this message for these next few weeks. Now, if I could push a magic button or if I could get the microphone into every church in America today—you know, suddenly the mics went dead and it was like a "Big Brother" moment and they heard my voice and I could speak to every single Christian in the whole country, here's what I would say.

Let's not miss this opportunity—because this is an opportunity. And the other thing I would say is this: Hey, let's not make the mistake of previous generations during a crisis and accidentally view our faith through the filter of our politics. Let's be the unique generation of church people and of Christians who are willing, and I say willing because it's tough to view our politics through the filter of our faith. Because if the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in this country could begin to view their politics through the filter of faith rather than the other way around, there would be a unity, and as we're going to see, there would be solutions.

And for those of you who aren't Christians that scares you to death, because you're thinking, Yeah, you're going to have like your own version, Christian version of Sharia law, and we're going to have to stone our children when they're disobedient—which you've thought about anyway if you're honest. Okay? But you know, the great thing is have no fear, because we're not going to take you back to the Old Testament. We're going to take you to the New Testament. If the Christians in this country could pause and say, You know what, I'm a Republican, I'm a



Democrat, I'm a Tea Party, I'm an Independent, I'm a Libertarian, you know I'm in the middle, I'm an everything, I'm nothing, I'm an I don't care. And you know, what as a Christian I'm going to set that to the side as much as I can and I'm going to ask the question, What would my heavenly Father have me do? What would my Savior have me do? What should the church do in a nation like the United States of America if we had the opportunity?

I think we have an extraordinary, extraordinary opportunity. For the next few weeks, to the best of my ability, and I'm sure I'll fall short but I've got to give it a shot, I want to help us view our current national situation not through the lens of politics. You get plenty of that during the week but through a different filter. And if we could be that generation. And maybe nobody else, maybe just us, maybe just us in our group of churches and those of you who join us online, if we could just begin to see it differently we would know what to do. I'm absolutely convinced of this. The recovery would begin not in Washington, the recovery wouldn't begin far, far away with people we don't even know except little sound bites on television. The recovery would begin with us. Because what needs to be recovered can be recovered by "We the People," especially I think by "We the Church People."

Now, I know there's a big debate about whether we're a Christian nation or not. And my opinion is Christian isn't an adjective; Christian is a noun. There is not Christian anything, there are just Christians—but you can debate that over lunch. So, whether or not you think we're a Christian nation, here's what we know. There are a bunch of Christians in this nation and we should have far, far, far more in common than we do different, because of our faith. So I think we have a great opportunity. I think we need to talk about it. So for the next few weeks, we're going to talk about Recovery Road and we, whether anybody else pays attention or not and whether it makes a difference or not, we are going to begin the recovery.

So, Session 1, Part 1—here we go. I want you to think for just a minute about if you can remember the last time you read in the paper or heard on the news about some rich and famous rock star, athlete, movie star, or singer who had made millions and millions and millions of dollars. Everybody knows their songs, everybody has seen their movies—and as they hit middle age or later they go bankrupt. Aren't those fascinating stories? We all think the same two things. There is a recent one this week. Fortunately for him there's so much in the news about what's going on politically, nobody's noticed, but you may notice later.

We always think two things. Number one, how could that happen? How could people make way, way, way more money than you'll ever make, have name recognition, and then go through all of their wealth—and toward the end of their lives or even middle years, later middle years, have to declare bankruptcy, lose their homes, lose their airplanes, you know, lose stuff we'll never even own? You think how could that happen. The second thing you think is this, and you know what it is don't you? What's the next thing you think? What is it? Yeah, you're thinking, If it were me, that would never happen. Right? If I had that much opportunity, if I was that famous, if I was that rich—not on my watch. That would never happen to me. Isn't that true?

Second category. For some of you in business—you think about this more than the rest of us. You see a company that everybody knows about. I mean again, if you're in business, you know it's so difficult to break through all the clutter and all the noise for people to even recognize the name of your company. If you can be a



company that half the people in the United States or ten percent of the people in the United States would recognize your company, I mean that's major success in the marketplace. So when we hear about companies that everyone has heard of going bankrupt, we're like, What? I remember years ago, some of you don't remember this, K-Mart. K-Mart filed . . . You know, K-Mart shoppers—I mean blue light—I mean how could K-Mart? K-Mart was like Wal-Mart in the old days. How could K-Mart go into bankruptcy? And we're thinking, Or Circuit City? Circuit City, they owned that brand. When you thought electronics, big box retailer: Circuit City. And you know when you find out those kinds of companies are falling apart you think, How could that happen?

