Money and Trust — Delivery Transcript

2 Corinthians 8:16–24 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, October 26, 2025 · *Close the Gap*

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If you have your Bible, you can go ahead and open it up to the book of 2 Corinthians. We're going to be in 2 Corinthians chapter 8. And we're in a series in these two chapters of the book of second Corinthians. Typically we do books of the Bible in our church, but we took a little pause because of a big project we're working on in our church related to a resource initiative that we're also doing to renovate the very first sanctuary. A Broadview Baptist church. Believe it or not, our first sanctuary was not this one.

Most churches don't build a sanctuary this big. It's the building right behind me. And we are renovating that to become a worship center for our students and trying to raise $1.5 million to do that as well as add some seating. In here as you can tell it gets cramped and then on big days it certainly gets it gets plenty cramped and so we're trying to make room and so the New Testament, I would say the Bible in general, is inspired by God. It's completely relevant, completely profitable. All the truth that we need to live the life God has called us to live is contained, I think, in the Old and New Testaments.

And believe it or not, the early Christian church did the same exact thing that we're doing right now in terms of trying to raise capital and funds for a kingdom project. And that is described in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9, which is why we're looking at it these last couple of weeks in the next A couple weeks after this. And I know that preachers don't I know that people don't like when preachers talk about money. I'm honestly surprised so many of you came back after last week. Especially some of you new ones.

I'm glad that you did. And I just want to address the elephant in the room. I know that it's not you know everybody's favorite topic. In fact, some of you, if you're new today, you're like, man, I shouldn't have come. I knew better. Could have been sleeping in. I mean it rained last you know y yesterday it would have been such good sleep. But here you are nonetheless, and it's rude to walk up walk out in the middle of a sermon, so don't do that. But I just want you to know I know that.

And I think one of the reasons that people don't like when people like me talk about an issue like this is because it's so personal, it's super private, money is. You what you do with your money is your business. It's not my business. It's God's business. God talks a lot about money in the scriptures, but you don't want someone like me talking about it because it's super private the other reason is because for at least some of you in this room, you don't know me. And because you don't know me, you don't trust me.

And you probably shouldn't trust me. I think I'm a trustworthy person, but I would understand why you wouldn't trust somebody like me. And the thing about money is money and trust are always just like this. Money and trust are two sides of the same coin. Trust and money are directly connected. And I think you recognize this even if you have never heard that statement before. When you when you give your bank money, what are you doing? You're trusting that the bank is going to give you that money back when you ask for it, right?

You I don't know if you know this. Our banking system is fractional reserve banking. So they don't actually keep all your money. They use your money and make money off your money by giving it to other people and charging them interest. But nevertheless, you're cool with that. Whether you knew you were or not. You're cool with that because you know if I need to get my money back, they're going to be able to have that money and give it back to me, and so there's an issue of trust. When you spend money at a store You give the clerk a dollar bill, that dollar bill accepts that clerk.

That clerk accepts that dollar bill because that clerk believes the money has value. And then you believe that the thing that you're getting in return for your money is worth that amount. So there's a base level of trust applied to the to the dollar or whatever currency. Even the very idea of currency, I don't know if you know this, I've got a picture of a hundred dollar bill up on the screen, but this $20 bill on the back of a $20 bill it has the phrase in God we trust. That actually wasn't always on the money, believe it or not, but it's on there now and it's a great statement.

We should trust in God, but that's not what the dollar represents, right? It's not trusting God that the dollar represents. This dollar is what's called fiat currency. Fiat's from the Latin word, which basically means let it be so. Let it be. Which is essentially the US government saying when they print this dollar, it is what I say it is. Let it be what I say it is. Used to the dollar was backed by a thing called gold, but even then you had to believe that gold had a certain value and that the gold was being kept where they said it was being kept and that there was enough gold to match the dollar.

We don't even do that anymore. Essentially, when you give a dollar and receive a dollar, you're doing so with implicit faith. That the US government is trustworthy. I bet you didn't know that's what you were doing, but that's exactly what you're doing every time you every time you give somebody money and accept money. You're saying I believe the US government is good on its word, that it can be trusted. And that's true of every system, believe it or not. At least most systems today, different cultures do it different ways. They try to back their money with different assets and different goods, but at the end of the day it's all a matter of trust.

