

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “THE PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: November 26, 2023

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 16:1-9

Eleven of Jesus’ thirty-nine parables have to do with money. And the parable found in Luke 16:1-9 is generally considered one of the most confusing, mainly because it seems to condone the calculating schemes of a household manager. But Jesus is not endorsing the manager’s dishonest actions. Rather, in *The Parable of the Shrewd Manager*, Jesus commends the use of worldly wealth for the eternal well-being of ourselves and others.

**The parable: A clever manager, facing imminent trouble, takes resolute action. (vv. 1-8a)**

Fearing dismissal from his master’s house, the manager uses his position as steward to cancel half of the debts owed to his employer. In doing so, the shrewd manager secures future friends for himself as he nears the time of his unemployment, when he will need to call on them for favors.

- Who is Jesus’ audience for this parable (v. 1)? How does this information affect how you read the passage?
- What does it mean to be “shrewd”? In the *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, only five of the virgins were considered wise (Matthew 25:1-13). Why? Discuss the parallels between these two parables.

**An observation: The people of the world are far more focused on their goal than are the people of the light. (v. 8b)**

Once the shrewd manager reduces the obligations owed to the master by the debtors, the master will be celebrated by the townspeople for his generosity! But if the master revokes the manager’s discounts, his reputation will undoubtedly suffer. For that reason, the master commends the manager for his shrewdness (v.8). In his sermon on the passage, R.C. Sproul summarizes: “Jesus was saying in ‘The Parable of the Unjust Steward’ that if unbelievers in the secular world are shrewd and smart enough to look out for their best interest for tomorrow, how much more should the people of God look to the future of heaven?”<sup>1</sup>

- Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. How can building relationships with people be far more effective for gaining security than building wealth?
- Read Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 12:32-34. How can you “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”? Discuss one thing you can do this week that will invest in the eternal well being of others.

**The exhortation: Disciples must creatively and decisively use our resources for the Kingdom as we anticipate eternal welcome. (v. 9)**

The overarching principle Jesus is teaching his disciples is that we are to use our money wisely, not trusting in it or running from it, but consecrating it for Kingdom use: “Building relationships is far more effective for gaining security than building wealth is. The Word eternal signifies that good relationships help us in times of trouble in this life, and they will also endure into eternal life. True riches are good relationships with people founded on our mutual adoption as God’s children, and a good relationship with God is realized in generosity to the poor.”<sup>2</sup>

- Read Luke 14:12-14. What is one way to use our resources to make “eternal friends”? (cf. Isaiah 58:7-11)

## Family Dinner Table

### Stewardship vs. Ownership

taken from *The Faith Driven Investor*

“Adam didn’t create the Garden—he cultivated it. So, what has God put under your care? We believe that God owns it all—our finances, our influence, our everything. We will be held accountable for our faithfulness in stewarding His resources. Time, talent, treasure, truth, and relationships are gifts to be stewarded for the ultimate glory of the One who gave them. These resources are our one ‘minas,’ as Luke 19:11-27 describes—the one life we have been given. How we live it is up to us. This life is a resource and we are responsible to do something with it. This results in an eagerness and excitement to work hard, invest well, and serve effectively as the vehicle through which God’s grace and love move. Every penny is an opportunity for God to work redemptively in the lives affected by every investment. As we steward what we have been given, we are free to experience the fullness of God’s joy.”<sup>3</sup>

- Read 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Chronicles 29:11, and Deuteronomy 10:14. Everything you have—your health, wealth, and opportunities—are gifts from God. How does this perspective shift the way you think about stewarding your resources for God’s Kingdom?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

House of Refuge, supported partner ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Beth and Dal, supported missionary partners

<sup>1</sup> *The Parable of the Unjust Steward*, a Sermon from R.C. Sproul | Ligonier Ministries. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/sermons/parable-unjust-steward>

<sup>2</sup> *God’s Provision* (Luke 9:10-17; 12:4-7; 12:22-31) Theology of Work. (2023, May 3). <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/luke/gods-provision-luke/#shrewd-manager-and-prodigal-son>

<sup>3</sup> *Stewardship vs. Ownership* (2020) Faith Driven Investor. Available at: <https://www.faithdriveninvestor.org/blog/2019/8/17/stewardship-vs-ownership> (Accessed: 22 November 2023).