And then you think this, business people: you think, Not on my watch. If I were president, if I were CEO, if I was on the board, I would not have let that happen. You have to work so hard to get to that place, there is no way, you think, you would let that happen. Now we step way back from those circumstances and those situations and we ask this: we go, The United States of America? Are you kidding? We're bankrupt? What? How in the—I mean I can't even understand it happened to an individual. I can't understand how it happened to K-Mart. From sea to shining sea, are you kidding? How in the world could the United States of America have a financial problem? We are the standard. We're the last bastions. We're the stock market everybody wants to invest in. Everybody wants to own our money. Remember when they found Saddam Hussein buried in his little spider hole and they dug him out and they started searching around the compound? Remember what they found? About \$800,000.00 worth of what? American money. Our money. We may be "the Great Satan," but he loved our money. He knew the future was in American economy, not his own economy.

They say Gaddafi has over one billion U.S. dollars stashed away. He may hate us, but he loves our money. Even the bad guys know when it comes to rock-solid investment, it is the United States of America. For us to have a financial problem, are you kidding? That is absolutely unexplainable. The rest of the world, you know this, they look at us and it's like us looking at a rich, famous person who loses his home, or some name brand company that's like, How in the world? And they look at us and go, How could that happen? And we should be flabbergasted that such a thing would happen.

Now, if I were to ask you how it happened, all of you have an opinion. Let's just assume for a minute you are all right and I'm wrong, that you understand. And I know what you think, you think, If I was in charge, if I was the President, you know if I was in Congress, if it was up to me—because you've got it all figured out and you're smart people. You've got it all figured out. But we should all, in a sense, be flabbergasted. The what? The United States of America has a financial problem? I mean it's really, if you step back, especially if you know your history, it's absolutely unbelievable that we would ever, ever, ever even get close to this place.

The other thing we all know, because we're smart people—in fact, if you're a part of our church network or you watch online you're way above average, so I don't even have to convince you of what I'm about to say. You already get this. What you already know is the root of our financial crisis is not financial. You know that already. Okay? So I'm not going to try to prove that to you. You know that the root of our financial crisis . . . In other words, the way to think about it is this: When you start looking around at the details of those famous people who made millions of dollars and then they go bankrupt, when you start sniffing around, you find out it wasn't



a cash flow problem. It wasn't an income problem. It was a Twinkie problem. It was a spending problem. When you start sniffing around, and doing the case studies, and reading the case studies of big, giant, nationally known corporations going out of business, it wasn't cash flow originally. It was management problems. It's amazing how individuals, companies, and as we're going to see, nations can ignore fundamentals year after year after year after year, principles year after year, after year, after year, good accounting skills year after year after year, and finally, it catches up with them and everybody goes, We have a financial crisis!

And it's almost never a financial crisis. It's just that nobody pays attention to problems until they become financial problems. Now in my world as a pastor, I just know this because of human nature. It's amazing how many people with addictions never deal with their addictions until they run out of money. And they come in with financial problems, and they have an addiction, but they have a behavior problem—but until it impacts us financially, or as adults, until it impacts our health, we just don't pay any attention. It's just not a crisis. It's only a crisis when it hits our wallets. And then you scratch below the surface and you discover, you know what, this really isn't a financial crisis. This is a crisis of a different kind. So where all of this begins, just begins to intersect with the Scripture is this simple principle you've heard a thousand times. We're simply reaping what we have sown. And it's not this administration that sowed it, and it wasn't the last administration that sowed it, and it wasn't the administration before that. It goes way, way, way, way back. And you're smart enough to know that.

Here's what happens in the principle of sowing and reaping: When you begin to reap what you have sown you always look in the general vicinity for someone or something to blame. But you know what? We're smarter than that, aren't we? You see, mature people don't look for someone to blame; mature people look for something to do. Mature people don't point their fingers. Mature people realize you know what, we all sowed it and we're all reaping it, and we are all and can be part of the solution. Only immature people blame, blame, blame, blame, and never bring about any change. So we're not going to do that. We are going to be part of the solution. Now, backing in a little bit and kind of narrowing the focus, here's the general idea, and here is the general premise of what we're going to talk about today.