Trust and money are directly related, which means when the trust begins to go away in a financial system, then the financial system begins to fall apart. You can see this throughout history. When the integrity is lost, trust is eroded. Trust is eroded through a loss of integrity. This is why bank runs happen. I told you that we have fractional reserve banking. Well in the nineteen thirties, when they started to wonder if the banks were good for what they said they were good for they question the integrity of the bank. The word integrity just means that what you see is what you get.

That you present yourself to be a certain way, and that you are all the way what you present yourself to be. And so if the banks are saying. We are able to pay back that which we guarantee. And then someone starts to question, I don't think that's true. And then as they question, their questions, their their accusations are well sued are where warranted then they begin to do doubt the trustworthiness of that institution because it doesn't have integrity. And then when the integrity begins to wane, the entire system falls apart.

And then when everybody loses the trust in the system, then that's not good, right? Because the bank doesn't have all the money for everybody if they all came back at once and systems fall apart. That's also why hyperinflation happens. You know, we always have inflation because of a lot of different things. But when the value of a dollar decreases super rapidly, a lot of times it's because people question the integrity. Of the issuer of that fiance currency. So I don't think the US government has integrity anymore or the German governments or whatever the Franks were whenever the when this happened in Germany.

The they don't have integrity. I don't trust them to not print more and more and more of that paper. And so since I don't trust their integrity, the entire system falls apart. And again, I think most people know this intuitively. You would recognize that trust and money always go together. And so when people start to talk about money and you don't trust those people, it would make sense why you'd get a little bit uncomfortable. And believe it or not, the apostle Paul knew that. The apostle Paul recognized that I'm trying to raise money from a group of Christians and those Christians have a trust deficit with me.

We don't have time to go into all the reasons for that. You can look at the last couple of weeks' messages. Essentially, Paul had upset the Corinthians because he had challenged their moral behavior and they were rightly to be challenged, but they didn't take kindly to it, and so they cut off ties, they questioned Paul's integrity, they questioned his motivation for ministry. They even questioned his you know, capacity and talents and abilities. They said, you're bald and you're not a good speaker and we don't like you anymore. And so he sent this guy named Titus to try to patch things up.

Titus does patch things up. And tells Paul, hey, they're back on board. And so Paul writes this letter of 2 Corinthians to try to restore trust in him. And in his team and in the and in the integrity of this project that he was trying to fund. And the fund was essentially a benevolence fund to put food on the table for starving Christians in Jerusalem. Which for the Corinthians, that was hundreds of miles away, across an ocean, people they didn't even know, people were that were culturally Jewish. There were reasons why they might not be motivated.

But Paul is saying, I want to try to persuade you to trust me. What's so interesting though is Paul recognizes that if there's no integrity, there's no generosity. And so in order for you to be generous, Paul recognizes I've got to demonstrate integrity. And I'm not going to get integrity by saying, hey, trust me, bro. No, I've got to do something more than just say it. I've got to show I got to show that there's a system worthy of their trust. And our text is essentially Paul's showing them that system.

It's a trustworthy system, and therefore I Are we will be trustworthy stewards, and therefore you can be generous in your giving to this project. Because if people don't trust the bank, they divest from the bank. And if they don't trust a missionary, they divest from the mission. They don't trust a pastor. They divest from a church. And so Paul is saying, you can have trust in me. Does that make sense? Everybody good where we're going? Alright, let's pick it up in 2 Corinthians. We're going to read starting in chapter 8, verse 16.

And he is he has been challenging them to be generous. He has praised them for their heart of willingness, their eagerness to give. He's saying that's awesome. And oh by the way, Titus has that same zeal and concern that you do. And I know y'all love Titus, and so let me show you, let me show you what we're thinking. So thanks be to God who put the same concern for you into the heart of Titus, for he welcomed our appeal. In other words, we asked Titus to do this hard thing, and he didn't just agree, he welcomed it.

And being very diligent, he went out to you by his own choice. We didn't force him. We have sent with him the brother, we don't know this brother's name, but the brother who is praised among all the churches for his gospel ministry. And not only that, but he was also appointed by the churches to accompany us with this gracious gift that we're administering for the glory of the Lord Himself. And to show our eagerness to help. So Titus is in, this other brother is in, he's not just popular, he's been appointed by not one church but many churches, and we're partnering together to steward this gift verse 20, we are taking this precaution so that no one will criticize us about this large sum that we're administering.

