

Series: Desire Overflow	Reference: Romans 15:13	Title: Bold \$ Unapologetic	Date: 08.01.2021
Website Writeup:			
Overflow includes all that we are. We were bought with a price, and have become the bondservants of Christ. God has entrusted all that we have to our care, do we regard everything we have and are as His? And what difference does that make in the area of finances for us?			

COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

We're focusing on our signature verse, Romans 15:13 - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Overflow, a natural process of being filled. The Holy Spirit filling me - family & friends - local community - the world. Not forced or awkward. What you're filled with overflows to others. Filled with Jesus, the Word & Spirit of God. Purified. Made holy. Last week we spoke of being blessed to be a blessing. We give God in proportion to what He's given us (Deut. 16) - Jesus gave His life, I lay mine down in like response.

Which brings us to the question of ownership. Who owns me? Do I own me? Who owns my stuff? My talents? My abilities? Car? House? Money? Kids? My life?

Scripture teaches, we & all we are & have belong to God. In Leviticus 25:55 it says this about the people of God, ⁵⁵ *for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.*

In Revelation 5:9-10, in speaking about the work & person of Jesus it says, *"You are worthy to take the scroll & to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom & priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 it teaches, *You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price.*

In Romans 6:18 it speaks of our allegiance...¹⁸ *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.* A mirror image of Pharaoh & Israel's slavery in Egypt. God rescued Israel out of Egypt. In turn, their status as slaves transferred to God. We're literally slaves.

Here's the kicker...in the language of the 1st century Greco-Roman world a slave was considered a living tool of the master, property in every sense of the word.¹ So, when the original readers of this came across this slavery language, there was no mistaking what it meant. Whatever you yield to becomes your master.²

¹ Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Phm 16). Biblical Studies Press.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ro 6:16–20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

They'd have understood the word slave as bond-servant, a person who willingly submitted themselves as slave to another. Maybe they had debt. Maybe they came from a line of bondservants. But we mustn't confuse this idea of bondservant with slavery in American history - they're not the same idea. Slavery in America was a wicked & oppressive system. However, a bondservant in this context willingly submitted to the master, and enjoyed many benefits of the master's household. Bondservants were often treated very well, and in certain cases, enjoyed elevated status in society.

A fitting illustration. Before Christ, I willingly submitted myself to sin. But sin is a tyrannical master never delivering what it promises. I transfer my allegiance to Jesus, a master who willingly gave His life to buy my freedom, which drives me to willingly give Him mine. Jesus isn't tyrannical. He brings freedom from bondage. That's why Paul writes to the Galatians 5:1... *'It's for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.'* As master, sin depletes, but as Master, Jesus builds me up.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, 'When Christ calls a man, he bids him come & die.' Death to self - Alive to God in Christ Jesus. In Jesus, we're a new creation, the old has gone the new has come. We've passed from death in sin, to life in Christ. We saw that symbolized in our baptisms a few weeks ago. We've shifted allegiance - we have a new Master.

According to Scripture, we're the willing bondservants of Jesus. And in that bondservant/master relationship, we must acknowledge, the Master owns everything. Yes, the bondservant enjoys the benefits of the Master's belongings & financial covering. Yes, the bondservant's entrusted with certain items & monies to steward/oversee - but the Master ultimately owns everything. The servant stewards what is the Masters. This is reflected in the story of Adam & Eve from the beginning.

Therefore, in speaking of FILLING & OVERFLOW, it brings us to an important spiritual subject. One which is brought up more than any other in Scripture. A subject of practical nature - Money.

It's been said that fools rush in where wise men fear to tread. But in this matter fear's unfounded. We need to talk about money boldly & unapologetically. In full trust & assurance, Six:Eight isn't in the business of misusing funds. Fear has gestated in the stories of those few who've misused the kingdom of God for personal gain. The church sometimes resides under a cloud of suspicion in the area of money given a few televangelists.

As bondservants of Christ, our finances overflow to serve our King. We're not televangelists scamming others into giving their life inheritance so we can fly around in private jets & build personal empires. We don't speak the language of 'You & Us', but the 'we language' of family. Local church is a family of faith sharing resources for kingdom purposes. So, if you your hackles raise at the mention of money, I ask you gain

self-control over the emotion for the next few moments. Set it aside. Listen. Because we can have a very candid conversation couched in trust & marked with purpose. I think we'll find we have great opportunity to participate in the kingdom of God through our desire to overflow financially.