Ultimately our problems don't stem from the lack of prosperity. Come on. We are the United States of America. We're sea to shining sea. We're not way north where you freeze to death; we're not way south where you burn up; we have the ultimate piece of real estate. You realize that. If you look all over the world and you started all over, and God said, There aren't any countries; you get to pick one, and here are all the pieces in the world you could look at. You might find some more beautiful ones, but in terms of strategic locations, you would say, I'll take that one. Sea to shining sea, right in the middle, full of resources, that's the way to go. We do not have a prosperity problem. We have an abuse of prosperity problem and it's caught up with us. That's basically all this is.

Now, it's manifested through several different things, and I'm going to give you my list. You have a list, but I have the microphone so here's my list. Get your own microphone, do your own list. This is why you have people over and watch the news and yell at the television. We've abused our prosperity. So basically, here's what happens. We have a discipline problem as a country. You know what discipline is. If you have kids, discipline is when they want to do something and they want their way and you say no and they do it anyway. That's a discipline problem.



We live in a country that doesn't like to hear no. So, we reach into the future and leverage the future so we can have what we want to have and we want to have it now. That's what we do. That's a discipline problem.

Did you know that whenever you have more of something than you need, you're never disciplined with it? When you have more of something than you need, you are never, ever disciplined with it. This country has been so prosperous and so blessed and we've had so much of so much that we have not had to be disciplined with it. So, we have developed a lifestyle and habit personally and nationally where we've simply lacked discipline. We don't take no for an answer, and if somebody tells us no, we get rid of them and elect somebody that will say yes. That's the American way.

And so we have a political system full of people who are trying to say yes to everybody, and we've come to the end of that. We have a discipline problem. Not only that, we have an entitlement problem. And I'm not talking about entitlement spending, so don't push me into a political category. Entitlement—we didn't use to use this word. The old-fashioned word for entitlement, do you know what the old-fashioned word for entitlement is? Spoiled. We're spoiled. Everybody in this country, everybody in this room, everybody watching, you feel entitled. Entitled is you owe me, you owe me. Why do I owe you? Well I'm breathing, aren't I? Well yeah, I'm a breathing American, aren't I? You owe me.

Do you know what happens when you try to take something away from a rich person who feels entitled to it? The same thing that happens to a poor person when you try to take something he feels entitled to away from him. Which is the same thing that happens when you try to take something away from a middle-class person who has something he feels is entitled to him. Which is the same thing that happens to a four-month-old when you try to take something away from him or her when they feel entitled to it. We whine and we complain and we come up with all kinds of reasons why you owe me, you owe me, you owe me—the government owes me.

We, and I'm part of we, we are so unbelievably spoiled. Now, any of you who've been to a third world country, isn't it weird you come back and you have the same feeling? You go, Wow, those people have so little and they're so happy. Those people have so much less and they have so much joy. Those people have so much less and I feel so guilty. And you can't wait to get back here and wallow it down in all the extra stuff we have. This is not a criticism; it's just an observation. We've had so much of everything we haven't had to be disciplined with it, and we feel entitled to it, and this has contributed to our abuse of our prosperity. And at an individual level, we have a greed problem.

You know what greed is? Greed is simply the assumption that everything that comes your way is for your consumption. That's all greed is. Greed is the assumption that if it gets placed in my hands it's for my consumption. Do you know how I know at an individual level we have a greed problem? Because the more money you make in this country, the less money you give away. The more money you make, not "less dollars," the "less percentage." The poorer you are, the more generous you are. The richer you are, the less generous you are. That is an indication of national greed, and the statistics are the same year after year after year after year after year. The richest people give away the least. Do you know what that means? That means their assumption, our assumption, the assumption is if it



gets placed in my hands either because I work for it, I inherited it, I earned it, whatever, if it gets in these hands it is there for my consumption. Greed is an abuse of prosperity.

