

6 MONEY MYTHS

by Andy Manning

- The title of this sermon is “6 Money Myths.”
- I want to talk to you about some of the most common money myths that I’ve heard from Christians.
- The reason this topic is important is because many Christians are being foolish when it comes to their money when in fact we should be the wisest people in the world. We have all the financial wisdom we need right here in the Bible, and if we would just study and apply this book, we’d be doing awesome with our money.
- Unfortunately that’s not the case with most Christians. Check out these sad statistics.
 - 76% of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, with little to no emergency savings, according to a 2013 survey released by Bankrate.com.
 - The average twenty-eight-year-old has \$66,000 in consumer debt.
 - 62% of Americans don’t pay off their credit card bills each month.
 - Only 4 percent of Americans give 10% of their income to churches (2011, Barna Research).
 - As of 2009, tithing is the lowest it has been in 41 years.
 - The average church member gives 2.38 percent of their income (EmptyTomb.org).
 - According to Barna Research, the more money a family makes, the less they are to tithe. The more money people earn, the less they give.
 - If you earn over \$25,000, you are in the top 10% of the world’s wealthiest. In other words, you are richer than 90% of the world. And although most Americans are in the top 10%, only 2 percent of

Americans think they are wealthy. 90% of Americans don't feel like they have enough yet.

- The Bible gives the best financial advice.
- In the Bible there is a three-fold plan for financial freedom. **Give, save, and live on the rest.** It's a simple strategy that has worked for thousands of years. Give 10% to God, save 15%, and then live on 75%. When you live according to God's plan for your finances, God blesses you, and God blesses others through you. You are blessed, and you become a blessing.
- However most Americans and most Christians today are ignoring the timeless wisdom of the Bible. Why? Money myths.
- **Myths are lies that culture tells.** There are many money myths circulating, and if a lie gets told enough times and by enough people, it starts to be accepted as fact.
- Many Christians have bought into several destructive money myths, and these myths are causing them to be greedy instead of generous, in debt rather than debt-free, stressed rather than worry-free, and dissatisfied rather than content.
- Today I want to expose ten of these popular money myths so that we can stop making dumb decisions and put ourselves in a position to be blessed and to be a blessing in the name of Jesus Christ.

6 Money Myths

1. The church shouldn't talk about money.

- Some people are convinced that the church shouldn't talk about money. That the church is no place to talk about finances. As if money should not be mixed with spirituality. And if they hear a sermon on money, on giving, on tithing, or money management, some people even get angry and vow never to return.
- Here's the truth. The church's job is to teach people the Bible, and the Bible is filled with instructions and warnings about money.
 - 2,300 verses in the Bible talk about money.
 - The church's job is to teach people to obey the teachings of Jesus, and Jesus Himself had much to say about money.
 - 15% of everything Jesus said had to do with money.
 - If you just look at His parables alone, two-thirds are specifically about money.
 - And if you just look at the four gospels, the four Bible books that tell the story of Jesus life, one out of ten verses is about money.
 - When you put that together, if the church talked about money as much as Jesus did, I would preach on money every third sermon.
- Why does the Bible talk so much about money?
- First, because you need money to live. God cares about us, so He has given us wisdom about how to manage our money so that we are well taken care of.
- And second, because money is God's number-one competitor for your worship. It's very tempting to put money before God. It's tempting to worship money and use God, rather than worship God and use money. It is tempting to sacrifice your relationship with God to get more money.
- Isn't that what happened to Judas Iscariot? He was one of Christ's closest friends; one of the twelve apostles. But in the end, his love for money was too big a temptation, and he betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver.

- Or what about the story of the Rich Young Ruler. A wealthy young leader approached Jesus and asked what he needed to do to go to heaven. Jesus said, keep the commandments. Jesus wanted to expose his sin so that he would realize he couldn't earn his way to heaven and see his need for a Savior. But the young man said that he had kept all the commandments. So Christ, knowing the young man's heart, knowing that his true god was money, told him to sell everything, give it to the poor, and then follow Jesus. But the young man refused. He walked away disappointed. He chose hell rather than part with his money. Money is a huge challenge for people who want to live for Christ.
- So, God has given us many instructions to help us avoid money-olatry – the worship of money.
- **PIE ILLUSTRATION:** Don't forget that Jesus doesn't just want to be first in your life, He wants to be the center of your life. Some people try to compartmentalize their walk with God. They divide their life into sections, like slices in a pie. One slice is for work, one slice is for family, one slice is for Jesus, one slice is for money, one slice is for fun, one slice is for sex, one slice is for health. This is why people get upset when the church talks about money. Jesus is just one slice in the pie, and they don't want Him to impact their finances. Jesus and money are different slices and they need to stay separated. But Jesus doesn't just want to be one of your slices, He wants to be the filling in the whole pie. Jesus wants to be the leader of every arena of your life, including your money.
- **Matthew 22:37-38** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command."

