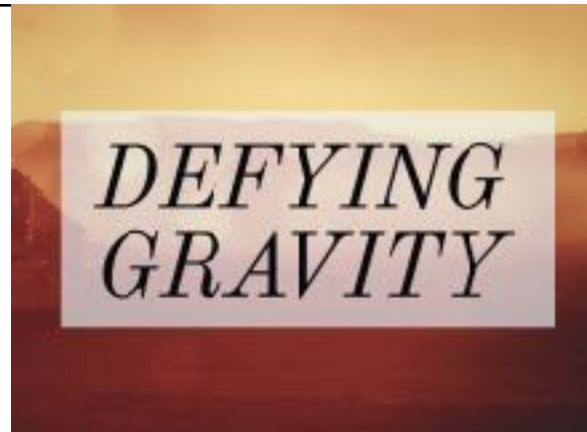


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## Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.
- Today is All Saints Sunday. During Holy Communion, there will be a video to be played with the names of those who have died during the last year who are connected with our congregation. Refer the 2016 Communion Liturgies - The Great Thanksgiving for guidance on the order and when to play the names.



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## Key Questions

### What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the secrets to generosity and what happens when we give.

### Why is this sermon important?

It is important because our lives are shaped by what we give and we can actively participate in what God is doing in the world.

### What is the context of this sermon?

This series and sermon is adapted from Defying Gravity resources from Tom Berlin published through Abingdon Press.

### What are the next action steps?

Use the annual financial planning tool.

Complete your annual giving commitment card.

Set a goal for your generosity and be a part of the launch pad that is our church.

### What is the good news? What is the bottom line?

The good news is that when we are generous, we are not doing things for God so much as we become part of what God is doing in the world.

### What are other key takeaways?

#### *For social media*

- [text here]

All Saints Sunday / 25th Sunday after Pentecost  
Defying Gravity - Tethered to God  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://bit.ly/2e27vra>

November 6, 2016  
Matthew 6:19-21  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,928  
Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/2fs5DGR>  
Video Online at <http://bit.ly/2f6GZs7>

---

## Metadata

### Topics

- Give

### Sermon Books of the Bible

- 1 Timothy
- Matthew

### Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, generosity, giving, stewardship, steward, tithe, proportional, generous

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**11**

Key Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:18

Set Numerical Goals

### **Conclusion**

**12**

Key Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:19

Good News

Call to Action

Personal Example: How do I calculate a 10% tithe?

Invitation

Closing Prayer

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## Matthew 6:19-21, CEB

<sup>19</sup>“Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. <sup>20</sup>Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don’t eat them and where thieves don’t break in and steal them. <sup>21</sup>Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.  
All: Thanks be to God.

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

### Listen for God’s Word

I invite you to listen for God’s word today.

#### *Place for Notes*

You can find a place in your bulletin to take notes or, if you prefer, in the event for this worship service in the Bible app on your mobile device

#### *Tool for Spiritual Growth*

When you learn something new, have a question, make a connection with your life or hear anything that will help you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ as you worship, grow, give, serve and share, write it down.

Then, use these notes as a tool to help you grow in your faith in the days ahead.

### Prayer

Will you pray with me?

O God, use these words to speak good news, so that, as individuals and as a congregation, we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you, and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Opening Story - Orteig Prize

One of the greatest gravity-defying events of all time was the Orteig Prize, a \$25,000 reward offered in the 1920s by hotel operator Raymond Orteig to the first person who could fly across the Atlantic Ocean between New York City and Paris.

Let me tell you about three of the competitors:

#### *René Fonck*

[Show Image]

René Fonck was a World War I French flying ace whose plane was as expansive as his personality. Fonck wanted to arrive at his homeland in style with three others in his crew. The interior of his plane was more like the living room of a chateau than the fuselage of an airplane. There were heavy chairs, mahogany tables, and a sofa that could be converted into a bed. Fonck took everything, including the kitchen sink! (There was a cooking area with a small kitchen.) He brought cases of wine and champagne. He loaded up gifts for friends.

