



Topic: The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

Pray:

Begin your time of reflection with a prayer, opening your heart to God. You can use Psalm 119:36-37 (NIV) as a guide: "Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word." Take a moment to quiet your mind and focus on God's presence.

As you pray, ask Him to help you understand the lessons from the parable of the shrewd manager and how they apply to your life. Invite His guidance in managing your resources, making wise decisions, and aligning your priorities with His kingdom. Use this time to express your gratitude for the resources and opportunities you have been entrusted with and your desire to use them wisely and faithfully. Ask God to reveal His insights as you delve into this parable and seek to be a good steward of all He has given you.

Meditate:

Read Luke 16:1-15 (NIV) - "Jesus told his disciples: 'There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So, he called him in and asked him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management because you cannot be manager any longer." The manager said to himself, "What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses." So, he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" "Nine hundred gallons of olive oil," he replied. The manager told him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty." Then he asked the second, "And how much do you owe?" "A thousand bushels of wheat," he replied. He told him, "Take your bill and make it eight hundred." The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So, if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? No one can serve two masters. Either you

will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.'"

In this parable from Luke 16, we encounter a situation where a seemingly unscrupulous manager is commended for his shrewdness. It's important to note that the commendation here isn't for his dishonesty but rather for his resourcefulness in a challenging circumstance. The master praises the manager's ability to secure his future by reducing the debts owed by others. Now, what can we learn from this intriguing story? Firstly, it underscores a crucial difference between those who follow the ways of Christ and those who are solely driven by worldly pursuits. The "sons of light," as described in the Bible, are those who walk in God's light, guided by His principles. They operate with a different set of values, recognizing that worldly wealth, while significant, is ultimately temporary. In verse 9, we encounter the term "unrighteous wealth," which points to the manager's use of worldly resources to secure his future. However, let's remember that Jesus is speaking with a touch of irony here. He wants us to understand that material riches can't secure our salvation or grant us eternal life; only God can do that. But here's the powerful insight: While worldly wealth may not buy us a ticket to heaven, it can serve as a tool for good. Wealth, when used wisely and compassionately, can help others find their way to God's path. It can be a force for positive change in the lives of those in need. This aligns with the message of Jesus throughout His ministry, emphasizing love, compassion, and service to others. So, as we navigate our lives in a world often driven by material pursuits, let's remember the wisdom of this parable. Let's use our resources wisely, not just for our own benefit but to make a positive impact on the lives of others. By doing so, we can store up treasures not only for this life but also for the eternity that awaits us in the loving presence of our Creator.

Proclaim:

"I declare that I will be a faithful and wise steward of the resources God has given me. I choose to prioritize relationships and eternal impact over fleeting wealth. By serving God with my finances and possessions, I aim to bring honor to Him and further His kingdom."

Fellowship:

Engage in a conversation with a friend or family member about how you can use your resources to make a positive impact in your community. Share ideas for acts of kindness and generosity that reflect your commitment to serve God.

For Students:

- Have you ever faced a situation where you had to be creative or clever to solve a problem? How did you handle it, and what was the outcome?
- The parable of the shrewd manager highlights the importance of making wise decisions with resources. How do you think this applies to managing your time and resources as a student?

- Jesus emphasized that we cannot serve both God and money. What steps can you take as a student to ensure that your priorities align with serving God above all else?

For Parents:

- How do you teach your children about the responsible use of money and resources? Are there lessons from the parable of the shrewd manager that you can incorporate into these discussions?
- Discuss the concept of stewardship with your children. How can you encourage them to view their possessions and finances as gifts from God that should be used wisely?
- In what ways can your family use its resources to make a positive impact in your community and serve God? Share ideas and explore potential family projects or initiatives.

For Professionals:

- The parable of the shrewd manager emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness and wise resource management. How do you apply these principles in your professional life?
- Reflect on your career decisions and financial choices. Are they aligned with your values and commitment to serve a higher purpose? What adjustments, if any, do you need to make?
- Discuss the idea of using your professional influence and resources to benefit others and further God's kingdom. Are there specific opportunities within your field where you can make a significant impact?

