

The Generosity Secret: How to Get Out of Debt and Find Financial Freedom

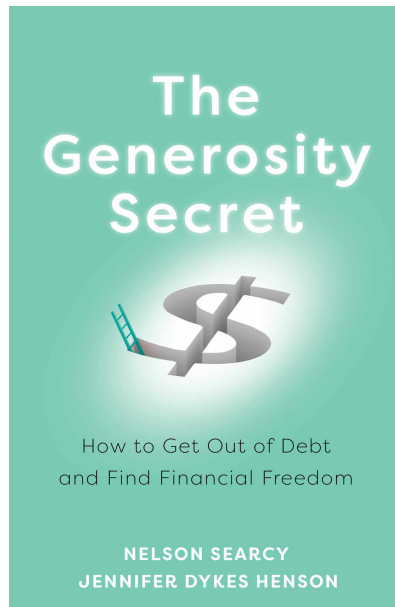
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Summary

It may seem strange to suggest to those who are engaged in missions to read a book on the topic of financial debt and generosity. But even though we may be generous in our time and talents and even our lives, that does not exempt us from also being responsible and generous with our finances. For many, financial stress is a stumbling block to living an abundant life and ministering well. Financial fear should not be the norm for those who love and serve God and want to honor him in every way.

The Generosity Secret provides a proven strategy to break free from the financial stress that's keeping one from living a joy-filled life. This practical, systematic approach to handling money in a God-honoring way guides the reader step-by-step away from a life of financial strain to a new reality of financial health and freedom. Yes, this book is geared toward Christians in general, but there are helpful principles and reminders for those of us who are engaged in ministry as well, especially those on mission home staffs.



Best illustration

"The late, great Christian entrepreneur Jim Rohn tells the story of an early encounter with his mentor in life, a gentleman named Earl Shoaff. According to Mr. Rohn, he sat down to breakfast early one morning with Mr. Shoaff to talk about where Mr. Rohn was in life and what he wanted for his future. The conversation went something like this: Mr. Shoaff: Jim, let me see your list of goals. Let's go over them and talk about them. Maybe that's the best way I can help you right now. Mr. Rohn: I don't have a list. Mr. Shoaff: Well, is it out in the car or at home somewhere? Mr. Rohn: No, sir, I don't have a list anywhere. Mr. Shoaff: Well, young man, that's where we better start. If you don't have a list of your goals, I can guess your bank account within a few hundred dollars. (And then he did, which got Mr. Rohn's attention.) Mr. Rohn: You mean, if I had a list of goals, that would change my bank balance? Mr. Shoaff: Drastically." Kindle location 1645

"In your quest to get out of debt and take hold of the Generosity Secret by becoming an obedient giver, you'll need to set up a specific plan for telling your money where to go. As the old adage says, if you don't tell your money where to go, you'll wind up wondering where it went." Kindle location 1664 this earth, your relationship with money will be summed up by one of two words—generosity or greed." Kindle location 2403

Our Recommendation

Every one of us is obligated as God's stewards to manage our finances well. It's appropriate that at the beginning of a new year we give due consideration to the issues of our finances coupled with generosity. If this book is not for you, you may find it a good read for those of your support base.

Best Quotes

"Most of us have grown up with a skewed understanding of money and possessions. Based on misinformation from the world around us, poor examples, and our own desires, we have unconsciously developed a certain paradigm for understanding and managing our income, from the first five-dollar bill we were given in a birthday card to our first paycheck, and everything we've received since." Kindle location 239

"Unfortunately for most of us, our financial paradigm has gotten us in trouble. And it's not entirely our fault. We have unwittingly bought into the world's distorted paradigm—a paradigm that has led us into catastrophic debt, broken apart our families, and caused high levels of stress and anxiety." Kindle location 241

"When you shift your perspective to a new way of thinking—God's way of thinking—you will experience a financial transformation. But the key is to allow yourself to begin to see your money in a different light." Kindle location 317

"The connection between your heart and your money is complicated. That's because money is not just a financial issue; it's also a spiritual issue. How you view and manage your money impacts you on a spiritual level." Kindle location 404

"In the end, your life will be defined by either greed or generosity. To be open to the Generosity Secret is to choose to be open to God's way of viewing and handling money, ensuring your ability to live a life of financial freedom that is ultimately defined by generosity." Kindle location 456

"The Generosity Secret is that generosity is the secret. When you choose to be generous, you interrupt the cycle of selfishness that leads to financial strain." Kindle location 462

"Money feels like a private matter. Why? Because in our society, we are largely defined by how much we make. We equate our self-worth with our net worth. Not only that but talking about our own money can expose deeply held attitudes about consumption or aspects of our personalities that we don't want to put out there for public view." Kindle location 498

"All of our money, houses, toys, mutual funds, clothes, gadgets, stocks, and retirement plans are not really our own; they are God's. We've just been entrusted with managing the resources he has allowed into our lives. Whether we are overseeing huge portfolios or shoestring weekly budgets, we are all managers of God's means. That's actually where the term stewardship comes from." Kindle location 596

"A steward is someone who manages the wealth and property of another. Stewards don't take ownership of their masters' possessions; they don't use them for their own gain. They don't stash a little of the crop away to increase their family's lifestyle. Instead, they distribute their masters' resources as they should be distributed. Part of that means releasing a significant portion of the treasure back into their masters' work. Part of the paradigm shift to understanding God's ultimate ownership means that we also recognize our role as conduits of his resources." Kindle location 600

