

**“Generosity is a Heart Thing” - Mark 14:3-9**  
**Pastor Burt Garwood – October 15, 2017**

The primary foundation of stewardship is acknowledging: "*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*" Psalm 24:1

“At some point, **stewardship became a sort of "dirty word" in our culture.** People associated it with fundraising campaigns or just assumed it was some old, historic church word. **But stewardship actually means managing God's blessings God's way for God's glory.** It affects our money, sure, but there's so much more to it than that. We get to steward our marriages, children, careers, leadership . . . all for God's glory.” – Chris Brown (on DaveRamsey.com)

READ: [www.stewardship.com/articles/how-stewardship-helps-pay-down-debt](http://www.stewardship.com/articles/how-stewardship-helps-pay-down-debt)

- It really was a heart shift. “You can tell yourself it's God's money all day long, but is that actually going to help if your heart's not in it?” Getting that right crushed any pride and caused them to be prayerful about how they would use the money God had put into their lives. That encouraged them to trust God with their circumstances and count on Him to meet their needs. [Stewardship.com 8-31-17]

Matthew 6:21 Jesus said, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”

- Money management is a heart thing. We put value on things we desire. We put a price tag on it. We dream about it, save up for it, or just go crazy and impulsively buy it.
- Your treasure is the thing that is most important to you. Maybe it's your job, investments, a new house, or a new car. Or maybe it's spending money on activities with your friends, your spouse or your kiddos.
- Regardless of your particular passion, your treasure is what you think about, what you go after, what you want to attain. It's where your heart is.
- If you aren't willing to part with something, it could mean you're placing too much value on that thing.

God wants us to treasure him and hold our money up to him with open hands. When God is your treasure...when Jesus is your heart's desire...he will receive from you a generous amount of all that you possess. What's interesting is how this plays out in our lives today...

- We easily spend money on something we want. It doesn't take much to impulsively buy on Amazon. We go on expensive vacations, attend numerous Royals and Chiefs games, music concerts and festivals. That's what a lot of us, if we're honest with ourselves are doing. We're enjoying living life in the now spending the money God has given us.
- But when it comes to giving back to God, we say we're financially hard up and can only give this much. This is sin. READ: Malachi 3:8-10

Richard Simmons III is founder and executive director of The Center for Executive Leadership. In *The True Measure of a Man*, he notes:

- We have shifted from a production economy to a consumer economy.
- We measure ourselves not by what we do but by what we own. Our work is a means to our wealth. And in a culture driven by social media and instant celebrity, we measure ourselves by

how others measure us. Simmons quotes professor Christopher Lasch, who observed that...People "would rather be envied for their material success than respected for their character." [Denison Forum 10-12-17]

Our heart for God is reflected in our spending and in our giving. Is he getting our first fruits? Or is he getting our leftovers? READ: Proverbs 30:8-9 That's a heart cry when it comes to money and God.

Save, Spend and Give. Those are Dave Ramsey's big three principles.

- He says...“Giving liberates the soul of the giver.” When you buy something, you can feel buyer's remorse. But you never walk away feeling badly about giving. It's because when we give, we are connected to God and his mission and there is something bigger than us and more fulfilling going on than the acquisition of personal wealth.
- Generosity is a much more satisfying feeling than greed. Generosity generates contentment because you reach a mindset and a feeling in your heart where you realize you are just fine with what you have and that others can benefit from your generosity.

READ: Mark 14:3-7

- This woman poured a year's worth of wages over Jesus' head in a matter of seconds. It was her act of worship...straight from her heart...expressing to him her gratefulness for the forgiveness of sins and salvation that he gave her.
- An Alabaster jar. We all have one. They come in different shapes and sizes. And sealed within is all that we prize – our treasured earthly possessions. Occasionally, we open it up and share a little bit with others, as we know we should. But we do it carefully, with control, anxious to put the lid back on before too much is poured out. So much of life is spent saving up and preserving what's in that alabaster jar.
- The woman with the alabaster jar...she poured it all on Jesus' head. She brings each of us to a fork in the road: It's a heart question. What will you do with your alabaster jar?

Good stewardship and wise money management are very important and good things to practice. But more so is extravagant love.

- Christ poured himself out for you. And you have received the greatest gift ever...forgiveness of sins and the promise of heaven as your final destination, thanks to Christ pouring himself out for you.
- Has Jesus so filled your heart with gratitude that that you can't help but lavishly pour it out in return?
- Is his love transforming your heart and your prayers from “Give me, Lord” to “Use me, Lord...all that I am and all that I hold dear”?
- Jesus never regretted breaking his alabaster jar...his body and pouring out his blood for you. Nor will you.

Resources:

1. [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com)
2. [www.stewardship.com](http://www.stewardship.com)
3. “Giving: Unlocking the Heart of Good Stewardship” (Bible study from Zondervan)