

Weekend Teaching Discussion Guide
Reordering Your Life: Week Three
Teaching by Pastor Ken

WARM-UP QUESTION

- When you think about money, what emotions or words come to mind first: freedom, stress, generosity, security, control, contentment, responsibility, or something else? Why?

DISCUSS

1. The Heart Behind the Money

Pastor Ken began by acknowledging that this weekend we are having an honest and open conversation about tithing, offerings, and money. He reminded us that the first two weeks of Reordering Your Life covered the heart behind our finances and how to put those heart changes into practical action.

Jesus talked extensively about money because money is rarely just about money. What we do with our money often reveals what is happening beneath the surface of our hearts.

The goal is not simply to become better at managing money. God desires for us to experience financial freedom, peace, joy, purpose, and alignment with His best for our lives.

Pastor Ken also emphasized that those who are not yet believers are not expected to give. Giving is being discussed specifically within the context of following Jesus and growing as His disciples.

- Why do you think money can reveal so much about what is happening in our hearts?
- What is the difference between simply managing money well and allowing God to transform our relationship with money?
- What would financial freedom, peace, and purpose look like in your life?

2. God Is the Creator, Owner, and Provider

Pastor Ken established three foundational principles for Christians:

God is the Creator.

Everything begins with God.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1

God is the Owner.

Everything ultimately belongs to Him.

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it.”

Psalm 24:1

God is our Provider.

We can trust Him to provide what we need.

Pastor Ken pointed to the story of Abraham and Isaac and the name Jehovah Jireh, meaning “The Lord will provide.” He also referenced Paul's confidence that God would meet the needs of His people through Christ.

This changes the fundamental question we ask about our finances. Instead of seeing ourselves as owners who occasionally give something to God, we begin to see ourselves as stewards of what already belongs to Him.

- Which of these three truths is easiest for you to believe: God is Creator, Owner, or Provider? Which is hardest?
- How would viewing yourself as a steward rather than an owner change the way you approach your money?

3. The Purpose of the Tithe

Pastor Ken explained that in the Old Testament, God established a system of giving that served several purposes. The tithe, meaning one-tenth, was not simply about collecting money. It helped God's people connect with Him, remember their place and God's place, resist selfishness, and care for the community.

“No one should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.”

Deuteronomy 16:16–17

The sacrificial system was also designed to help people give God what was valuable rather than simply giving whatever was left over. Pastor Ken explained how people eventually began trying to fulfill the letter of the law while cutting corners, offering animals that were blind, diseased, or otherwise defective.

This ultimately points toward Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice was perfect and once for all.

*“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your **ancestors**, but with*

the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

1 Peter 1:18–19

The New Testament believer is not trying to earn salvation through giving. Instead, giving becomes one expression of worship, trust, obedience, and spiritual growth.

- Why do you think God used a regular rhythm of giving to help His people remember who He is and who they are?
- What does it look like for giving to become an act of worship rather than simply a financial transaction?

4. Giving and Salvation Are Not the Same Thing

Pastor Ken addressed a common statement: “I don't have to give money to be a Christian.”

His answer was clear: That is correct.

Giving does not save us. We cannot buy God's favor, earn salvation, or become worthy of God through good works or financial generosity.

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”

5. Growing in Grace Changes How We Live

Pastor Ken emphasized that while giving does not save us, discipleship changes us. As we grow in grace and move from spiritual infancy toward spiritual maturity, our experience of peace and joy from living according to God's purposes should grow as well.

Spiritual maturity is not simply determined by how long someone has been a Christian. Someone can be young and wise beyond their years, while someone who has followed Jesus for many years can remain spiritually immature.

The question is not simply, “How long have I been a believer?” but “How am I growing as a follower of Jesus?”

“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

Ephesians 2:8–10

Giving is one area where our spiritual growth becomes practical. As God changes our hearts, our willingness to trust Him, surrender control, and live generously can change as well.

- What are some signs that someone is growing spiritually, regardless of how long they have been a Christian?
- How can financial decisions reveal areas where we may still need to grow in trust and surrender?

6. New Testament Grace Does Not Mean Lower Expectations

Pastor Ken addressed another common perspective: “We are New Testament believers, so I can simply do whatever feels right in my heart.”

He explained that throughout Scripture, God's expectations often become deeper and more heart-focused rather than simply becoming less demanding.

In the Old Testament, the command was not to commit adultery. Jesus addressed the condition of the heart behind adultery by teaching against lust.

In the Old Testament, the command was not to murder. Jesus went deeper by addressing anger and hatred toward others.

The movement is not from law to less responsibility. It is from external behavior toward internal transformation.

Pastor Ken connected this principle to giving. The question is not simply, “What is the minimum I have to do?” The deeper question is, “What does it look like for my finances to reflect a heart that belongs to Jesus?”

- Why do you think Jesus often moved the conversation from outward behavior to the condition of the heart?
- How can asking “What does love, trust, and obedience look like?” lead to a different approach than asking “What is the minimum required?”

7. Four Reasons to Consider Giving

Pastor Ken shared four reasons that are worthy of consideration for followers of Jesus.

1. Giving Helps Us Stay in Alignment

Giving reminds us that God is the Creator, Owner, Provider, and Sustainer.

“You must set aside a tithe of your crops, one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship, the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored... Doing this will teach you always to fear the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 14:22–23

The practice of giving can serve as a regular reminder that everything we have ultimately comes from God.

2. Jesus Said So

Pastor Ken pointed to Jesus' words in Matthew 23, where Jesus addressed the Pharisees for being meticulous about tithing while neglecting justice, mercy, and faith.

“You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.”