Indeed, we are giving careful thought to do what is right, not only before the Lord, but also before people. And we've also sent with them our brother. So there's another brother, a second, no-named brother. We have often tested him in many circumstances, and we found him to be diligent, and even more diligent because of his great confidence in you, the Corinthians. Now as for Titus, he is my partner. He is my co-worker for you. And as for our brothers, they are the messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. And therefore, now he's going to appeal to the Corinthians.

Challenging them directly, since we're trustworthy with this system, therefore you do the same. Therefore show them proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about okay, so you see what Paul's doing? He's saying, I know you may not trust me, so I'm going to create a system that is worthy of trust, and I want to challenge you to be trustworthy stewards as well. Now one of the things I've nerded out on before with you guys is this literary device that's in the Old and New Testaments called a chiasm.

You may not know this, but in Greek and in Hebrew they don't use punctuation marks which makes it really hard sometimes to read. It's just a big square block of text. And so since they don't use punctuation marks, they will often create emphases with different literary devices and one of those devices is called a chiasm. And a chiasm is a big fancy word that essentially means the main point of the unit of thought is in the center. Think of it like a pyramid. Point A is at the beginning of the block of thought, and then there's like a on the other side at the end of the paragraph.

So there's like AA B C main point. Does that make sense? No one writes like this in English In fact if you tried it's pretty hard to do but it was super prop prominent in the old and new testaments and so what Paul's really driving home is at the very center of this text. And you probably picked up on that in verse 20 and 21, he's saying. What I want you to know is that we can be trusted. And that I know you may not trust us, but I want you to trust me.

And here's how I'm going to show that I'm worthy of trust. That's the main point. Building up to that point, he talks about these no-name brothers. There's one no-name brother in verses 18 to 19, and then there's another no-name brother on the other side of the chiasm in verse 22. And then he talks about Titus. He talks about Titus at the very beginning, and he talks about Titus at the very end, and then he has an application in verse 24. Now you do it. Does that make sense? Okay. Nobody cares, Wes.

Well I think it's pretty cool. I don't know about you. I think that's pretty cool. Especially if you don't use punctuation marks. You know, he's like, throw me a bone. What are you trying to do? I don't know about you. Well and I read this passage. I wrestled with this passage for hours before I picked up on that chiasm. And then I felt like a really dumb person because I didn't see it earlier. But it's obviously there. It's obviously there. What's the main point? The main point is that stewardship. And trust are directly correlated.

Stewardship determines whether trust is deserved. If you want to be someone worthy of trust, then you need to demonstrate through your stewardship that you are trustworthy. And when you demonstrate through your stewardship you are not a trustworthy person, then no one's going to trust you to manage their money. And that's not just true of money, by the way. That's true of everything. It's true of relationships. It's true of we could we can go on and on and on. The trust is determined by the stewardship you that you by the stewardship that you practice.

And so what is the way to be a trustworthy steward? I think that's the main question of our text this morning. And Paul actually gives us some principles of stewardship on either side of this chiasm, if you think about it. So I want to give you four principles of stewardship, and then we're going to apply them to our life corporately as a church and then and then to your life individually as well. I'll give you these pretty quick. The first principle of stewardship. Is that stewards are driven by genuine concern.

Again, if you go back to the very beginning of our text in verse 16, he talks about Titus. And what does he say of Titus? He says, Titus is eager God has given him this eagerness to come back to you guys and to and to do this whole giving thing. I know preachers don't like to talk about money and it's weird, but Titus is excited. And the reason he's excited is because he loves you guys so much. In fact, if you don't believe me, when things were super awkward, Titus agreed to go.

And not only did he agree to go, he welcomed the opportunity and he demonstrated diligence. And just like he demonstrated diligence that first visit, he's going to demonstrate diligence in the second visit as well. Sorry, you're going too fast. Go back to that last one. So he is driven by genuine concern. He's concerned, notice, for you, at the end in verse twenty two the other brother, same truth, this other

brother, we don't know his name, but he is diligent because of his great confidence in you. And then he says at the end of Titus in verse 24, I think, not 22, that Titus is my partner and co-worker, again, for you.