Before takeoff he had a local hotel deliver a hot dinner that included clam chowder, terrapin, roast duck, and turkey. To keep it all warm, he placed it inside a heavily insulated cabinet. It is hard to know if Fonck was really trying to cross the Atlantic or just enjoy the ride. His plane was designed to carry no more than 20,000 pounds. Fully loaded, it weighed in at whopping 28,000 pounds! He actually had to retrofit an extra wheel on the tail section to support the load.

Gravity defeated Fonck. Even with full power, the plane only made it to the end of the runway. It rolled over a small incline, toppled forward, and burst into flames. Though Fonck and his navigator made it out, the other two crew members did not.<sup>1</sup>

### **Charles Levine**

[Show Image]

Millionaire Charles Levine financed another team that may have had the best chance to claim the Orteig Prize. He had a great plane and a qualified crew, but they never functioned as a team that had the single goal of getting to Paris. Levine was all about drama. He wanted two pilots ready, and he planned to choose between them on the runway just before departure, thus attracting greater publicity. He eventually abandoned that idea but nevertheless chose two flyers, Chamberlin



<sup>1</sup> Tim Brady, "The Orteig Prize," *Journal of Aviation/Aerospace Education & Research*, Volume 12, Number 1 (Fall 2002), pages 48-49.

and Bertraud. These two disagreed on virtually everything from the flight plan to the equipment. Just when it appeared that things couldn't get more dysfunctional, Levine presented Chamberlin and Bertraud with contracts the night before takeoff that essentially said he would not share any money from publicity on the trip. Bertraud filed a temporary injunction on the flight and they were grounded.<sup>2</sup>

### **Charles Lindbergh**

[Show Image]

Charles Lindbergh wanted to be the first person to fly from New York to Paris and claim the prize. He was personally involved in every aspect of the trip. Lindbergh was in the factory as the plane was built and made sure to keep it simple. The Spirit of St. Louis had only one engine, so as to conserve fuel. It had one seat for one pilot to save weight. Lindbergh famously trimmed excess paper from the edges of his navigational charts to save weight. There were no luxuries, not even a forward windshield. Unable to see straight ahead, Lindbergh navigated by using the side window and a small periscope to see what was in front of him.

Lindbergh landed near Paris on May 21, 1927, a full 33½ hours after he took off from New York. Thousands of cheering people waited for him. The press dubbed him "Lucky Lindy" in honor of his success.<sup>3</sup>



### **Generosity by Design**

In those days, a flight from New York to Paris did not happen by luck. It took careful planning and intentionality. This is what I want you to hear in the story of the Orteig Prize:

**Generosity does not just happen by luck. Generosity happens by design.**

While statistics say that 45 percent of U.S. citizens give no money to charitable organizations of any kind, we can be certain that many wish they had done so and hope to be generous in the future.

### **Challenges to Generosity**

The problem is that we are like the competitors for the Orteig Prize:

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pages 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.charleslindbergh.com/history>

- Some of us are like Fonck, so weighed down by the gravity of possessions that we are unable to experience the freedom of generosity.
- Some couples and families are like Levine and company. They have competing financial goals and conflicting personal values, and they lack basic communication skills, especially when the topic is money. They will never break free from the culture of more.

### ***Be Like Lindbergh***

If you want your life journey to be a generous one, you need to be like Lindbergh. Generosity happens by design. Those who are generous know that to make a real contribution with time or money, they need to think about what they want to accomplish, plan a strategy that fits their other financial and time allocations, and then muster the courage to act. Just as Lucky Lindy did not count on good fortune, we must have a clear plan of action to be generous.

### ***Transition***

I have talked to many financially generous people over the years and have found that they have three secrets.

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## **Secret #1: Make a Budget**

### **1) Make a budget**

Budgets remind us that all our finances matter to God. If faith is truly central to our lives, we must begin with the portion of our income that we plan to invest in the work of God's kingdom. If we do not plan this first, we will simply be offering God leftovers, and as we all know, by the time the other bills have been paid, the leftovers are often nonexistent. Discipleship cannot begin after the spending ends.

## **Provide for Our Needs**

The Bible is clear that we are to provide for the needs of ourselves and our families. Such provision creates a safe environment in which people can generously use their gifts and graces for others because their own needs are being met. It provides a place of safety and even abundance where marriages can prosper and children can develop physical and emotional health.