John Wimber, one of the original founders of the Vineyard, once wrote, *"Twelve of Jesus' thirty-eight parables had to do with money, as did 1/6th of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It's now clear to me, pastors have a responsibility to preach & teach about money, for Christians can't grow to maturity until their hearts & minds are conformed to Scripture on their use of money."*³ It's said that money is the one subject which comes up in Scripture more often than any other, so it must be an important topic with far reaching implications on our spiritual journey.

Billy Graham once said, *"If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life."* True.

Money promises everything it can't deliver. It can't save you, give you purpose, or happiness (I didn't say it can't help). Jesus urged us to have a proper outlook on money in Matthew 6:19-21...¹⁹ *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths & vermin destroy, and where thieves break in & steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths & vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in & steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Where's your heart? What does it serve? What's your treasure? Because, overflow originates from the heart. What's in my heart overflows from within me. So, it's a question of ownership. What fills me is the same question of what owns me. Because Jesus said in reference to money in Matthew 6:24...²⁴ *"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Either consumed with the love of money, or consumed with the love of God."*

Money isn't bad in & of itself. It's a spiritual matter. A tool of the kingdom which mustn't be allowed to become king itself. A spiritual tool in the hand of the steward, the bondservant, for the sake of the Master's bidding. It's not my job to tell you specifically what to do with your money, rather how to regard money in light of Jesus. We speak of ownership to see money & wealth for what it really is, which leads to wise choices with the resources God has entrusted to us. When we're filled with Jesus it naturally overflows from us. The same goes for our material & financial resources, they're an overflow of gratitude towards Jesus to see the kingdom advanced among the nations.

Martin Luther said, *'Every Christian needs two conversions. One for the soul & the other for his pocketbook.'* True. It's a constant ongoing awakening for us as to what we are in relationship to God. In our early walk of faith we may look at this relationship very simplistically. We compartmentalize. Jesus saved me - which is placed in a box over

³ <http://www.vineyardchurchplanting.com/2013/09/04/every-pastor-needs-tell-congregation-money/>

here. Now, I live my life on my own terms until He comes back - in a box over there. We may not regard our relationship with Jesus to have any bearing on finances, sexual purity, where we live, or career choices. Yet, as spiritual maturity sets in, we realize, God owns all of me - everything I am, do & own is His. The mature Christian willingly & gladly offers it all up to Him as a living sacrifice.

As it says in 2 Corinthians 9:7...⁷ *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* We freely & cheerfully give back to God what's already His - driven by gratitude of what He's already entrusted to us!

The longer we walk with Jesus & the more we learn, verses like Luke 14:33 come into focus...³³ *In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.* There's no in-between in the kingdom of God. I'm either a slave to sin, or a slave to righteousness. Being filled with Jesus means I'm 'all in' which includes my finances, sexuality, career & calling, the way I speak, etc.

There are some very sober warnings about money in Scripture. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says...⁹ *Those who want to get rich fall into temptation & a trap & into many foolish & harmful desires that plunge people into ruin & destruction.* ¹⁰ *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith & pierced themselves with many griefs.*

And sobering commands as well in v17...¹⁷ *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*

Some of this may be difficult to hear. But we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rm 12:1-2). Some teaching may fly in the face of the way you think, but issues like money need to come in line with Scripture. Understanding we're bondservants of Christ - God owns everything - there's no compartmentalization. No 'Half-in/Half-out'. God doesn't own a tenth of my finances - it's all His. He's graciously letting me use & enjoy it.

Jesus teaches this in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents. The servants are given the masters money to steward while he's away. A parable clearly teaching we're stewarding God's resources here & now. Therefore, the idea that we possess anything is a deception. The question is, do we invest what's been entrusted us to benefit God, or do we squander it, or merely sit on it waiting for His return?

John Wesley said, *'Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.'* Great advice. We shouldn't be ashamed of proper ambition to make a good living for our families. Scripture pushes us in this way. It pushes in the way of diligence, hard work & integrity in the issue of accruing wealth. There are no get rich schemes in Scripture. I remember a friend calling me in Indonesia years ago, asking, "Hey, I just got this email from a guy in Nigeria. He says if I give him my bank account number he'll transfer a million dollars

over to me & I can keep a percentage...” You know the scam. Scripture warns us, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. Very few win the lottery in life & those who do are often ruined by it - the way to secure wealth is through diligence, honesty, integrity & hard work (Prov 14:23/28:19/Jer 17:11).