When it comes to a steward, especially someone that's going to manage your money, what you want to be able to believe about that person is that he's not managing my money for him, he's managing my money for me. He's not trying to steal from me. He's not trying to profit off me. He's not trying to manipulate me. He is trustworthy because he is for me. He has genuine concern. And that's true of all stewardship. All stewardship begins with genuine concern. Second point is good stewards are diligent in every task. Again, Titus is characterized as this ministry worker who demonstrates diligence.

And one of the reasons we know that Titus was a man of diligence is because of the task that he performed for the apostle Paul in Corinth. If you don't know the backstory, again, Paul kind of challenged them on their integrity and their wisdom as a local church and dealing with a with a sin problem in the church. And they did not like what Paul had to say. And so they begin to attack Paul. And they said, Paul, you're a self-righteous baldy. You don't speak very good. We've got better speakers.

We've got better everything. And then Paul wrote them a severe letter and said, oh yeah, your mama. No, he didn't say that. He said, oh yeah, well I've got God on my side and I've seen the risen Jesus and you're wrong and here's why. And so he wrote this severe letter. And he I'm glad this one's not on the internet, right? He said, I am I'm going to come and visit you guys, and if I come and visit you guys. What do you want? You want me to come with a stick or do you want me to come with some sugar?

He didn't say sugar. I can't remember what he said, but essentially is it going to be a good thing or a bad thing? And they were like, I guess it's a bad thing. So Paul comes and it's a bad thing. And it's just weird. It's tense. And I don't know if you've ever tried to reconcile two people that are fighting. Has anyone ever done that? And then the person you're trying to reconcile, at least on the Corinthian side, is very self-righteous, arrogant. Bitter and angry. Have you ever tried to work with someone like that?

It is not easy. It is very challenging. And Paul sent Titus to do that. And Titus got it done. Titus is the man. Titus is awesome. I don't know how he did it. I'm not sure how long it took. He had to be a very charismatic individual, very bold, very principled. But he was diligent. Diligence, my favorite definition of diligence, is doing it the right way all the way. Some say giving your best work to the very end. Same basic ideas. Diligence is not just doing it well early when it's easy or when you're excited.

Diligence is when you're tired or when there's opposition or when it's really costly, then you still do the right thing because you're diligent to the task, and that's who Titus is. And I'm saying, I say that's what you want in a steward. Because a good steward can manage money when it's easy, but what happens when it's not easy? What happens when it's challenging? What happens when it's difficult? Well, a good steward is diligent in that they do the right thing. All the way. They give the very, very best work to the very end.

And it's not just that Titus was diligent in everything. He says this other brother was also diligent. In fact, we've tested him in a lot of things. And have found him to be diligent. I mean we've squeezed this dude and he is the proof of the pudding has been in the tasting and not just that he's even more diligent because of where he's going. This brother had confidence in Corinth. He knew that they were gifted. He knew they were smart. He knew that it was a big city with lots of money and lots of influence and the gospel potential to really take over the Roman Empire, that that was going to be not dependent upon, but greatly advanced by God doing a really cool thing here in Corinth.

So I'm going to work hard and I'm going to be diligent. And that's what you want in a good steward. You want a steward that is diligent and driven by genuine concern, diligent in every task. Then the third thing Paul talks about stewardship being determined by trusted voices. Look again in verse 16. I'm sorry in verse yeah, 17. I'm sorry, verse 18. There we go. Verse 18. This again we don't know who this brother is. He says the brother. We know he's a guy. Okay, they weren't gender fluid back then.

It's a guy. And commentators speculate which guy it was. There was a lot of people traveling with the apostle Paul. Luke is an option. Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke. Some say it's Luke because of the gospel ministry. Maybe it's that gospel he was writing. Some say it's a guy named Apollos, who was a gifted speaker, very polished, very effective, and he would do the circuit, kind of like evangelists do preaching circuits today. And so he would have been well known by the churches, and people really liked Apollos because of how gifted he was.

Some say it's Silas, some say it's Sylvanus, some say that's the same guy. Nobody knows. Nobody knows. In fact, you can waste so much time trying to figure out something you'll never know. So I don't recommend it. The point is he was well praised by the churches, but it's not just that. Notice Paul also says He was appointed by the churches. That's the important piece. That Greek word is literally two words in the Greek. It's the word hand and the word raise it up. So it literally meant one chosen by the raising of a hand.