"...everyone must answer these three questions: Where did it all go? What did I spend it on? What has been accomplished for eternity through my use of all this wealth?" Kindle location 615

"In God's eyes, you are the financial manager of the wealth he has given you. You are not the owner. As we've discussed, God gave you the ability to work for everything you have. He gave you the opportunities that put you where you are today. Everything, including your energy, your intellect, and your ability to produce, is on loan from him." Kindle location 637

"God has loaned all of us a portion of wealth to manage. Like the servants in the story, we all get different amounts. The key to being a wise manager has little to do with how much we've been given and more to do with how we handle what we've been given." Kindle location 651

"Again, we are managers of our money, not owners. When we internalize that fact, we will be more careful about wasting the owner's money on frivolous things. Money is a tool for good, not something to be consumed freely with such little regard for the benefit it could otherwise have—for us, for those around us, and for the world at large." Kindle location 747

"One of the most common mistakes we see people make when it comes to both their financial life and their spiritual life is to put their trust in their money. Too often, money equals security. People set financial security up as their foundation, build on it, and continually work to maintain it. The problem is that finances are not trustworthy. They can sway and shift, which ultimately makes for a weak foundation." Kindle location 763

"No matter how much money you have, human nature is to think you don't have quite enough. You need just a little more and then you'll be okay, right? This is a fallacy we all buy into when we expect money to satisfy. If you think more money will allow you to have all you need, you are expecting too much from your money." Kindle location 814

"An inclination to give is written on your soul, no matter how muted it may be by your innate bent toward self-preservation, present concerns, or lack of belief. Sometimes it takes a traumatic experience to bring that God-given pull toward generosity to the surface." Kindle location 849

"The key to breaking the bonds of materialism and making wise financial decisions is giving in a God-honoring way. And learning to live within your means takes on a whole new significance when your means become infused by God's blessing on your generosity. The way we ultimately honor God and begin cooperating with him in our financial lives is through our giving." Kindle location 902

"Fear is one of the primary enemies of heartfelt generosity. Fear keeps people locked in the lie of the scarcity mentality—the idea that the more I give away, the less I will have for my own needs. The only way to break out of that lie is to take the first step in faith. Decide on an amount and give it." Kindle location 920

"William Carey had this to say on the subject: 'I was once young and now I am old, but not once have I been witness to God's failure to supply my need when first I had given for the furtherance of His work. He has never failed in His promise, so I cannot fail in my service to Him.'" Kindle location 923

"At its core, debt isn't a math issue or even an income issue, though sometimes it may feel that way. Debt is a behavioral issue. It's a heart issue and ultimately a spiritual issue. If your debt is growing, you are living in a way that goes against God's best plan for you." Kindle location 1056

"Being debt-free is a biblical mandate. Scripture clearly says that you should owe no person anything but your love (Rom. 13:8). Debt is not part of God's best plan for your life. He is more than willing to help you

step out of crippling debt and into freedom as you commit your plan and your efforts to him." Kindle location 1225

"Materialism is simply an unhealthy desire to have more. It's not necessarily a money issue or a possessions issue; it's a heart issue." Kindle location 1265

"The truth is that having more money will just make you more of what you already are. Money is a magnifier. If you are discontent when you have a little bit of money, you will still be discontent when you have a lot of money. If you are unkind when you have a little bit of money, you will be tremendously unkind when you have a tremendous amount of money." Kindle location 1277

"There are only two things that will endure for eternity: your relationship with God and the relationships you create with other people. That's it. While money is a blessing and you are free to enjoy it, the most important decision you can make in your quest for contentment and financial freedom is to build your life on God rather than on the acquisition of stuff. You can lock the contentment thief up forever by deciding that loving God and loving people are more important than any financial level you may attain." Kindle location 1409

"I have seen this scenario play out time and time again. God shows up in people's lives when they honor him. He has obligated himself to. God's promise about tithing is an if/then promise: If you will honor me with your first of your increase, then I will pour out my blessing in your life. Test me." Kindle location 1509

"The tithe is specifically intended to infuse the local church so that God's kingdom can continue to expand at the best possible rate. It is not up to us as givers to judge where we'd like to give our tithe. We are simply told to make it the first fruits, make it proportional, and bring it to the storehouse." Kindle location 1521

"People who tithe have more money left at the end of the month than people who don't. People who tithe are able to pay off credit card debt and student loans faster. They have peace and security when difficult financial times hit. They are able to save for the future and for their children's education. God's Word is true. Test me in this." Kindle location 1609

"Giving generously doesn't have anything to do with the actual dollar amount you give; it has everything to do with what that dollar amount is in proportion to your income. When you quickly and cheerfully give over and above the minimum requirement, you are a generous giver, no matter where the decimal point falls." Kindle location 1884

"As Thomas Wolfe has been credited with saying, 'You have reached the pinnacle of success as soon as you become uninterested in money, compliments or publicity.' We would take this assertion a step further and add that true success is knowing you are being obedient to God. When you obey God by making his plan your motivation and then act on that plan by consciously serving others and helping them grow spiritually, he will make you successful in everything you do." Kindle location 2186