

Jesus' Teaching on Stewardship

Luke 16:1-13

Every January is stewardship month at BBC when we emphasize what the Bible says about stewardship. Therefore, in this message we will study what Jesus taught about stewardship. [READ TEXT]

The word steward means a “*household manager*”—A steward is a person entrusted with oversight and profitable management of someone else’s property. ILLUS: Abraham’s steward—*Eliezer* (Gen. 15:1).

➡ Principles of Stewardship:

1. OWNERSHIP (who owns what—who does it belong to?).
2. TRUST (The property/resources that have been entrusted to you)
3. RESPONSIBILITY (To wisely use what has been entrusted to you to gain a good return).
4. ACCOUNTABILITY (giving account to the owner of how you used what he entrusted to you).

Each of us are stewards since everything we have belongs to God (Ps. 24:1). You manage it, but you do not own it. Your **responsibility** is to use what God has entrusted to you so it will bring a profitable return. In turn, God will give a reward for your stewardship based your profitable use of what God entrusted to your care.

➡ Many of Jesus’ parables were about stewardship. Luke 16 is an example.

- Luke 16 is an addendum to the parable of the prodigal Son in Luke 15. “Prodigal” means “waster” (cf. 15:13). Luke 16 continues the theme of wastefulness. God hates waste (John 6:12).
- Luke 16 emphasizes life is a stewardship, and we must not waste it.

I. **The ACCOUNTABILITY of the steward** (16:1-2).

- A. He was RESPONSIBLE for his lord’s goods. The wealth is not his. He had the responsibility of using it for the profit of the owner.
- B. He was CARELESS with his lord’s goods (vs. 1-2). He wasted his master’s goods, and deserved to be “fired” (v. 3).

- This steward forgot he was a steward and began to act as if he were the owner. Never forget God is the owner, NOT YOU!
- C. He was ACCOUNTABLE to his master. There is an AUDIT coming (2 Cor. 5:10). We must prepare for that audit now!
- ➔ Every Christian will “*give account*” of his stewardship at the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-12).
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In 1960 Bernie Madoff started a small stock trading company that quickly became a major player on Wall Street. He received investments from some of the wealthiest people and institutions in the country because he offered a much higher rate of return than normal to his investors. Rather than investing the money that was entrusted to him, Madoff siphoned off much of it to fund his lavish lifestyle.

In 1999 a financial analyst called his business practices into question, but the authorities did not take the charges seriously. It was not until 2008 that Madoff was finally arrested for defrauding billions of dollars from investors. Madoff is now in prison serving a 150 year sentence.

One day each one of us will stand before God and give account of our stewardship—“*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*” (Rom. 14:12). Everything we have belongs to God, and He holds us responsible for how we use it. If we fail to use those resources in a way that pleases God, we are defrauding God as Madoff defrauded his investors.

II. The ANTICIPATION of the steward (vs. 3-8).

- A. He was CIRCUMSPECT (v. 3). He recognized his opportunity to use his resources was coming to an end. He saw the handwriting on the wall and was about to be “fired” from his job!
- B. He was CALCULATING (v. 4). He could not change the past, but he could prepare for the future. How?

1. The steward used his position to “discount” the people's debts owed to his master. He was really “buying friends” at his master's expense.
 2. By making friends of his master's creditors he hoped they would take him in when he was out of a job.
- C. He was COMPETENT (vs. 5-7). He made wise use of his present resources for future benefit.
- As shady as he was, he wisely used his present opportunity to prepare for his future. THIS IS WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD DO— Make preparations for eternity (Amos 4:12). A call to an audit is a call to prepare!
- D. He was COMMENDED (v. 8). A common feature of our Lord's parables is they often do not end as you would expect. That is particularly true of this parable.
- ➡ He was NOT commended for his ethics, but for...
1. Having done “*wisely...*” Wise means “to act with foresight.” It is illustrated in Jesus' account of the wise man who built his house on the rock in anticipation of a coming storm (Mt. 7:24). It also describes the five “wise” virgins who brought extra oil anticipating future need (Mt. 25:1-13).
 - This steward recognized his crisis and seized his opportunity because **he had his eye on the future**, not just the present. Keep your eye on the future!
 2. His acute business sense (Rom. 12:11).
 - a) “*The children of this world*” are better at seizing opportunities for making money and friends and getting ahead in this world than the people of God—Bill Gates; Paul Allen; William Buffet; Donald Trump; Jeff Bezos.
 - b) “*The children of this world*” are wiser only “*in their generation.*” They see the temporal things, but have no eternal perspective. The child of God should live “with eternity's values in view.” Therefore, God's people should be just as

wise in investing for the their eternal future as the children of this world are in feathering their earthly nests.

- d) We are to do righteously what this steward did unrighteously.

III. The **ADMONITIONS regarding stewardship** (vs. 9-13).

A. The wise stewardship of money **can achieve eternal goals** (v. 9).

1. Make lots of friends for the Lord. Win people to Christ who will one day welcome us into heaven.
 - Every believer will be welcomed into heaven, but not all will have the same number of friends to welcome them.
 - When I get to heaven, I expect to meet “friends” who will thank me for helping pay the bill to send the Gospel to them. As the song goes, “Thank you for giving to the Lord.”
2. We can be sure the Lord will reveal to our converts how our stewardship of money was instrumental in them getting saved or in meeting their needs.

B. Faithful stewardship **pays eternal dividends** (vs.10-12).

➡The most important thing about a steward is faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2). Faithfulness will be the basis of his eternal reward.

1. Faithful in least—Faithful in much
2. Unfaithful in least—Unfaithful in much
3. Unfaithful in mammon—Unfaithful in true riches. How can anyone expect to be trusted with more who has been unfaithful with what they have now?
 - This parable teaches **why God gives us money**—It is given as a TEST. Your stewardship will be a factor in determining your millennial inheritance (Luke 19:12-17).

C. Wise stewards recognize **stewardship of money prevents bondage to money** (v. 13 cf. Mt. 6:19-24)

- “Money makes a good servant but a cruel master.”

1. You cannot love two masters, anymore than you can travel in two directions at the same time.
2. You can serve God *with* money, but you can never serve God *and* money.

When you choose the Lord as your Master, He does not take away your money. Instead, God turns your money into an ally. The same dollar that can buy a bottle of booze; pay a prostitute; or purchases drugs, can also buy a Bible, build a church, or support a missionary.

SUMMATION: Someday the Lord will say to me, “Hughes, *g i e a a c c o u n t o f h e a d h i , f h m a e b e I g e a e d* [because I’ll be in heaven! Opportunities for stewardship will be over after you die at the rapture!]

- I gave you a good wife...four daughters...20 grand...3 great-grandchildren—*What did you do with them?*
- I gave you thousands of dollars—*What did you do with them?*
- I gave you a house—*What did you do with it?*
- I gave you a car—*What did you do with it?* [read the Bible to defend it? share it?]
- I gave you the ability to teach and preach My Word—*What did you do with it?*
- I gave you a church in Vermont and one in Port Orchard—*What did you do them them?*
- I gave you hundreds of people to pastor throughout your ministry—*Wha did d i h hem?”*

What will the Lord say to YOU when you give account of your stewardship (Mt. 25:21)?