

## The Story of the Shrewd Financial Planner

Luke 16.1-13

“That’s mine!” “No it isn’t, it’s mine!” Children’s squabbles over what is theirs are echoed in the hearts of adults. Jesus taught that possessions can be a barrier to kingdom living, but properly ‘invested’ are a means to eternal rewards. How we treat possessions *now* matters!

A Poor Manager, but A Wise Planner (1-8a)

- Manager accused of mismanagement; ‘pink slip’ coming!
- Desperate, he lowers creditors’ bills (which they appreciate!)
- The ‘boss’ praises him for shrewdly planning for his future.

Jesus Applies the Parable to Kingdom Living (8b-13)

- Use material possessions for spiritual goals (8b-9)
- Faithfulness now are entrusted with eternal wealth (10-12)
- Who are you serving – God, or wealth?

*After this life is over, Christ will judge our service for Him,  
whether we have invested our resources on earth;  
if we have, heavenly treasure will be our lasting reward.*



1. Jesus spoke more about His coming kingdom more than any other subject, but very often, His teaching about the kingdom involved financial issues. To get a flavor for Jesus’ teaching, here are some references just from the Gospel of Luke: 6.20-21, 24-25, 30-31, 35, 38; 8.4-15; 11.42; 12.15-34; 14.33; 16.19-25; 18.18-30; 20.19-26; 21.1-4. From these passages, and other verses you may know, what ideas and themes are central to Jesus’ teaching about money? What lessons are most applicable to American Christians today?
2. Bible scholars describe the parable of the ‘Unrighteous Steward’ as the most difficult parable in Luke. Certainly, the main character in the parable is less than honorable (see Luke 16.1-3). Facing getting fired and being out of work, what can he do? His response is the focus of the parable (4-7). Since he was dishonest once, some think he dishonestly reduced what his master’s creditors owed. But this is unlikely; the master wouldn’t commend him for being dishonest a second time (8a)! More likely, he forfeited his own commission in order to foster goodwill later. At the end of v8, what does Jesus mean when He says “the sons of this age are more shrewd...than the sons of light”? What does He want “sons of light” to do with the material wealth they possess (v9)? Why?
3. In verses 10-13, Jesus applies the message of the parable for His followers. In v10, what does “very little thing” and “much” refer to? In v11, what is the contrast between “unrighteous wealth” and “true riches”? In v12, what do the phrases “that which is another’s” and “that which is your own” refer to? Can you see how Jesus is contrasting wealth in this life with rewards in eternity?
4. Verse 13 is a proverbial truth, which Jesus used on more than one occasion. In Matthew 6.24-34, Jesus is exhorting us to not worry; here, Jesus tells us to use material wealth so that we’ll be entrusted with spiritual riches and rewards in the life to come. Why is it so difficult for us to look beyond the possessions of this life, and see the surpassing value of heavenly rewards?