And lastly—this is my list—remember, your list at home or over lunch, we have a failure of nerve problem. Now let me explain what I mean by that because this is huge. Failure of nerve is when leaders look at a situation—parent leaders, national leaders, marketplace leaders, nonprofit leaders, preacher leaders, any leader—whenever leaders look at a situation, recognize what the problem is, recognize what the solution might be, but fear the consequences of doing what they know they need to do, and they back down from doing what they know needs to be done. That's called a failure of nerve. They get right up to the edge and they see the problem, they know what the solution is, they think about the consequences, they think about the feedback, they think about the pushback, they think about what's going to happen to their reputation. They might lose their support, they might lose their funding, they might lose, they might lose, and because of their fear of what they might lose personally, they decide not to address the real problem. Failure of nerve results in people talking about all kinds of things that aren't germane to the real issue.

In our country, we have a national failure of nerve problem. Part of it is just because of the way our political system is set up. And I'm not suggesting we change it. It just goes with the fact that we have a President for four years or maybe eight years and there's a change; that people get into Congress and they stay there forever, and they're funded by the same people during their entire careers. And at some point you dare not rock the boat too much, less you lose the thing that keeps you there. So when you see a solution, and you see a solution to a specific problem, if you fear the consequences of the solution, a leader who has a failure of nerve steps back and throws out all kinds of words and talks around it and throws money but never deals with the issue. Now before you get too critical, every parent in this room, you've had failure of nerve. Because you put your kid to bed on time, you know, she went to bed at 6:30 last night, but she cried and screamed and kept getting up and made your life miserable. So now the next night it's time to put her to bed at 6:30, and it's like, Do I really want to go through that again? Honey, you just stay up. Failure of nerve. You know what you need to do, you just won't do it.

All of that is just part of our abuse of the incredible, incredible prosperity that we've experienced. Now again, you see something like that and you hear that list and you go, Yeah, you're right. And the Republicans, you're going to pick up a stone, because it's those Democrats, and they're so entitled. And all the Democrats are going to go pick up a stone and look at the Republicans and go, Yeah, you're so greedy. And all the Independents, you're going to throw stones both ways. The Tea Party, they've got a boat load of stones and a verse to go with it, because they're all Christians. And you've got Independents—you've got everybody. You hear a list like this, I'm telling you, you hear a list like that, and here's what happens. Everything I've said so far, for most of us, you listened to it through the filter of our political persuasion, didn't you? While I'm talking you're going, Yeah, yeah that's why I'm a Republican. Or you're exactly right, Andy, that's why I'm a Democrat; yeah, Andy, that's exactly why. If President Bush hadn't done what he had done, we wouldn't be in this mess. Yeah, that's exactly why we've got to vote President Obama out of office. Yeah, I love this church. Because you just heard all of that through your political filter.

So we all reached down and we got our stones: I like Andy's list. I'm going to add some things to his list



when I get home. I'm going to sit the kids down and kind of put my spin on it, because he didn't get it exactly right, which I'm sure I didn't. And just as we're about to start throwing stones, Jesus speaks. And you know, it's Jesus. Oh okay, go ahead. I'm not putting my stone down, but go ahead. And all of us Republicans, we're so glad Jesus spoke, because we know he's going to support our position. He's Jesus. Right? And all the Democrats are like, I want Jesus to speak, because Jesus is for the poor and Jesus is for the downtrodden. And Jesus, you know, he had a single mom and I'm for Jesus. I want Jesus to speak, because Jesus is going to support my position. And all the Tea Party, you know, you've got a stone in both hands and you're like, Well, I know he's going to support my position, because we all go to church. Go ahead, Jesus, say something, and then we'll throw our stones. We're going to have even more motivation, more fuel for the fire.

But you just have got to remember this. Have you read the gospels? You know I tell you to read your Bible all the time. Some of you go, Yeah, yeah. Jesus would walk into these situations where is it left or is it right—Jesus are you far left or are you far right? Jesus would say, I'm just far out. Well Jesus, should we or shouldn't we? And Jesus would say, Oh yeah, there's a third option you haven't thought of. That doesn't help our cause—go away. You know we've just got it all worked out in our minds.

So today, for all of us, and you know we're everything, which I love about our church, Jesus comes into this tense situation. And he's hoping, he's hoping that we will learn. This is hard for us, and I think the older you are maybe the harder this is. And Jesus comes in and he's hoping that we'll be able to view our politics through the filter of our faith, rather than our faith through the filter of our politics. And he says, Before you throw your stone, before you choose who you're going to write that letter to, before you call your cable provider and say I want you to take the following networks off, I'm not supporting that anymore, before you put a code on there so your kids don't accidentally listen to one of those lunatics on the station you don't like—Jesus says, Before you do any of that, I just want to ask you a question.