And I don't know if you know this, but the ancient Greeks were the inventors, originators of this form of governance that we call democracy. We kind of like it. It's a big deal. Great. And the way that they would vote in their elected representatives is through that Greek word. They would raise their hands. This guy's it. And so the messenger or the appointed one was the one selected by the raising of hands. And it's not just one church that selected this guy. Paul says all the churches. Not only do the churches like this guy and like praise him for his ministry, they trust this guy and they are demonstrating their trust by telling you can trust him.

They're vouching for him, they're endorsing this fellow. And they've appointed him to this task. And that is how stewards should be. Good stewards should be determined by trusted voices. There should be trusted voices around you who say you can trust that person. Or they should be people around you who can say you can trust you. You manage money. You manage God's stuff. You manage your talent. You're a good steward in that. You've demonstrated to people that you do what you say, that there's integrity. You see the same thing applied to this third unnamed brother.

Not the third unnamed, the second unnamed brother, the third brother next to Titus and whoever it was and Paul and then this last guy. They Paul doesn't just say I've tested him. Paul says, no, we've tested him. It's not just my opinion, it's Titus and it's this other dude. And we've tested him in a lot of things and we have found him to be diligent. So I want you to not just believe him. It's not like he's drunk his own Kool-Aid and he says you should trust him. No, we see it.

And that's a principle of good stewardship, driven by genuine concern. Determined by trusted voices and diligent in every task. But the most important principle of stewardship and really the main point of this text is this is this last one and that is that good stewards depend upon outside accountability. And that's essentially Paul's main point in verse 20 and 21. We are being very diligent, very careful to do what is right, not just before God, but before other people. Why? Because we anticipate there will be charges, a criticism. Lobbied towards us and we want to be proactive and doing what we need to do so that those accusations don't stick.

And that's why we're creating this system of accountability. It's not just me. In fact, Paul said, I'm not even touching the money. I'm not even coming down there to talk about it. That's going to be Titus's job. But Titus has extra eyes on him. And then the guy that has eyes on Titus has eyes on him from this other brother. So there's all kinds of eyes on the system to create and strengthen accountability. Accountability is just is it's giving someone the authority to call you out if you're doing something wrong to hold you accountable.

You see this with Paul in verse 19. He's going to he's appointed for the purpose of, it's a purpose statement in order to accompany us so that as we administrate this great gift, they're doing it alongside of us. I've also sent this other messenger in verse 22. Accountability is something I think is obvious when it comes to other people managing your money. I don't know that people see the obvious need for accountability when it comes to them managing their money. Could could you imagine inviting another Christian? Let's say somebody you trust, but you could you imagine inviting them over to your house, giving them six months of your bank statements, showing them your budget if you do one, and say, hey, tell me what you think.

Could you imagine doing that? So yeah, do it with my spouse every month. No, I'm just joking. Obviously your spouse, that's a pretty that's a given. And it should at least be that. But could you imagine giving someone voluntarily that level of access? I guess in some ways that's what a money manager does if you have a investment manager. It's accountability. And the reason that it's so important is because trust and money are so directly related. The reason it's so important is if you want generosity demonstrated. Toward the thing that you're going to steward, you've got to ensure and protect your integrity.

And you can be a person of integrity. And the accusations be false. But once the accusations are made, the damage is done. It doesn't matter whether the accusations are true. And Paul knows that I'm going to get accusations. He had already been getting accusations, even though he wasn't guilty. They thought he was funny with the money. They thought he was, okay, Paul, maybe you don't get paid, but I bet you're using your team members to launder the money. And Paul is knowing that this accusation

is going to come and so in order to prevent the accusations from sticking, I'm going to establish this system of accountability.

And it has two key marks and this I would encourage you this is what we want to do in our church this is certainly what I want to do as a as a pastor I think you should you should implement these in your own life as well somehow. I know it's complicated. I know you know Paul's not a CEO of a Fortune 500 company, so I'm not saying give away trade secrets, all right? Are there any CEOs of 500? Probably not in here. But there's some business owners and you say, I'm not going to be giving anybody anything.

But just stick with me for just a second. The two marks are distributed authority and deliberate accountability. First, Paul distributes his authority. Paul was the chief apostle. He's the one that saw the risen Jesus. It wasn't Titus, it wasn't these other brothers, but Paul intentionally endows them with the same level of authority that he has. And that's very key. You see it two ways. Number one, you see it in the pronouns that he uses. We are taking this precaution so that no one will criticize us about the large sum we are administering.

