

SERMON SERIES

# Sermon Series: Money, Generosity & the Kingdom — A 5-Week Financial Discipleship Series

---

*James Bell | Lead Pastor | Founder, Pastors Connection Network*

*Author & Speaker | LiveWell by James Bell*

SERMON SERIES: MONEY, GENEROSITY & THE KINGDOM — A 5-WEEK...

## Sermon Series: Money, Generosity & the Kingdom — A 5-Week Financial Discipleship Series

### Introduction — Why the Church Must Preach About Money

The church's widespread reluctance to preach about money is one of the most consequential failures of pastoral nerve in contemporary Christianity. Jesus addressed money in his teaching more than almost any other subject — more than prayer, more than heaven, more than marriage, more than church governance. He said "you cannot serve both God and money" and meant it as a statement of ultimacy: money is the primary rival deity in the human heart, competing with God for ultimate allegiance in the most powerful and practical of arenas. The church that avoids sustained, honest engagement with money is not being appropriately humble — it is abandoning one of the most important fields of pastoral formation.

The result of this avoidance is entirely predictable: congregations that are financially unhealthy, insufficiently generous, deeply confused about what the Bible actually teaches about wealth and stewardship, and practically untransformed in their relationship to money despite years of otherwise faithful Christian formation. The person who has attended church for twenty years but has never heard a sustained, serious, biblically grounded treatment of financial discipleship has been formed incompletely — regardless of how well they know their doctrine, how faithfully they attend, or how actively they serve.

This series is the antidote. It is not a stewardship campaign — it is a discipleship series, and it is important to communicate that distinction from the beginning. The goal is not to increase the offering, though genuine financial discipleship will do exactly that. The goal is to form believers who are genuinely free from money's grip, genuinely generous toward God's purposes, and genuinely wise in their stewardship of what God has entrusted to them.

*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

— Matthew 6:24



SERMON SERIES: MONEY, GENEROSITY & THE KINGDOM — A 5-WEEK...

## Week 1: "Follow the Money" — What Your Finances Reveal About Your Faith

### Week 1 Full Outline

**Texts: Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:13-21**

THESIS: The budget is a spiritual document. Where you put your money reveals where you have put your heart — and the gap between your stated values and your actual financial behavior is the precise measurement of the distance between your confessed faith and your lived faith.

#### Introduction — The Financial Audit as Spiritual Audit

Open with an invitation to a thought experiment: "Without looking at your bank statements, I want you to write down what you would say your top five financial priorities are." Allow 60 seconds of silent reflection. "Now I want to tell you something that might be uncomfortable: your actual financial behavior — your spending patterns, your savings habits, your giving history — is a more accurate indicator of your real priorities than anything you just wrote down. This is not condemnation. It is an invitation to the most practically important diagnostic tool available for assessing the health of your spiritual life."

Connect to Jesus' teaching on treasure and heart: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Note that Jesus does not say "where your heart is, there will your treasure be" — the causation runs the other direction. The placement of our resources shapes the orientation of our hearts, not merely reflects it. This is why financial discipleship is not just about money — it is about the formation of the heart.

#### Point 1 — The Eye as the Lamp

Matthew 6:22-23 connects financial orientation (treasure) to perception (the eye as lamp). The financial generosity or greed of the heart determines how a person sees everything — whether they see the world as abundant (held by a generous God who can be trusted) or scarce (requiring defensive accumulation). "If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness." The financially anxious, hoarding person perceives reality through a lens of scarcity that affects every domain of life. The generously trusting person sees through a lens of abundance that enables bold faith and open-handed living.

#### Point 2 — The Impossibility of Financial Neutrality

Matthew 6:24 establishes that financial neutrality — having no particular master in the realm of money — is impossible. You are either serving God with your money or you are serving money in opposition to God. There is no third option. This is a stark claim, and it should be preached starkly: the comfortable middle ground that most Christians occupy — using money for their own purposes while nominally acknowledging God's ownership — is not the biblical option. The question is not whether money is your master; it is which master you will choose.

#### Discussion Questions — Week 1

1. What did your thought experiment reveal about the gap between your stated and actual financial priorities?
2. What would it look like practically for your financial life to be fully submitted to God?
3. Where do you notice financial anxiety or scarcity thinking most often?

*SERMON SERIES: MONEY, GENEROSITY & THE KINGDOM — A 5-WEEK...*

4. What would generous living look like in your specific financial situation?



SERMON SERIES: MONEY, GENEROSITY & THE KINGDOM — A 5-WEEK...