Matthew 23:23

The point is not that giving replaces a life of justice, mercy, and faith. Rather, Jesus challenged His followers to pursue both.

Pastor Ken described the tithe as a starting place. It is not merely about a percentage of income. It is an indicator of what matters most and where our priorities are placed.

3. Giving Can Become a Gateway to a Blessed Life

Pastor Ken referenced Malachi 3 and God's invitation for His people to bring the full tithe into the storehouse.

“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!”

Malachi 3:10

Pastor Ken clarified that blessing should not automatically be understood as financial wealth. The blessing of generosity can include peace, margin, joy, purpose, and the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in others' lives.

4. Giving Connects Us to the Work of the Local Church

Pastor Ken described the local church as a means through which God provides resources, serves people, shares the Gospel, and helps meet needs in the community and around the world.

“For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous.”

2 Corinthians 9:10–11

- Which of these four reasons challenges or encourages you most?

- How does generosity move beyond an individual financial decision to become part of God's work through the church?

8. Giving Fuels Changed Lives

Pastor Ken shared examples of how giving at Cypress has helped create opportunities for people to encounter Jesus and experience practical care.

Over the previous year, hundreds of people said yes to the Lord for the first time and have been baptized.

Giving has also helped Cypress minister to thousands of children and students through the Kids Team, Student Team, and other Difference Makers serving throughout the church.

Pastor Ken highlighted current and future ministry opportunities in communities such as London, Dublin, and Marysville, as well as local partnerships and global ministry.

He also shared about a recent trip to Peru, where Cypress partnered with learning centers serving children experiencing significant poverty. These centers provide meals, health checks, educational assistance, and opportunities for children to hear about Jesus.

Cypress has helped provide more than 100,000 meals through these efforts and is working toward completing additional kitchens so these ministries can continue serving children and families.

Giving also supports scholarships, a bridge fund, local outreach partners, church planting, pastor training, and many other ministry opportunities.

- What stands out to you about the connection between financial generosity and changed lives?
- How does seeing the practical impact of giving change the way you think about generosity?

9. Tithe and Offering: Two Different Expressions of Generosity

Pastor Ken clarified the distinction between the tithe and the offering.

The Tithe

The tithe represents the first 10 percent and is given as an act of honoring and worshiping God through the local church.

The Offering

An offering is above and beyond the tithe and is an opportunity to respond to God through personal generosity and specific areas of need or ministry.

At Cypress, the Next Fund provides opportunities for people to give above and beyond toward specific priorities and projects.

Pastor Ken emphasized that the heart behind this distinction matters. If God is the owner, then giving the tithe is not simply about deciding what we personally want to do with God's resources. The offering provides a separate opportunity to follow our hearts and respond generously to particular needs or opportunities.

- What is the difference between giving God what belongs to Him and giving above and beyond in response to a specific burden or opportunity?
- How might this distinction help us think differently about generosity and stewardship?

10. The Deeper Issue: Control

Pastor Ken identified what he believes often lies beneath the conversation about giving: **control**.

It can be easy to think, "I am the church, so I should be the one who decides exactly where my money goes."

Pastor Ken challenged that perspective by returning to the foundational principle of ownership. If God is truly the owner, then giving becomes an opportunity to practice trust and surrender.

When we honor God first, we practice what it means to trust Him rather than keep complete control of our resources.

This does not mean we stop caring about how money is used. It means we recognize that stewardship begins with surrender.

- Why can control be such a difficult thing to surrender when it comes to money?
- What would it look like to move from simply managing your money to trusting God with it?

11. Taking God at His Word

Pastor Ken closed by offering two practical next steps.

The first was the **90-Day Tithe Challenge**.

For those who begin tithing or increase their giving, Cypress is inviting them to take part in a three-month challenge. At the end of the 90 days, if someone does not believe they experienced God's blessing in their life in an increased way, they can contact the financial office and receive back 100 percent of the money they gave during those three months.

Pastor Ken explained that the purpose is not to treat God like a vending machine or to promise financial wealth. It is an invitation to take God at His Word and intentionally practice trust and generosity.

The second opportunity is the **Generosity Journey**, a three-month Monday-and-Wednesday devotional designed to help people keep growing in generosity through the end of the year.

The goal behind both opportunities is not simply to increase giving. It is to help people experience greater freedom, joy, peace, trust, and purpose in the way they handle their finances.

- What might be a practical next step God is inviting you to take in your relationship with money?
- What would it look like for you to approach generosity as a spiritual practice rather than simply a financial decision?

CLOSING REFLECTION

Which statement best reflects where you are right now?

- I need to remember that God is the Creator, Owner, and Provider of everything I have.
- I need to grow in trusting God rather than trying to maintain control over my finances.
- I need to move from simply managing money to allowing God to transform my heart around money.
- I need to consider what generosity should look like as part of my spiritual growth.
- I need to take a practical next step toward greater financial freedom, peace, and purpose.
- I need to become more aware of how my generosity can help bring the Gospel and practical care to others.

PRAYER

Close by thanking God that everything belongs to Him and that He is both our Provider and Sustainer. Thank Him that salvation is a gift of grace that cannot be earned or purchased.

Ask God to transform our hearts so that we are not controlled by fear, selfishness, or the desire to maintain control. Pray for wisdom to steward what He has entrusted to us and courage to trust Him with our finances.

Pray that generosity would produce greater freedom, peace, joy, and purpose in our lives. Ask God to use the generosity of His people to see lives changed, marriages healed, captives set free, churches strengthened, communities served, and the Good News of Jesus spread locally and globally.

Pray that we would become people who do not simply hear God's Word but faithfully live it out through the way we think, spend, save, give, and trust.