Paul states in rather clear terms that people need to care for the members of their family, especially if they are vulnerable. In 1 Timothy 5:7-8, Paul told Timothy:

Teach these things so that the families will be without fault. But if someone doesn't provide for their own family, and especially for a member of their household, they have denied the faith. They are worse than those who have no faith.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 5:7-8, CEB.



### **Example: Ropes Course Video**

I want to give you an image about why a budget is such an important tool. So, let's take a look at the video:

#### **Play Ropes Course Video**

This is video of a ropes course. Have you ever been on one of these?

As people are going through the course, what I want you notice is the line that is attached to each person.

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#### *Video: Climbing and Safety Introduction*

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This is the ropes course instructor that gets you ready to go.

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#### *Video: Listen to explanation of carabiners*

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I want you to listen to what he just said. He said, "The key to getting around this course is this carabiner. If, at any time, you slip and you fall, don't worry. Why? The carabiner is going to catch you.

### **Budget Worksheet**

I want you to open your bulletin and get out the budget worksheet that you find inside. Why is this in your bulletin today?

#### ***Oil Industry in El Dorado***

During the time that I have been your preacher there have been some tough economic times and there have been some good economic times.

Here in El Dorado, a good portion of our economy rises and falls with the oil industry. When the price of oil is up, a portion of our local economy does well and businesses are hiring. When the price of oil goes down, that same part of the economy goes down – there is a hiring freeze or people lose their jobs.

Do you remember the summer of 2014 when a barrel of oil sold for over \$100? Then over the next six months, the price went down 50%. The price still hasn't recovered – less than \$50 a barrel today.

#### ***Outcome for those who budget and save***

If you ask some people in the oil industry today how they are doing, they'll say, "We are going to be okay." Why? Because during the good years, we saved money. We paid down debt. I still need a job and I'm looking for that job right now, but we are going to be okay because we have been living a certain way.

#### ***Outcome for those who don't budget or save***

People without budgets. People that didn't do budgets may panic. People that are living over their means already can be thrown into an absolute tailspin. Why? No

safety line, no carabiner. Just trying to go through a high ropes course holding on for dear life.

Did you notice how the guy stood on the rope and freely fell backwards? He knew he could. Now, he didn't want to spend his whole journey like that, but he knew for an instant that he could take the fall. Why? Because he had something that was going to hold him in place. That is what I would love for you to have in your life.

### ***Using a Budget***

Nicole and I have been more intentional about tracking and following a budget over the last several months. We need to make progress in this area. Using a budget enable us to look at the level of spending that is pleasing to God in each area so that we can balance our resources accordingly.

Generosity to others will not happen by accident. It can happen, however, when we become serious about being stewards of our income and make appropriate allocations in every area of our financial world. We gain that ability when we clip our lives to a safety line with a budget.

### ***Transition***

Here is the second secret of financially generous people:

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## **Secret #2: Live Simply**

- 1) Make a budget
- 2) Live simply

If you want to live within your means, keep it simple. I have observed this quality at work in the buying decisions of many generous people I have known over the years. It is even true of many who are wealthy. While higher-income individuals often have a great deal more in terms of income and assets than their neighbors, many keep life simple in terms of what they possess.

## **Frugality, Saving and Working a Budget**

You don't have to do much research on this topic to see what was discovered years ago by Thomas Stanley and William Danko, authors of *The Millionaire Next Door*. Often people of high net worth live in average homes in their communities, drive used cars, and do not wear the most expensive clothes. They have a clear vision of the difference between their needs and their wants in life. These people often gained their wealth through careful attention to how much money moved in and out of their businesses. They do the same at home. The disciplines of frugality, saving, and working a budget push them toward the practice of simplicity.<sup>5</sup> The principle of simplicity is the

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko, *The Millionaire Next Door* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1996) (<https://www.nytimes.com/books/first/s/stanley-millionaire.html>).

single most effective tool that can be employed by people who want to escape the financial gravity of our culture.

## Gravity Bound People

Gravity-bound people usually see simplicity as absence. They assume that simple means the bed is hard, the car is undependable, and the shirt is camel hair. Because people see simplicity as absence, there is no motivation to practice it. The good stuff, they assume, is inside the ads on the computer screen or in the deals offered by local retailers. Gravity-bound people pursue these things with abandon and believe these are the path to the good life.