- God wants us to love Him with all that we are, including our finances. Not just our words, not just our sexuality, not just obeying the Ten Commandments, but with every arena of our lives.

2. My money belongs to me.

- This may be the most destructive money myth at all.
- If my money belongs to me, then I can do whatever I want. I can be greedy; I don't have to give; I can buy whatever I want; I can be wasteful; I can hoard it; it's up to me.
- In fact, this is the myth that feeds the first myth. The reason the church shouldn't talk about money is because my money belongs to me, and it's none of the church's or God's business. This is, of course, a myth.
- The Bible says in **Psalm 24:1**, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Everything belongs to God. Every penny you have belongs to God.
- Perhaps the most important lesson we can learn about money is this: **It's all His**. Your possessions. Your talents. Your skills. Your time. Everything You have is God's.
- "But I worked long and hard for this money. I should have the freedom to do whatever I want with it." The Bible says in **Deuteronomy 8:18** (NIV), "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..." The eyes, the hands, the feet, the brains, the health to produce wealth – all these things come from God. If God didn't give them to you, you wouldn't have earned a dime. Everything belongs to God.

- If everything belongs to God, what does that make you? That's means you are a steward. You are a manager. The Bible speaks much about stewardship. God owns it all, and you're His money manager. You are to manage His money in a way that honors and serves Him.
- Imagine that you went on a long vacation to Europe and you asked your friend to house-sit for you. You own the house, but your friend is the manager, the steward. Now imagine your reaction if while you were away, your friend sold your house, took the money partied with some of it, gave some away, and gambled away the rest. How would that make you feel? Angry! Now imagine how God must feel when He places all this wealth in our hands, and we act like it's ours to spend however we want.
- Stewardship means three things:
 - What you have is not yours;
 - It's temporary;
 - You will be held accountable.
- The challenge of stewardship is that we don't have authority to mismanage God's money, but we have the ability. All we have to do is write a check, or swipe a credit card, and we can act like God's money is our own. But it's not. And we must not forget that.
- God has placed His resources in your hands to manage. And He has given some plain instructions. The first 10% goes to His work in the church. This is called a tithe. And the other 90% is for you to live on.
- But there's a catch. The 90% is still God's. He will allow you to enjoy it. But it is still His. That means you need to acquire it in a godly way. You need to spend it in a godly way. You need to carefully consider His will in every

purchase. And you need to constantly listen for His voice so that He can lead you to generously help others along the way.

- One mistake that many people make is they think God only wants 10%. As long as they tithe, then they can do whatever they want with the rest. But it all belongs to God. Tithing is only the beginning, the foundation, the training wheels of generosity and stewardship. If you listen to God's voice, He will lead you to become more and more generous.
- Many Christians have aspired to become reverse tithers – giving 90% to the Lord, and living on the rest.
- That's what Rick Warren did. He is a pastor from California. The first year of his marriage he and his wife decided that they wanted to increase their tithe by 1% every year. So the first year they brought 10%, and the second year 11%, then 12%, and on and on. God doesn't allow generosity like that to go unrewarded. A few years ago God used Rick to write a book called "The Purpose Driven Life," which went on to become one of the best-selling non-fiction books in history. What do you think he did with the money? Most people think more money means more for me! Not so. That's called greed. Greed is the assumption that the extra is for my consumption. But the Bible teaches that when I'm blessed with more than I need, it's for somebody who is in need.¹ Rick and his wife became reverse tithers. They now give 90% to the church and live on 10%. Not only that, he stopped taking a salary from the church, and paid back the church every penny they paid him for the past 25 years. And on top of all this, he drives a 13 year old Ford, he lives in the same house that he's had for the past 22 years, and he doesn't own a boat or a jet.
- God doesn't just want 10%. He wants it all. And like Rick Warren, the better you are at stewardship, the more money God will put in your hands to serve and honor Him.

