

## I. INTRO

- a. I want to talk about what Dave Ramsey calls one of the biggest misunderstandings—or the number-one myth—about money.
  
- b. We have this tremendous idea about this particular subject, and if we don't crush this wrong-headed view and do away with this myth, we'll never really grow into the men and women that God designed us to be.
  
- c. Here's the myth: The way to have more is to hold on more tightly.
  - i. When we hold our money with an open hand, sure, we may lose some. However, we have room for more to come in.
  - ii. When we hold our money with a closed hand, we'll hang on to what we have, but we aren't open for more to come in.
  - iii. The fist is the international sign of anger. If you hold up a fist to someone, they know what you're trying to say.
  - iv. The open hand is the international sign for acceptance. Even a dog recognizes the warmth of an open hand.

## II. CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVE

- a. When it comes to money, we all get a little tight-fisted. We feel like we have to protect what's "ours."
  - i. That brings up a great point that we need to talk about today.
  - ii. What is "ours"?
  
- b. SPEAKER: Have two people come up to the front, one to represent the banker and one to represent "us."
  - i. Have the person who represents us "deposit" \$1,000 at the bank.
  - ii. When you go to withdraw your money, the banker doesn't have it. He says, "Well, I work at the bank and we don't make a lot of money, and we needed to go on a cruise. I needed a new car, and my kids needed to go to college. I didn't have the money, so I took the money you entrusted to me and used it for whatever I wanted. Is that okay?"
  - iii. How does that make you feel?
    1. I'm thinking, "I want my money!" Anybody else with me? He took my money!
    2. Well, let's change their names just for a second.
      - a. Instead of this position representing you and this position representing a bank, let me show you how it really is out there.

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- b. The person the money belongs to really represents God, and the banker really represents you and me.
  - c. You see, God entrusted His resources, money, stuff, time and talents to us.
    - i. We're just holding His stuff.
    - ii. It belongs to God. He owns it all.
  - iv. Thank and excuse your volunteers.
- c. Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof."
- d. We have a fiduciary trust responsibility with everything God's given us.
- i. If you're a manager at a company, the owner gives you responsibility for running a part of his company.
  - ii. That doesn't mean you own it; it just means you're responsible for part of it.
  - iii. If the owner wants it back, you give it back.
  - iv. If the owner tells you to write a big check to a vendor or charity, you do it.
  - v. Your job is to manage the resources the way the owner tells you to.

### III. REAL STEWARDSHIP

- a. A steward is a manager, not an owner.
  - i. "Stewardship" has become a Christianized term.
    - 1. The church uses it wrong, however.
    - 2. When the church says "stewardship," people usually hear, "We're about to build a new building."
- b. Definition of "steward"
  - i. In medieval times, the second nicest property in the kingdom belonged to the king's steward.
    - 1. His job was to see to the king's business.
    - 2. The steward managed all of the owner's affairs.
    - 3. As such, he enjoyed the good graces and full use of all the king's property, but he didn't own any of it.
  - ii. The King James translators saw that as the perfect word to describe how we should view ourselves in relation to God's blessings.
    - 1. We don't own anything, just like the steward didn't own anything.
    - 2. We just manage the Owner's wealth.
  - iii. Stewardship means "managership"
    - 1. It should not refer to a fundraiser; it should refer to a campaign to teach people how to manage money.

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2. The church goes about this all wrong.
    - a. We usually just run around saying, "Give, give, give!"
    - b. However, if you actually teach people how to properly manage their money, you free them up so that they can, in turn, give like never before.

#### IV. WHY GIVE?

- a. A lot of Christians honestly ask, "Why does God need my tithe?"
  - i. That's a bad question.
  - ii. It's funny, too. Remember, God doesn't need anything from us.
  - iii. As followers of Christ honestly pursuing God, we don't have to give; we get to give.
  
- b. Giving makes us more like Christ.
  - i. Genesis 1:26 says that God made man in His image.
  - ii. John 3:16 says that God loved the world so much that He gave His only son.
  - iii. Giving is a crucial theme throughout the entire redemptive story in the Bible. Giving and God cannot be separated.
  - iv. If we're made in God's image, and if God is a giver, then that means we are made to be givers, too.
  
- c. Giving changes us.
  - i. We celebrate the image of God within us when we give.
  - ii. When we don't give, we're stopping up the flow of grace that God wants to pour through us.
    1. It's like a stopped-up river.
      - a. Water flows in but can't get out.
      - b. Over time, a layer of scum starts to settle on top.
    2. Anything that gets stopped up begins to stink.
  - iii. Giving may feel strange at first, but that's just the selfish human nature trying to hang on.
    1. Over time, giving is the most natural feeling you can have!
    2. It just feels so natural that you don't notice it anymore, like breathing.
  - iv. Giving turns good things loose in our lives.
    1. We become more creative.
    2. We become more passionate.
    3. We become less selfish.
      - a. Couples who tithe are less likely to get a divorce.
      - b. Why?

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- i. Giving makes you less selfish.
      - ii. When you're less selfish with money, you're less selfish with everything.
      - iii. Less selfish people prosper in their finances, business, relationships, families, and every other area. It's not about money; it's about character.
    - v. Giving helps us prosper.
      - 1. There's no mystical "this for that" scenario in the Bible.
        - a. However, as we become more responsible stewards, God can and will trust us with more and more.
        - b. But never get confused. It's not about the money. It's about the management and faithfulness.
      - 2. Practically, givers are generally more likeable and reliable.
        - a. If you come across as a trustworthy, generous person at work, you're more likely to be promoted.
        - b. Who wants a selfish boss? Who wants a selfish employee?
        - c. There are practical outcomes to spiritual disciplines.

## V. THE TRUTH ABOUT GIVING

- a. Giving is a reminder of ownership.
  - i. Every time I put money in the plate at church, I am reminded that I am not the owner.
  - ii. It's my own little AA meeting.
    - 1. Money is my drug of choice.
    - 2. "My name is <NAME>, and I like stuff."
- b. Giving is praise and worship.
  - i. The offering shouldn't be a "half time" during the worship service. It isn't an intermission. It is part of the worship!
  - ii. Be a CHEERFUL giver!
    - 1. 2 Corinthians 9:7: "God loves a cheerful giver."
    - 2. This comes from the Greek "hileos," from which we get the word "hilarious"!
    - 3. A cheerful giver gives because it is a joy and a blessing, not because of duty and obligation.
    - 4. Parents, your kids are watching you. If you give with a frown on your face, they'll equate giving with rules and regulations. If you do your giving with a giggle, they'll grow up thinking that giving is a joyful thing.

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- c. Giving is spiritual warfare.
    - i. Malachi 3:11: “‘I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ says the LORD of Hosts.”
    - ii. Pray on the armor of God (Ephesians 4).
    - iii. Tithing posts big, bad, square-shouldered angels all around my property line. It’s the ultimate Murphy Repellant.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

- a. We’ll never be happier and more fulfilled than when we are serving and giving.
- b. Giving changes us, and it can change the lives of the people around us.
- c. SPEAKER: Close by showing the provided video clip, *Outrageous Giving*.