Matthew 7:3 (NIV)

³ Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

Yeah—you with the microphone—oh yeah, I know the answer to that—Jesus. Because it makes me feel empowered, it makes me feel right, and I don't really have to do anything different. That's a good answer. Why do you focus on the sawdust in somebody else's eye, the speck, when you have a plank in your own? All right—yeah, you again. Well, I don't have a plank in my eye, that's why.

See, let me just tell you, okay. I know you; we're the same. You're right. We're all right, aren't we? I mean none of us are wrong. You wouldn't be wrong on purpose. Nobody is wrong on purpose. Well, I have the wrong view but I'm going to hold onto it. No, everybody thinks, we all believe we're right. And Jesus says, Hey, why is it you're so na na na na and you won't look in the mirror at the plank sticking out of your eye? And the real answer to this question is, Because I don't think I have a plank. He goes on.



Matthew 7:4 (NIV)

How can you say, 'Let me take that speck out of your eye,' [And I'm going to twist it as it comes out!] when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

He repeats it. To which we say: Well I'm not aware of any plank in my own eye. To which Jesus is going to say: Do you know how I know there is plank in your eye? Because you are so focused on the speck in their eye.

And then he says this—not me, okay, I'm just reading.

Matthew 7:5 (NIV)

⁵ You hypocrite,

Not me, I wouldn't say that, okay. You, and I'm part of you, you hypocrite. Now this is very important. You see, when you read this passage and you just kind of read through the Bible, you read this passage, and here's what we think this passage says. We think this passage says, Hey, don't be critical of others, because you have some issues in your life. That's not what he's saying. Jesus is saying, Watch out in your criticism of others; you have the same issue in your life. Oh no I don't. I was raised a Democrat, I've been a Democrat forever, I don't have any Republican issues in my eye. Jesus says, You don't think so. You hypocrite.

Do you know what a hypocrite is? A hypocrite—this is why this word in this passage is so important—a hypocrite is someone who expects something of someone else that they are unwilling to do themselves. Oh, like the same thing. Yeah, like the same thing. A hypocrite is someone who accuses somebody of not doing something or doing something that they're either guilty of or refuse to do themselves. It's the same thing. You can't be a hypocrite unless somehow you've weighed in on something and you're not doing the thing you think everybody else should do. Jesus says, If you're focused on the speck in somebody else's eye and it's really bothering you and it's getting you all jazzed up and all geeked up, chances are whatever you don't like in them, there is some of that in you. Yikes.

Matthew 7:5 (NIV)

⁵ You hypocrite. First . . .

First, first recovery begins here. First, change begins here. First, hey would you like to help the people that you put in office change? First, would you like to see the country change? Yes. First, would you like for there to be a recovery and everybody is great and everybody is educated?

Matthew 7:5 (NIV)



⁵ first take the plank out of your own eye.

You know, that's like . . . no fun. I mean, I can't get all worked up over that. I can't have a party at my house and say, Let's all get together. And no, we're not going to turn on the television, I just want you to help me get the plank out of my eye. Here's what he's saying, in case you miss it. When something about you bothers me, I need to take a long, hard look at me before bothering you. My friends—that could change everything. See, I know what Republicans think. You think, Democrats, would you just look in the mirror? Democrats are going, Yeah, Republicans, if you could just see you the way I see you. And Jesus is going, That's a great idea. Let's all turn off our televisions and let's all go home and look in the mirror. Let's all go home and say, Hmm, that stuff that drives me crazy about those left wing radicals, is there any of that in me? The thing that drives me crazy about my right wing friends and the Tea Party—oh, is there any of that in me?

And, of course, you don't think there is, because if you thought there was, you would have already dealt with it. Jesus says, If it really just ticks you off and drives you crazy, oh that's an indication that you're focused on a speck when there might actually be a plank. Now this next part, oh I just don't even know how to communicate this clearly enough. Listen to what he says. It's so brilliant.

Matthew 7:5 (NIV)

⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly.

