

The Story of the Shrewd Money Manager Luke 16:1-14

by David Servant

Jesus' story of the shrewd money manager teaches us about the importance of faithfulness, trustworthiness, and generosity with our resources, and how our attitude towards money reveals our priorities and spiritual lives.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:3, Matthew 6:24, Matthew 25:21, Luke 16:9-10, Luke 16:13, 1 Timothy 6:10, 1 Timothy 6:17

Topics: "Stewardship Of Wealth", "Faithfulness To God"

Description

David Servant delves into Jesus' parable of the shrewd money manager, emphasizing the crucial lessons it teaches about the use of money and our attitude towards it. Jesus highlights that serving both God and money is impossible, urging us to prioritize God over material wealth. Trustworthiness is another key lesson, as faithfulness in small matters determines our ability to handle greater responsibilities. Our handling of worldly wealth reflects our spiritual condition and reveals our true devotion to God, impacting our eternal destiny.

Transcript

Jesus' story of the shrewd money manager is one that many people have difficulty understanding. However, if we first consider the lessons of the story that Jesus shared at its conclusion, it's easier to understand how the story leads to those lessons.

Jesus mentioned at least three lessons His story teaches, and all of them revolve around the use of and our attitude about money. The last of the three is, "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Luke 16:13). Jesus does not want money to be our highest priority as it is for many people. Every aspect of some people's lives revolves around money. For example, when faced with a decision about choosing a career, the most important question they ask themselves is, "What can I do that will make me the most money?" A servant of God, considering the same question, would ask, "What does God want me to do?" Those whose god is money are literally controlled by money, as it directs their every decision. And that was the case with the shrewd money manager. He deceived and cheated his master, sinning against God, because money was his highest priority. It was his god. By their actions, the Pharisees also proved they loved money more than God.

The second lesson was about trustworthiness. Jesus said, "Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities" (Luke 16:10). Trustworthiness is something that must be earned, and it is first earned by proving yourself trustworthy in small things. The shrewd money manager in Jesus' story was found unfaithful, and that was why he lost his job. God is testing everyone's faithfulness by watching what we do with what He's given us, including our money. Christians who don't give anything when they're making only a little money are proving they wouldn't give anything if they made a lot of money, in spite of what they may claim. So why would God bless them with more money? Christians who waste money that God gives them are also proving themselves untrustworthy and provide no reason for God to entrust them with more.

This is more important than many Christians realize. How we spend our money is a primary indicator of our spiritual lives. In fact, it can reveal whether we are truly saved or not. Jesus said, "If you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?" The shrewd money manager in Jesus' story proved, by his mishandling of his master's money, that he was not truly devoted and obedient to his master. So his master rejected him, just as God will reject those who, by their use of their money, prove that they aren't truly submitted to Him.

The third lesson is perhaps the most difficult one to understand, especially if you are reading from a translation other than the New Living Translation. Jesus said, "I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven" (Luke 16:9). The shrewd money manager made friends out of his master's debtors by lowering their debts. Because he'd helped them save money by cheating his master, they'd feel obligated to help him once he lost his job. Jesus, of course, doesn't want us to make friends by cheating anyone, but He does expect that we will assist our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in financial need. And we, like the shrewd manager, will ultimately benefit from helping them when we are rewarded in heaven.

Q. Do you think what we've read today has any application to kids?

A. If they receive any money, either by earning it or receiving it as a gift, it certainly does. They should demonstrate their obedient faith in Jesus by what they do with their money, and it doesn't make any difference how little money they have. In fact, by proving to God at a young age that He can trust them with a little money, kids can ensure themselves a better financial future.

Q. Many people think it's O.K. to tell "little" lies, as long as their lies don't hurt anyone. And they claim they would never tell a "big" lie. How do you think God feels about that?

A. God knows they're lying about not lying! When they're faced with a small temptation to tell a small lie and yield, God knows they'll tell a big lie when faced with a big temptation. God never tells any lies, big or small, and neither should we.

Application: When you are faced with a decision, are the financial consequences more important to you than the spiritual consequences? Say, for example, that you have just enough money to buy a certain thing you've wanted for a long time. However, you haven't given away any portion of that money yet, to someone less fortunate, to your church or to a missionary. What is the proper thing to do?

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