Proverbs 13:22 urges us to save well...“A good man leaves an inheritance for his children’s children.” Proverbs 6:6 says...“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways & be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer & gathers its food at harvest.” And 21:20 says...“In the house of the wise are stores of choice food & oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.” Sometimes life doesn’t afford us the opportunity to save enough for the future or our families at the whim of volatile economies, business & governments. However, we’re urged to plan wisely & save as best we can.

Jesus also urges us to guard against hoarding. In Luke 12:15 He says...“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” Then proceeds to tell the story of a man who’s hoarding wealth but dies in the midst of his obsession. Jesus ends by saying in v21...21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Scripture also urges us to give all we can. John Wimber wrote it this way, *“So where does God tell us first to invest His money? In the kingdom of God, in tithes & alms (which are sacrifices beyond our tithes). Formerly I taught that a tithe wasn’t necessarily 10 percent. But now I’m convinced from Scripture that it’s at least that, and that it should be given to the local church. Christians need to understand, from the Bible, their responsibility to give generously to God’s work.”*

I agree. God’s people have always been instructed to give at the least a tenth of their income as in Leviticus 27:30...30 “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” And that tithe, or a tenth, went to support the Temple, the priesthood, care for people & overall work of the kingdom. Jesus rebuked the leaders for neglecting other things but only keeping up with the tithe in Matthew 23:23...23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law & Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill & cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy & faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. Notice He states they were clearly not to neglect tithing, just that they should be overflowing the life of God in all ways.

The local church is the avenue by which God is bringing the message of salvation to the world. Tithing’s a spiritual issue practically tied to the local church. John Wimber went as far to say we give that tenth to the local church before anything else & anything outside that is considered alms.

I remember when we first started Six:Eight & hadn’t yet started passing the tithe box. A guy came up to me & said, “Man it’s great you don’t ask for money! That’s cool.” He

further explained he thought churches only cared about money & were always asking for it. That it was nice that a church lived by faith & didn't ask. I proceeded to tell him that the only reason we hadn't passed the tithe box was that I hadn't gotten a bank account open yet. I simply didn't want to be personally sitting on a bunch of cash. His was a naive comment. Churches are organizations with bills & rent to pay & like everything else operate on money. They expend resources on their communities, in areas of poverty & mission. Churches have salaries & people to care for. Comments such as his come from younger people who've never had the financial responsibility of running an organization.

We can't be afraid to talk about money. God calls us to speak unapologetically on the issue. At Six:Eight we never want our ministry to be limited by a lack of funding. In our history we've paid our rent, salaries, bought equipment, paid other necessary bills, helped out local families both inside & out who struggle. We've invested back into local community partnerships which has taken relationships farther. We support workers in the Middle East, North Africa & Southeast Asia for the care of people & furtherance of the Gospel among the people groups of the world. And we've recently committed further to that. We've invested money in this building, and others we've met in, as a thank you to them to show we care & love our neighbors & appreciate them. We've trained leadership & refreshed them with meals & well deserved gifts. We've put on community parties & luncheons which have increased relationships & opened doors.

We've paid for Bibles to Prisoners which has had a profound affect & led to people coming to Christ! Just this week I got an email from a prisoner which said... "Hello my name is Christopher. I was introduced to your Prison Fellowship Inside Journal The Life Recovery Bible by an old cellmate and ordered one. Thank you so much for sending me this bible. I am 52 yrs. Old and have never had a bible of my own before. I am truly enjoying reading the gospel and learning all I can about God the father and Jesus. I actually cried when I received it. I have asked God to forgive me of my sins and invited the Lord Jesus to enter my life and save me from all my sins and guide me from now on. I was just wanting to thank Prison Fellowship for helping me change my life and giving me the tools to save my soul. God bless you!!"

We've welcomed our newcomers with meals & fun events. We've developed & implemented retreats seeing lives change as a result - we want to keep doing these things & more.

One of our dreams is that we have our own physical footprint in the Eastern Main Line. This is a crowded place, there are few options to meet as a church. In a split second we could be out on our ear without a meeting place. We need to be wise to save for the future & build our reserves for that rainy day when we need to rent or buy a larger place. We have dreams & visions of other projects. But they remain just dreams unless we overflow in the area of finances to make them happen - unless we tithe.

We seek good council from other churches & the Vineyard National leadership. And my challenge to us today is to think hard about ownership - are you glorifying God in all

ways? Are you a good steward of what He's entrusted to you? Do you tithe to this church? If you don't God challenges you to start. If you do, is it cheerfully & is it to the level it stretches you in your faith?