

**“A Journey Toward Generosity”**

**Text: 1 Timothy 6:10**

October 21, 2007

Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church ([www.pbpc.org](http://www.pbpc.org))

Oakland, California

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**PRAY!**

This morning I’m going to talk to you about something that tends to make us a little tense within the church—money.

- The reality is we only talk about money one time a year and if you’re a guest I don’t want you thinking that that this church is all about money, because we aren’t. This message is not for you but for those regular attenders and members of the church.
- This is a two-part series called, “Making the Most of What You’ve Got.” Next week I promise you I won’t be talking about money.
- I want to thank Doug Fields for being a resource for this series.

No matter what you think about money there is a universal perception about it. The perception is this, that if I have money that money promises security, freedom and peace. But as millions of broken lives will tell you, the promises of money don’t always deliver. Money usually oversells itself. The truth is money brings about a lot of life’s problems.

The Bible is not down on money. A lot of people misquote the scriptures and say money is the root of all evil. But the Bible says from 1 Timothy 6, “*The love of money...*” It’s the love of money that causes all kinds of trouble.

- Some people want money so much that they have given up their faith and caused themselves a lot of pain.
- More than anything else I can think of, money is that one thing that can tempt us away from God. It can make us feel like we don’t need God.
- Yet, ironically, God is the one source in the whole universe that can give us something that money can’t buy. That is a true and lasting sense of freedom and peace and security.

God has a lot to say in the Bible about money. Jesus, in almost half of what He talked about, He used money as an illustration because He knew what the heartbeat and felt needs of people were.

This morning I’m going to take you on a journey that I call a Journey toward Generosity. What does it look like when God becomes your God and money doesn’t become your god?

- There are four paths that I think you may take until you become a person of generosity and that you must take until you put God first in your life and not money first. These four paths will help you make the most of what you've got and live your life to the fullest.

### I. The "If Only" Path

- A. Many of you either have been on this path or you're still on this path. If only I could get into that college, if only I could have that job, if only I could have that office, if only I could have that title, if only I could make all the decisions for my company, if only I could afford that house and live in that neighborhood, if only I could buy a shiny one of those. That would be great." And then you do, you get it. Then you stop and notice, "This isn't it."
1. Acting illustration.
- B. The key word I want you to write somewhere is the word "more." Because that's really the term that identifies If Only. If only I had more. Then circle the word and put a slash through it. That's the international sign of No. So now it's saying "no more." This could be good for some of you if you are on this path, to put somewhere, where you'll see it all the time. So that you'll remember that in life you don't really need more. That's what the Bible says.
1. Ecclesiastics 5, *"Those who love money, they will never have enough. How absurd to think that wealth brings true happiness."*

### 2. Say what?

- A. When you walk down this path you learn what God has to say. You learn that God cares about your life and He cares about your money and you learn that he cares what you do with your life, and your money matters. If you want to make the most of your life you've got to understand what God says about money.
- B. Let's take a look at what Jesus said. Matthew 6, *"Don't store up treasures here on earth where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty and where thieves break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is there your heart and thoughts will be also."*
1. Jesus says in this passage, *"You're made for eternity. In eternity it's not going to be your treasures that you have here on earth. Those earthly treasures are going to be piles of rust."*
  2. God is saying, "If you want to make the most of what you've got, if you want to live life to its fullest, then you store up your treasure in heaven, where you're going to spend all of eternity."
- C. How do you do that? God says, you give away your treasure here and that stores it up for you in eternity. God gives a very specific way to do that. There's no mystery to it. He tells us how to give. Malachi 3:10, *"Bring your full tithe to the temple treasure so there will be ample provisions in My temple."*

1. The word “tithe” in the original means “a tenth.” A tithe means ten-percent. Why 10%? I have no idea. It’s just what God says several times in the scripture.
  2. But here’s what I do know about God. What He wants is for Him to be first place in your life. He wants your heart. And He knows that when He’s got your treasure He’s going to have your heart. So He says, *“Here’s where we start – ten-percent. Bring a tithe of everything you earn to your church home.”*
- C. A lot of times I imagine at PBPC, what if 100% of our members gave 10% of their income? Just imagine the explosion of ministry that could happen. The opportunities for reaching the world.

