

Christians Don't Understand Biblical Stewardship, Author Says

In *Secure: Discovering True Financial Freedom*, Rick Dunham writes that many Christians don't understand the true nature of stewardship. Instead, they equate stewardship with tithing—giving a portion of what they have to God and keeping the rest for their own purposes.

But biblical stewardship starts from a completely different place and, when properly understood, can provide a security like none other.

Dunham had to learn this lesson the hard way. When he was fired from his first job out of seminary, he seemed to be on the brink of financial disaster, where so many Americans are today. With payments on homes in Texas and California and a wife and three young children to support, bankruptcy seemed inevitable.

"Looking back, what I realize now is that God took me into a financial wilderness to teach me lessons that I couldn't have learned any other way," Dunham writes. "He was, in fact, rescuing me from a bondage that I didn't really understand."

In the new edition of *Secure*, published this week, Dunham recounts how family members came to his aid when he was on the verge of bankruptcy. He believes that tough economic times should be a wake-up call to the church like they were to him, challenging Christians' consumer-driven outlook.

"Money promises a security it can never deliver," he writes. "Our hearts have been seduced and ensnared by the promise of freedom, peace and security when in fact, money only turns our hearts away from fully following after God and His purposes."

Dunham also notes that wealth isn't necessarily a sign of God's approval: "The measurement of effective stewardship isn't that you're necessarily going to be overflowing with money, but that you'll have the money to make the greatest possible impact for God's kingdom."

The basic principle is this: Our money and our heart are tethered together in an unbreakable bond and, as a result, our use of money reveals where our hearts are. Above all else, God wants our hearts, and we can't be wholehearted followers of God if we are storing up treasure on earth at the expense of our investment in kingdom work.

"God has designed giving to bless you, not take something away from you," Dunham writes.

Secure sums it up this way: "When you look to God and fully trust Him to care for you, you will know what it means to be secure. Truly secure. But the only way to get there is to trust Him fully by making His kingdom your financial priority ... treasuring up treasures in heaven and not living for the here and now."