¹ Both of these sentences are from sermons by Andy Stanley, one of my favorite preachers. Check him out at www.NorthPoint.org.

3. Tithing is Old Testament only.

- The Bible is very clear about what He wants you to do with the first 10% of your income. It's called a tithe, and He wants you to bring it to the local church to further His work in the world.
- Why the church? Why not United Way, or Habitat for Humanity, or Big Brothers and Big Sisters?
 - The church is the body of Christ. It is His hands and feet; His mouthpiece. It is through the church that Christ impacts the world. And our tithes and offerings fund that work.
 - The Bible calls the church the bride of Christ, God's flock, God's field, God's building, the temple of God, the family of God, God's household, the pillar and foundation of the church, the assembly of the firstborn.
 - The says that Christ is the head of church; the Savior of the church; that Christ is building the church; Christ loves the church; cares for the church; provides for the church; and is making the church holy.
 - If you don't understand the significance of the church and the privilege and responsibility of bringing your tithe to the church rather than other organizations, then you don't know your Bible.
- But some Christians object to tithing because they have bought into the myth that tithing is Old Testament only. That it doesn't apply to us today, because in Christ, we are no longer under law, we are under grace.
- Here's the truth. First of all, God's people were tithing long before the law. The Bible says that Abraham and Jacob both tithed, and they lived long before Moses was ever born and the law was given.

- Second, not all Old Testament Laws have passed away. It's true that some Old Testament laws have passed away now that Christ has fulfilled the law, but many Old Testament laws still apply to us today.
- Could you imagine somebody saying, "You don't have to avoid murder, adultery, stealing and lying anymore. Those are just Old Testament laws, but we're under grace, not law."
- Also, the New Testament never releases us from the tithe. It never says that Christians no longer need to tithe.
- In fact, Jesus commanded the tithe. **Matthew 23:23** "You should tithe."
- And history records that the earliest Christians continued to tithe.
- Tithing may be out of style, but it is not outdated.

4. Tithing is giving.

- Isn't tithing giving? No. Listen to the words of **Malachi 3:10**. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple." The Bible doesn't say to give a tithe; it says to bring the tithe.
- Some people think that tithing is a synonym for giving. So if they give \$3 to the church, they call that their tithe. If they give \$10 to the church, that's their tithe. But that's not true. The word "tithe" means a tenth part. It is 10%.
- **Tithing is taking the first 10% of your income and bringing it to God's church.** You can't tithe 1%, or 3%, or 9%. A tithe is 10%. And you don't give it, because it already belongs to God. It's not generosity. You bring it.

- Many Christians consider themselves to be generous people, but they don't even tithe. The Bible says that giving, or generosity, doesn't even begin until after you've already brought 10% to God.
- The Bible calls anything above 10% freewill offerings. After you bring the tithe, then you can begin giving. You can give the extra wherever the Lord leads. You can help needy friends. You can give more to the church. You can give to missionaries. You can give to charities. You can give to politicians who are leading our nation in a godly direction. But the first ten percent goes to God through the church.
- Generosity is much more challenging than simply giving a dollar to the Salvation Army volunteer at Christmas time or dropping a \$20 in a fireman's boot at the stoplight. Generosity doesn't begin until after you're already tithing.
- You might say, "Well, I'm providing for my aging parents. Isn't that generous?" That's not generosity. That's not charity. That's called responsibility. That's like a father claiming to be generous because he provides for the needs of his wife and children. You're not doing anything special. 1 Timothy 5:8 says that someone who doesn't provide for the needs of their relatives has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever!

5. I can't afford to tithe.

- Some people never grow in generosity and stewardship because they believe the myth that they cannot afford to tithe. But that's just plain ridiculous.
- That's like saying, "I can't afford to be obedient."
- Imagine if somebody said, "I can't afford to stop stealing. I can't afford to tell the truth. I can't afford to stop cheating on my spouse. I can't afford to stop

prostitution.” Crazy! We would tell them that we must still be obedient, even when it involves sacrifice.