This is why most people inexplicably find their cabinets, drawers, closets, basements, attics, and sometimes even storage units full of stuff and more stuff. All that consumption leaves a trail. We are victims of what I call space junk.

## Gravity Defiers

Gravity-defiers see simplicity as freedom. It is freedom from the pressures of debt and freedom from the complexity of having more than we need. When I talk to people about how they live a simple life, I am told it's less about rules and guidelines and more about the discovery of what brings fulfillment. To gain simplicity, you have to identify what brings you real joy in life and allow this to weed out what brings you less joy. Simplicity is not about denying yourself. It is about avoiding things that keep you from completing your mission.

### **Key Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:17**

Paul speaks to people like you and me when he writes in 1 Timothy 6:17

"Tell people who are rich at this time not to become egotistical and not to place their hope on their finances, which are uncertain. Instead, they need to hope in God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment."<sup>6</sup>

The principle of simplicity, this sorting of needs and wants, enables us not to place our hope in our finances. Simplicity enables us to be content with what we have. No longer do we feel a need to have newer and better.

### **Transition**

The third secret financially generous people is this:

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## Secret #3: Set Goals for Generosity

- 1) Make a budget
- 2) Live simply
- 3) Set goals for generosity

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Timothy 6:17, CEB.

### **Key Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:18**

In 1 Timothy 6:18, Paul writes,

“Tell them to do good, to be rich in the good things they do, to be generous, and to share with others.”<sup>7</sup>

## **Set Numerical Goals**

One practice that enables people to make the journey of generosity each year is to set numerical goals for the good they hope to do with their time and money. Let’s look at those three secrets again...

- 1) Make a budget
- 2) Live simply
- 3) Set goals for generosity

People who are able to make the journey of generosity each year pray about God’s calling in their lives. They consider what activities bring joy to God that also uniquely bring joy to them. Then they find ways to participate. As these activities are discerned, financial goals for giving are projected for their annual giving. It is amazing what we can do—at any income level—when we set goals for generosity and order our lives accordingly.

Inevitably someone will say, I can’t do that. I can’t afford that. If that is how you feel, you need to set a generosity goal and get serious about your life and journey.

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## **Conclusion**

### **Key Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:19**

Paul talks about the outcome of generosity in 1 Timothy 6:19:

“When they do these things, they will save a treasure for themselves that is a good foundation for the future. That way they can take hold of what is truly life”<sup>8</sup>

Paul’s biggest worry is that if you and I are not careful, we will settle for a life that is held down by the gravity of our culture. We will miss the abundant life promised to us in Christ. In our heart of hearts, we don’t want an ordinary life; we long for the extraordinary life.

## **Good News**

The good news is that when we are generous, we are not doing things for God so much as we become part of what God is doing in the world.

Like Lindbergh, we know what we are about, and nothing will get in our way.

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Timothy 6:18, CEB.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 6:17, CEB.

## Call to Action

If you are an active member of our church, you will receive an annual giving commitment card in the mail this week. If you don't receive one, they will be available in the bulletin next week, as well as in the church office.

This week, use this annual financial planning tool. Nicole and I took about 30 minutes this week and filled ours out.

Then, complete your annual giving commitment card. Set a goal for your generosity and be a part of the launch pad that is our church.

### ***Personal Example: How do I calculate a 10% tithe?***

Sometimes people ask, How do I calculate a percentage of my income? You can use gross or net income.

I will tell you how Nicole and I made our calculation.

We add our paychecks together for the month and multiple by 12 to see our annual take home income.

Then, we move the decimal place one place to the left to determine our annual giving commitment.

As United Methodist pastors, our salaries are public information, so I want to share with you we will be making an annual giving commitment of \$8,094.31 which we will give by EFT each month. We will fill out our card when we receive it in the mail and bring it next Sunday when we will present them, along with you, during worship.

## Invitation

Generosity is the path. We can defy gravity and cross the great distance from committed consumer to generous steward if that is our goal.

Will you pray with me?

### ***Closing Prayer***