### 3. It’s a path I call What If?

- A. This is where I go if, If Only didn’t work. I didn’t find meaning there. So I said God what do you want from me and I see, Here’s what He wants from me. He wants me to tithe. Because He knows that when he gets my tithe He gets my heart. You’re kind of ready but then you go, “What if I don’t have enough money to tithe. What if I add up all my bills and all my bills equal more than how much money I make. What if I lost my money? Like I diversified my savings in the Tech market and that crashed. What if? What if?”
- B. I think the reason most Christians don’t give is not greed, but fear. They’re afraid their money is going to run out. They’re afraid that if they give to God off the top that they’re going to get half way through the month and they’re going to be out of money. They’re afraid. I’ve been there.
- C. I’ve learned in my life, over and over and over, an enemy of spiritual growth is fear. Really, when it comes to giving it’s nothing more than the fear of I don’t believe that God is who He says He is and He’ll do what He’s promised to do. The more that I follow God’s ways and the more that I learn from his love letter, the more that I realize that I shouldn’t be afraid of giving too much. What I should fear is giving too little.
1. Luke 12, Jesus says, *“Much is required of those to whom much is given.”* Friends, we have been given so much. Jesus said, *“Much is expected.”*

### 4. “I will”

- A. This is when you get to the point in your journey that you say I will give. You fight through your fear and you say, “God, I’m going to tithe.” I give not because it’s easy. I’m not suggesting this is easy. I tithe because I want to be obedient to what God wants me to do. I tithe because I want to follow His ways. I want to be faithful to Him.

- B. Malachi 3:10 in another translation says, *“I am the Lord all powerful and I challenge you to put Me to the test. Bring the entire ten-percent. Then I will open the windows of heaven and flood you with blessing after blessing.”*
1. The last part of this verse, He says if you obey me I’m going to open up heaven and I am going to flood you with blessing. The Bible repeatedly promises that your constant contribution to the church, to God’s work, will set in motion a series of diving blessings, that when you tithe, when you give, it’s like this promise of supernatural activity in your life.
  2. Don’t walk out of here misunderstanding what I am saying. I’m not saying that if you tithe, you’ll become rich. But you might. And you might not. God hasn’t promised you wealth but He has promised that He’ll take care of every one of your needs.
  3. God says, “Put me to the test.” You can’t find many scriptures where He says that – Put Me to the test. He promises blessings.

**To make the most of what you’ve got...You’ve got to have a plan.**

- A. You need a plan for your finances. The Bible teaches that there’s a plan for earning, there’s a plan for saving, and there’s a plan for giving. It says in Proverbs 21, *“Plan carefully and you’ll have plenty. If you act too quickly you will never have enough.”*
- B. What is taught all over the world by Christian financial planners is called the 10-10-80 plan. There are different variations of it but generally it goes like this. The first ten-percent of your earnings you give directly to God. You give it to God as your tithe and say, “God, You want my heart. Where my treasures are, there my heart is. I’m going to give it to You and say You’re number one in my life.” The second ten-percent goes to savings. That you begin to save. Then you align your life so that you can live off the eighty percent.

As I mentioned earlier, this is something we talk about one time a year when we ask our church members and regular attenders to consider making this commitment. **Generous giving leads to blessed living.**

**PRAYER**

**God, thank You for paying a tremendous price through Jesus Christ so that we might have a relationship with You. God, we want to stop chasing the wind and looking to money as the source of our security and freedom and peace. God, may we find that in You and give back to you what You’ve graciously given to us. We need Your help to fight past our fear and to put our faith in You and Your promises. God, We thank You for Your promises. Your promise is to provide for us as we put You number one in our lives. May revival break out in our lives and in this church as we become more generous in our response to Your love for us. It’s in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**