The reason he's using plural pronouns is because Paul has removed himself as the central point of failure. This is s analogous to what at Broadview we have what's called a pastoral team. So when I make decisions, say for staffing or some big thing that we you know might do as a church, I just can't decide. And here we go. There's a board of pastors, some of them are sta salaries, some of them are lay pastors, but when the plan doesn't go well or when the staffing problem doesn't you know go well.

The accusations can be lobbied at me, but I didn't make those decisions alone. So it distributes the criticism because the authority was distributed. Does that make sense? And Paul's doing the same thing here. They're going to criticize not me, they're going to criticize us because I've distributed authority. The other way you see the distributed authority is where he talks about in verse 23 that Titus is my partner and my co-worker. And then he applies. The word messengers to this to these two unnamed brothers. You don't see it really in the English, but I did a word study on those three words, and every single one of those words explicitly assumes distributed authority.

The word c partner, even in English we use this idea. If you're a partner with someone else in a business, it's you have ownership, right? It's not just that you're an employee working for a paycheck. No, I own the business. I own it 50-50 with this guy or 30-40 or whatever it is. But the point is you have an equal level of say-so as the other person, assuming it's 50-50 partnership. There's a difference between you as a partner looking at the books and the financial secretary looking at the books. You both have access, but only one of you has an authority to do something about what you see.

And that's Titus for Paul. Paul says Titus has an equal share in this, in this thing. And not just Titus, but these other brothers as well. He uses the word co-worker. That's where we get our English word synergy. It's not just the idea of shared activity, it's also the idea of shared access and shared responsibility. And so he's saying Titus is not an associate. It's not like he does the same things that I do from a distance. No, we're working on this project together in that we have the same level of access

and the same level of responsibility.

So that when it goes bad, if it goes bad, it's on both of us. And then the last word he uses, he applies to these brothers. It's the word messengers. It's the Greek word apostoloi. It's where we get the English word apostle. Just like Jesus had his apostles, the word literally means to be sent with authority. It means to be an a representative acting on behalf of the one who sent you. It was always used in a political context to apply to political envoys who would transact business on behalf of the sovereign.

So imagine a guy like Steve Whitkoff who is trying to broker peace in the middle East and on all the other places that that he's going. He's not an elected representative necessarily, but he was appointed by Donald Trump to speak for him. In these settings. And so when Witkoff was speaking or arguing or you know negotiating, he was it was as if he was the man. As if he was Trump himself. And you can say the same thing for Marco Rubio and all the other ambassadors who act in that way.

They are apostles. We probably wouldn't call them apostles because of the religious baggage that's attached to that now, but the Greek word in its original context, that's what it meant. It meant you were acting on behalf of the man. All of that implies distributed authority. And so when you want to be a good steward, what you want to do, especially if you're married, at least if you're married, you want to give your spouse an equal say of what is right and what is wrong, what is wise, what is foolish. What is growth, what is not, and partner together in that way.

But I would also argue, especially if you're not married, bring another Christian in on that process. Someone you trust, someone who's good with money. Let them speak into your life so that you can become a better steward. And if you're over an organization, certainly like a pastor or a church, that's one of the reasons that we have multiple people. Take the offering multiple people put the offering up multiple people look at the books multiple people read the financials every single month and not just one board it's not just the finance team it's our pastoral team it's the deacon body we even put them out in the public out there in the little rotunda thing, gathering place, so anybody can look at the financial statements because increased transparency bolsters and protects integrity.

And the more integrity that there is, the more trust you can have, and you want trust as a good steward. The second attribute, it's a deliberate transparency, deliberate transparency. And you see this in verse 21 where Paul says, we are giving careful thought. To do what is right. That whole phrase, giving careful thought to do what is right, that's one word in the Greek New Testament. I can't pronounce it. But it essentially combines the idea of foresight and preparation. So Paul is saying because I can see what's about to happen in the future, I'm going to do something right now in anticipation of that.