## Weeks 2-5: Full Sermon Outlines

### Week 2 — "The Freedom of Enough": Debt, Contentment, and Financial Freedom

**Texts: Proverbs 22:7; Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:11-13**

THESIS: Debt is bondage, contentment is freedom, and biblical financial wisdom produces not the comfort of affluence but the freedom of enough — the deep satisfaction that comes from living within one's means in dependence on God's provision.

KEY MOVEMENT: Proverbs 22:7 — "The borrower is servant to the lender" — is a wisdom statement of brutal practical accuracy. Debt is not morally neutral. It is a form of obligation that reduces freedom, creates anxiety, and redirects future income toward past decisions. The cultural normalization of consumer debt has produced a generation of financially enslaved people who work increasingly hard to maintain lifestyles that are increasingly expensive, with decreasing actual enjoyment of those lifestyles because the anxiety of debt is always present. The biblical alternative — living within one's means, pursuing contentment rather than consumption, building financial margin — produces the freedom that consumer culture promises but cannot deliver.

### Week 3 — "The Generous Life": Why Generosity Is Gospel

**Texts: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Luke 21:1-4**

THESIS: Generosity is not the result of having more than enough — it is the spiritual practice that produces the freedom from anxiety and the sense of abundance that makes "having enough" possible.

KEY MOVEMENT: Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9 is both countercultural and counterintuitive: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." This is not a prosperity gospel formula — it is a description of the spiritual economy of the kingdom, in which generosity both reflects and produces a fundamentally different relationship to money and to God. The widow's mite (Luke 21) illustrates this with particular clarity: she gave "everything she had to live on" — and Jesus commends her above all others. Her generosity is not excess; it is everything. And it is celebrated precisely because it demonstrates the trust in God that prosperity giving can easily simulate but cannot genuinely produce.

### Week 4 — "Enough to Leave Behind": Legacy, Estate Planning & Generational Stewardship

**Texts: Proverbs 13:22; Psalm 37:25-26**

THESIS: Biblical stewardship extends beyond our lifetime — the faithful steward plans not only for today but for the legacy he leaves, ensuring that his accumulated resources continue serving kingdom purposes after he is gone.

KEY POINTS: "A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children" — legacy thinking is not unspiritual hoarding; it is long-range stewardship. The practical elements of legacy stewardship: wills, trusts, beneficiary designations, charitable giving vehicles (donor-advised funds, charitable remainder trusts), and the inclusion of kingdom causes in estate planning. The most important thing: most Americans die without a

SERMON SERIES: MONEY, GENEROSITY & THE KINGDOM — A 5-WEEK...

*will, leaving the distribution of their assets to state intestacy laws rather than intentional stewardship. The church that equips its congregation to think intentionally about financial legacy is serving them in one of the most practically important dimensions of stewardship.*

## Week 5 — "A Generous Church": When the Body of Christ Gives Together

**Texts: Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7**

THESIS: The generosity of the early church was not a fundraising strategy — it was a missional statement that demonstrated the kingdom in concentrated form and gave irresistible credibility to the gospel proclamation.

KEY MOVEMENT: The Jerusalem church's radical generosity in Acts 2 and 4 — selling possessions and distributing to anyone who had need — is often treated as a historical curiosity rather than a missional model. But Luke's inclusion of this detail is not incidental. The community's generosity was the primary piece of evidence that something genuinely supernatural had happened to them. The Macedonian churches' giving "beyond their ability" in 2 Corinthians 8 is described by Paul as a "grace" — a spiritual gift, not a financial transaction. Collective generosity as a community is one of the most powerful expressions of kingdom reality available to the local church.

### CLOSING THE SERIES

End the series with a specific, concrete generosity vision: what would this congregation do if it gave together at a genuinely generous level? Name a specific community need, a specific mission opportunity, or a specific kingdom investment that this community's collective generosity could address. Make the vision tangible, the steps clear, and the invitation genuine.

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

— 2 Corinthians 8:9

*"The most generous act in history was God giving himself, through Christ, for people who had nothing to offer in return. Every act of genuine human generosity participates in the character of that God and points toward the kingdom he is building." — James Bell*

# LiveWell by James Bell

---

*Equipping Pastors. Strengthening Marriages. Building the Kingdom.*

*[livewellbyjamesbell.com](http://livewellbyjamesbell.com)*