Look: this is a promise; this is a promise to you, your family, your company, your network of friends, your community, our nation. If you take the plank out of your own eye, here is the promise. Then you will see clearly. You see, you think the problem with the other party is they don't see things the way they really are. You don't think they see clearly and they don't think you see clearly. Jesus says, Would you like to see clearly? To which we say, We already see clearly. Jesus goes, You don't see clearly. Would you like to see clearly? Would you like the other party to see clearly? Would you like the nation to see clearly? Would you like everybody to go, Oh now I see what needs to be done. And we're like, Yeah, yeah. He says, Well, I've got a great idea. Go home and look in the mirror, and look specifically for that thing in you that drives you crazy in the other group. Then you will see clearly to take, to remove the speck from the other person's . . . You go, Aha! I knew they had something in their eye. They do. And so do you. But when you have two people with logs in their eyes trying to take the log out of the other person's eye, you just end up putting the other person's eye out. Right? Now can you imagine the difference that would make?

So the first principle of recovery that we're going to embrace, and as we move forward in this series, the first principle is simply this: The road to recovery begins with "we," not "they." That's what Jesus says. That the road to recovery—this is true in your family, this is true in your business, this is true in your network of friends, this is true everywhere—that the road to recovery, the way forward, always begins with me, not you. It begins with we, not they. Listen, if you're not a church person it's optional for you. You don't have to follow the teachings of Jesus; you just don't. You just get to listen with me outside and say you get to pick and choose; you get to say, I don't



think I like that one. You're fine. But if you're a Christian, we don't have any option. If you're a follower of Jesus, you have no option. And there are enough of followers of Jesus in this nation if we just got this one right it could have a gigantic impact on our communities, on the level of hostility in the conversation, and the ability to actually implement changes that everybody knows needs to be implemented.

The road to recovery begins with we, not they. So I made a list. You're not going to like my list. I don't even like my list. So, I just want to ask us some we questions, and these are for Christians. If you're not a Christian, optional. You pick and choose. For those of us who are Christians, I think we have some planks in our eye. I think there are some Democrats with planks in their eyes and Republicans with planks in their eyes. And all of us have planks in our eyes, and the only way to see clearly or to help someone else see clearly is to remove our own plank.

Are you undisciplined with your money? Well yeah, but it's my money. Oh, so that's different, isn't it? Jesus says, No, that's a plank. If you're not saving, if you're spending up to the edge of your income, if you've got stupid consumer debt that you regret, if you owe money on stuff you don't even remember, if you're paying interest on credit cards you don't even remember what you spent it on, if you've lived up to the edge and over, if you've been irresponsible with your own personal money, don't you lose a little bit of leverage in wagging your finger at the government for being irresponsible with the taxpayer's money?

I mean isn't there some duplicity there? And that's true of Democrats and Republicans. Have you been irresponsible or undisciplined with your own money? Have you lived and are you living beyond your means? If so, I love you, but you are a part of the problem. Uncle Sam is doing as you have been doing. Uh-oh, that's a plank. Can you imagine what would happen in our country if just the Christians, if just the Christians decided we're going to get our personal financial house in order. We're going to purchase what we can afford, live within our means, we're going to give, save and live on the rest and stay out of debt. That would shift the economy of our entire nation. That's just simple.

Let's move on. Are you greedy? You go, Of course I'm not greedy. Of course not—greed, and I've told this to you before—you can't see greed in the mirror. Let me ask it a different way. Does ninety-eight percent of what gets placed in your hands get used up on your lifestyle? Is the assumption that it's for your consumption? That's greed. That is an abuse of your personal financial prosperity and Jesus said don't be that way. Do you know what would happen in our country, and I've told you this over and over and over and I modeled the way, if you would do as I do in this one area, not every area but this area, I know I have to be accountable to you and to God—if you would become a percentage giver, don't give it here if you don't trust me, I don't care. If every Christian in this country decided, I'm not going to be an average American and give one and a half percent of my money away. I'm going to be like a Christian American and I'm going to give a significant percentage of my money away—do you know what that would do in our communities, our neighborhoods and in our schools?

Not because the government, not because of "they" but because of "we" and our capacity as Christians in this country financially, even with the recession, is unbelievable. Hey, are you greedy? Are you paying your taxes or are you stealing from me? Are you filing or do you have some kind of Republican scheme where, you know, I



don't really have to pay. I don't believe it's a legitimate government, na-na-na. If you're a Christian, you hypocrite. You are part of the problem. Pay your taxes. Hey, you don't have to give me a bunch of mental gymnastics; Jesus answered this one. They asked him should we pay our taxes. Would you like to know what Jesus said? I bet you already do. He said to them, See Caesar's picture on it? Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and by the way, Caesar decides how much he gets. And give to God what is God's. The reason you don't pay your taxes is you have never given to God what is God's and you're a hypocrite.