And what does he see? What he sees is accusation. What he sees is people charging us with being shady. And because I know that's coming, I'm going to deliberately, I'm going to proactively, intentionally do something now so that that accusation doesn't stick when it inevitably comes. And that's what Paul, that's why accountability is so important. Accountability, when you're proactive about it, when you're intentional, deliberate. You're anticipating not whether the integrity will be

questioned, but when the integrity is questioned. There will be a system that doesn't depend on me, a third-party system that can prevent the accusation from sticking.

And it's so important on the question of money. You would you would want it for your bank. You would want it from any money manager. Why would you not want it for yourself? Well, you may say that because well it's not their business. But we're all managers, right? That's what we saw last week. Money is manna. Money is manna. It comes down from heaven. Yes, you work for your money, but your money is a gift from God And he gave it to you for a reason, so that you might steward it in such a way that it brings glory and honor to him.

If you're a steward, you want to be a trustworthy steward and a trustworthy steward. It depend they depend on accountability, marked by distributed authority and deliberate transparency. Now all of that, I think, applies to what we're doing as a church. So if you're a guest today, what I'm about to say does not apply to you at least not. It doesn't apply in the way that I'm going to apply it, but it does apply in general. But I just want you to hear that so you don't think I'm trying to get in your wallet.

Okay. These four stewardship principles of genuine concern, deliberate genuine concern I'm forgetting my sermon now. Genuine concern, diligence in every task, determined by trusted voices and depending on accountability. Those four principles apply directly to what we talked about during the vision night for Close the Gap. And those of you who were here last week, you got one of these brochures, and in there's this page. That talks about the four things we're asking everyone to do. And we're asking everyone to do this regardless of how much money you have, regardless whether things are good or bad in your life.

We're asking God to give us 100% participation in the campaign, not of equal amounts, but of equal sacrifice and just equal participation. And the four things were four words. It was pray, ask, plan, and give. Pray, ask, plan, and give. And all four of those words apply directly to these four principles. The reason we ask people to pray is so that you might become genuinely concerned in what God is doing in our church. Because good stewardship is characterized by genuine concern. Concern. People often think of prayer as a way to get God on your page, but really the New Testament talks about prayer as getting you on God's page.

Aligning your heart with God's heart. And when you pray for Close the Gap, what we're asking you to do is not just to pray that we reach a financial goal, but you become spiritually invested in why Close the Gap is happening. Why you know get invested in that God is doing something fresh, something new, something exciting, not just among people in general, but amongst our students in particular. Get invested in the particulars. Such that you emotionally get kind of tethered to the outcomes of what's next. And I think that's important.

If you're going to be a good steward, if you want to participate and Close the Gap, you need to be invested emotionally and spiritually. And that happens through prayer. That's one of the reasons we're doing the prayer night tonight, so that we can share specific details and do a prayer walk and see the spaces and really spiritually invest. In what the Lord is doing because spiritual outcomes require

spiritual tools and spiritual weapons. It's not about raising money. The money is for the mission. The money, the building is for the vision of helping people discover new life in Jesus.

And that's something we cannot do in our own power. It's something God has to do, and He does it in response to our prayers. And so a good good genuine concern comes through persistent prayer, so pray. The second one was the word ask. And I think the idea of asking correlates with trusted voices. Determining good stewardship. Good stewardship is determined by trusted voices. And the trust the voice more trustworthy than any other voice is the voice of God as it relates to your participation in this campaign. We asked during the vision night for every person to ask God the number he would have you to give.

And in our family, we asked God to help us be more generous than we had ever been before. And I think that's a great prayer. And he gave us a number that was uncomfortable. And we wrote that number down, and then we talked about it together, and we arrived at a consensus. And that number was not necessarily the same number I would have chosen. So the question isn't ask what you want to give or what you think you can give, but what does God want to give? Because good stewardship is determined by a trusted voice.

And then the third one is plan, and planning your stewardship correlates with diligence. A good steward is diligent in every task. If you really do give. What God wants you to give, in most cases, it's going to require you to be stretched. It's going to require God to do things. That you can't do yourself. So it's not like you can just cash flow the gift and I'll just write it and take care of it right now. There you go. A lot of times if you're wanting God to stretch you in this area of stewardship.

You're going to have to think creatively of how that's going to happen. And so in our family we took a process and walking around our property and all the stuff we don't use anymore. It's just collecting dust. Maybe God, you want to use this stuff. With our children, how can you reach your goal of what you're wanting to contribute to this campaign? Which toys are we going to sell? Let's sell all your toys, kids. No, we didn't say that. Just the ones with batteries, right? But we didn't no we didn't say that either.