- Tithing is a command. And when it comes to God’s commands, we don’t ask, “What’s the cost? What’s the price? Can I afford it? How much will it hurt? How big is the sacrifice?” No! We obey God’s word, and we leave the consequences to Him. We don’t obey if we can afford it. We obey, no matter what.
- The issue is not that people can’t afford to tithe, but that they can’t afford to tithe without making lifestyle changes. Many Christians want to follow Christ without Him changing their lives. They want to follow Jesus, but they don’t want to lower their standard of living. But when you invite Jesus into your life, He wants to do an extreme makeover. He wants to change you. If you are able to follow Jesus without making drastic changes in your life, you’re following somebody else.
- The truth is that we can all afford to tithe. Let me prove it. If your income were reduced by 10%, would you die? Of course not. You would have to make some changes. But you wouldn’t die. And that proves that you can afford to tithe. The question is can “Can” but “Will” we tithe.
- The reason people don’t think they can afford to tithe is because they see tithing as an expense, when in reality it is an investment. **Malachi 3:10** says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,’ says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, ‘I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!’” God promise to bless you beyond your imagination when you bring the tithe.

- The truth is that not only can you afford to tithe, but you can't afford not to tithe. I can tell you from years of experience that I am much richer living on 90% with God's blessing than on 100% without God's blessing.
- Do you know why some people don't feel like they can afford to tithe? Because they aren't tithing. Their finances aren't being blessed by God. But when you take a step of faith and trust God with your finances, He will provide for you, and He will bless you beyond your imagination.
- Don't get me wrong. Tithing isn't the cure all for your financial struggles. You can't ignore the Biblical wisdom of hard work, saving, planning, and living within your means, and believe that God will take care of you just because you are tithing. Foolishness leads to pain. You reap what you sow. But when you tithe, you place yourself in a position to be blessed by God, and to be used by God to bless others.

6. More money means more happiness.

- Many people believe the myth that more money means more happiness.
 - This is why so many struggle to tithe and be generous – they think giving away money means giving away happiness.
 - This is why many people lie, cheat, and steal. They think money will make them happy, so they will do anything to get it.
 - This is why many people take foolish jobs – jobs that leave no time for church, no time for rest, no time for family – it's because in the end, more money means more happiness, so they are willing to sacrifice anything and everything to get it.
- But that's a myth. It's called the Myth of More. More money, more happiness. Wrong.

- A study by the London School of Economics showed that more money does not equal more happiness after a certain point. Once average income is above \$20,000 a year, higher pay brings no greater happiness.
- More money means you can buy more. It means you can travel more. It means you can do more. It means you can have nicer things. But that's not happiness.
- Not only does money not lead to happiness, but the love of money leads to all sorts of problems. **1 Timothy 6:9-10** "9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
- The truth is that the best things in life cannot be bought. It doesn't matter how rich you are. Money can buy a house but not a home. It can buy a bed but not sleep. Money can buy a clock but not time. Money can buy a book but not knowledge. Money can buy position but not respect. It can buy blood but not life. Money can buy medicine but not health. It can buy sex but not love. Money can buy insurance but not safety.
- Money does not lead to happiness. So what does?
- We're all on a happiness quest. That's the way God made us. And God gives us plenty of instructions about how to get happy. Listen to **Psalms 119:1-3**.

1 Joyful are people of integrity,
 who follow the instructions of the Lord.
 2 Joyful are those who obey his laws
 and search for him with all their hearts.
 3 They do not compromise with evil,

and they walk only in his paths.

- Let me give you condensed version: **Happiness comes not from riches, but from a right relationship with God.** God's word promises that if you really want happiness, don't chase after money and the things money can buy. Run after God. Search for Him with all your heart. Obey Him. And walk in His ways.
- So what's your next step today.
 - Maybe your next step is to begin tithing.
 - Maybe your next step is to increase your offering to 12, 15, 20% or even more.
 - Or maybe you need to recommit your life to Jesus Christ. To commit to seeking Him with all your heart; to look to Him for happiness rather than money and material things.
- Whatever your decision is, I want to close with my favorite verse in the Bible, **Matthew 6:33.** "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." Seek God first. Seek Him first. And He will meet your needs – emotionally, relationally, physically, professionally, and financially.