Don't you love Sunday? Men, men are you taking responsibility for the children that you brought into this world with the woman or women that you weren't married to? Have you insured those children, like you are obligated to do? Are you paying child support to your ex-wife or to the women that had your babies? If not and you're a Christian, you are hypocrite. You are a major, major part of the problem in our culture. You can go home and figure this out for yourself. It's all over the Internet. The primary cause for poverty, the thing that drives poverty in our country is related to that very thing. And you say, Well, I'm middle class and she has a job. That doesn't matter. If you are not insuring your kids, and if you are not taking financial responsibility for your children from a previous marriage or that you brought into this world, you are part of the problem. You've lost all, all, all your right to say anything about the problem of poverty in this country, because that behavior is part of what drives poverty in our country. That's your plank. You go, Andy, well it's really none of your business. It is my business. Your decision and people who make those decisions impact all of us.

You're on disability but you know you could work—oh. Hey, there are things in your family you need to confront but you have failure of nerve. You scared of your teenager? Scared of your college student? Scared of your wife? Better be. No. Are you afraid of your husband? Are there things that need to be addressed and you just think you know the consequences of addressing them and it's failure of nerve. And you know what, if you told your story we would probably go, Well, you need to lock yourself in a cage before you bring that up. But hey, it's the very same thing that plagues, oftentimes, generational leadership of our nation. I could go on and on.

Are you stealing from your employer? Exaggerating your expense reports? Hey, what about this one? Do you smoke pot? That's not really a church issue, Andy. It's just like once a month. But hey, do you smoke pot? Do you use illegal drugs? You hypocrite. Do you know what you're contributing to? Has it ever crossed your mind? Do you know why there is not a cassette tape cartel? Have you ever thought about that? There is not a cassette tape cartel. There is not a group of people packaging up and smuggling cassette tapes into the United States of America. Do you know why? Because nobody uses them.

I know it's kind of funny, but think about it. My friends, look, look, look, if you're a Christian . . . You're not a Christian, you smoke all the pot you want; it's just up to you and you'll figure it out. But if you're a Christian and you're using illegal drugs, you're a hypocrite. You have no right to complain about anything anyone is doing. You're contributing . . . you are contributing to the abuse of women. You are contributing to the abuse of children. You are contributing to poverty. You are contributing to things that you will never, ever touch personally, because you're middle class or you're upper middle class and you'll never be exposed to the seedy side of illegal drug distribution, but you are a participant. And what's worse is this, if you're a Christian, then you have to believe that every single



dollar that comes your way comes from your heavenly Father and you're using it for that? See, I'll put my list away. All right. Now. No more lists.

Hey, did you know Republicans and Democrats smoke pot? Do you know Republicans and Democrats who don't pay child support and don't take care of and don't insure the children they brought into this world that they probably never should have brought into the world to begin with? Do you know that's not a political problem? That's just an American problem. Come on, and then I'm done. Can you imagine what would happen in our country if just the Christians began to address just the few issues I touched on? We would recover, we would recover, and I mean we would recover past anyplace we've ever been. There would be so much money available for people. There would be so much less poverty in this country. There would be so much less drug abuse. There would be so many things that happen.

We do not have a financial problem in our country. We have a discipline problem. We have a greed problem. We have an "I'm spoiled" problem. We have I'm afraid to do anything about it problem. And the solution to those problems doesn't begin in Washington. It begins in your home and in our communities and in your lifestyle and at work. It begins here and it begins now, because at the end of the day the road to recovery, it doesn't begin with them. This has nothing to do with legislation. This has everything to do with behavior. So the road to recovery begins with we, not they.

And if you're a Christian, come on. Let's do this. Let's do this. Let's do this. And if we do, here's what Jesus promised; this is amazing. Jesus said, If you'll look in the mirror and if you will address the plank in your eye, I promise you will be able to see clearly to help the other people around you see clearly. And if more and more people see clearly, we will make progress in our communities and progress in our nation once again. But it doesn't begin with them, it begins with me and it begins with we.

Let's pray together.