But we did say think about it I'm not saying you have to, not saying you have to do any of this. I'm saying ask the Lord, would you want to use any of this? And not just your physical stuff. Like vehicles and land and toys, but your digital world of checking accounts and savings accounts and IRAs and Cryptocurrencies and digital assets and all the like, asking the Lord again, even as simple as a Netflix subscription. Or Disney Plus or whatever you're into. Lord, is there anything I need to delay? Is there anything that I need to decrease?

Is there something that I could start doing now? So that you could bless that work and help me arrive at this goal, this number that you've given me. Is there anything I need to deploy and get rid of as it relates to these digital accounts because money these days is all ones and zeros unfortunately. And in that process, the Lord will give you a plan, a strategic plan to arrive at that gift. And some of it, in a lot of cases, most, maybe even most of it, will be outside of your control.

But when God demonstrates provision and faithfulness in keeping with your plan, it's almost like God's saying, see there, I did my part, now you do yours. And it stretches you as a steward to be trustworthy with the gift. And then the last one is accountability. Again, the most important, and that's one of the reasons that we have been putting these envelopes in your bulletin. The envelopes are not to get money yet, even though you can put money in there. That's not why we did that. We did that to save money so we didn't have to do a card and an envelope.

Because I can be a little, you know, bang for the butt kind of guy. But what this really is, is a pledge for accountability. It is you publicly expressing this is what I sense God wanted me to do as it relates to what he's doing in our church. And it's not just going to be between me and God. I want to seek to do what I can before God and other people. Now no one's going to read this except for the people who put it into the system. Very minimum number, but everyone will hear what we're doing together.

We will announce what we're doing as a church. In fact, for our leadership, our deacons and pastors and key leaders, we're going to announce it first. Here's what we're doing as a body of leaders. We want to lead the way and being accountable. To what God is calling us to do, and that's what I'm asking you to do. Over these next couple of weeks, if you're a member of our church I really sense God wanting to do this thing. I sense God acting in response to our prayers for this thing.

And it's going to require all of us participating, partnering together to Close the Gap so we can bring Jesus to every generation. And it's a fresh invitation for us to grow in our stewardship because stewards are driven by genuine concern. They're diligent in every task. They are responsive to trusted voices, and they depend on accountability. All of that is not so that you can be, you know, look at how generous you are. Again, most people will never know the individual gift. That will be between you and God. But it will be a way for you to participate in the kingdom of God advancing in this church and having part of the story of a transformed life where p people who did not know Jesus become able to discover new life in Jesus because of your good stewardship of this of this task.

If you're not a member of Broadview, you can apply this to anything in your life. The point is you're a steward. God has given you what He's given you. He's given you your talent. He's given you your job. He's given you all your house, your car, everything for you to be a steward. It's temporary and you're accountable. And on that day you want to be able to hear from the Lord, well done, good and faithful servant. And it's not even just about doing those things, it's about doing those things for the right reason.

If you look at why Paul did what he did, he said, we're doing this not just to be right before God and people. We're doing this for the glory of Jesus Christ Himself. We're administering this gift for the glory of the Lord himself. Stewardship, good stewardship, displays the glory of Jesus Christ. So in your notes, good stewardship displays the glory. And then the last thing it does is it deepens your love for the church. And at the end of the day, those are the two things that are eternal. Your house, your cars, they wear out, they go away, they burn up.

They get old, but the glory of Christ is eternal and the church of Christ is eternal. And when you steward God's resources, God's way with faithfulness, it increases your treasure on those two fronts and increases your affection for what God is doing at that level. And so as we enter into this time of response, I want to challenge you to think through those things. Again, we're not asking anybody to turn in their envelopes. You can take this home, you can put it in your Bible, and you can pray over those four things.

We are asking our leaders to turn theirs in this week, but you've got plenty of time. You've got all the way to the end of November. To seek the Lord on what it looks like for you to be a trustworthy steward. And it will be challenging, it might be disruptive. But it is a fresh invitation to the joy of the Lord because the fullness of God's blessing comes from the fullness of your obedience and your surrendering. To what God is calling you to do. So let's bow our heads and close our eyes and just spend some time responding to the Lord.

If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian,