

# STEWARDSHIP

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“Now He was saying to the disciples, ‘There was a certain Rich man who had a steward, and was reported to him as Squandering his possessions ...for that which is highly Esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”

†Luke 16:1-15

**Back in the late ‘80s the Lord spoke to me about “giving” and stewardship principles. He told me that “The Church has not been taught the biblical concepts of giving.” Of course He meant by that not that there was no teaching on giving (and receiving, with a lot of emphasis since the early ‘80s on *receiving*), but that what people were being taught were not “biblical”; i.e., correct teaching.**

**But you must understand the importance of these principles of stewardship because the Bible talks about it a lot and Jesus especially taught much on the subject as did the Apostle Paul. And no**

**matter what you think about it as a Christian, you “will give an account of those things done in the body whether good or bad.” You will give an account of your stewardship directly to the Lord Jesus at the *bema*—judgment seat of Christ.**

**I’ve mentioned this on occasion in my writings and preaching but never written an article devoted to this. But this morning at 4 A.M. the Lord began talking about this again emphasizing the importance of being a good steward of all that He’s given to each of us. I wrote at some length about this in our book *The Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit (G&Ops)* because stewardship is part of the Fruit of *faithfulness* (Gal. 5, The Fruit of the Spirit). Therefore, if you are not faithful in giving you are not faithful because we are commanded to give.**

**Now one of the reasons that the Lord wants to emphasize this today is because of all the perverted teaching in the Body of Christ and especially in the false churches because it is a false teaching and has no place in a true Church. This teaching is the false prosperity message that has been used for decades to separate gullible church members from their cash.**

**And the main reason that this message is false is because it incorrectly defines “prosperity” as money—meaning that if you have a lot of money, you are prosperous. Nothing could be further from the truth! Remember what I always say—“What does the Word say?”**

**And Jesus tells us right here in Luke 16 an important concept—“**What is highly esteemed in the sight of man is an abomination in the sight of God.**” Now that’s in red; Jesus Himself said that. And the word is clear that He was referring to money—cold, hard cash! He said it was “an abomination in the sight of God.” That’s an Eye of the Eagle statement isn’t it? What did He mean by that? You should meditate on these verses over and over and let the Holy Spirit tell you Himself.**

**But the Lord showed me one morning back in 1982 when I was reading Psalm 73 that “money was the lowest form of prosperity.” We certainly see that in the Book of Revelation concerning this church age—the Seventh—that we are living in. He said that we think we are “rich” but we are really “naked, blind, wretched, miserable and *poor*.” (Rev. 3:17). In other words, this church (meaning the people of this church age who are Christians) have a lot of money in the bank but they are still “poor” and “naked”; in other words, they are spiritually poor—meaning that they have no treasures laid up in Heaven! The nakedness represents the fact that they have no “acts of righteousness.”**

**When we lived in Libby, Montana, and had the church there the Lord gave me a vision of this I shared in the book, *Revelations from God, Vol. 1* as “The Vision of the Naked Lady.” That is this church of today—the lukewarm church that is “naked” as Jesus reported in Revelation 3 but she is not “ashamed” of her nakedness. But she will be on the Judgment Day! And many of those who claim to be speaking for God today, especially the Balaam Boys & Girls, will not make it into Heaven as a result of their lies, false teaching and dishonesty. Remember, Jesus said, “*Many* (not just a few) will say to me on that *Day* (italics added for emphasis that this is the Judgment Day), ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ Then I will say to them: ‘I never knew you; depart from Me ...’ (Matthew 7:22-23).**

**Now the fact is that the Lord does want to prosper you and He wants to give you *more* than you have now but if you are not a good steward, then you’d better get a high paying job because you will not be blessed much by the Lord; He will not act contrary to His Word.**

**So in the text for this particular teaching, the first verse, Luke 16:1, informs us that the “rich man” is the Lord Jesus and we are His stewards, or some translations use the word “manager.” And we see this word translated “steward” first in the book of Genesis. Abraham**

**had a steward and Joseph both was a “steward” in Potiphar’s house and later on had his own steward who looked after his “house” (all his possessions, including his family—that’s an important point). Abraham trusted his steward so much that he sent him on a journey to select a bride for Isaac. That should speak to you about your duty as a faithful steward for the Lord—are you seeking a “bride” for the Lord Jesus? Remember, and we will mention this later, this a portion of Jesus’ teaching here in Luke 16.**

**Now in those days, a person utilized a steward to take care of what might be considered the ordinary affairs of life. The “rich man” as I wrote in G&Ops was preoccupied with more important matters like perhaps running the entire Universe. But you must understand, and unless you are a foolish steward then you do, that one of the main reasons the Lord Jesus does this—and He also discusses this in our text here in Luke 16—is as a *test*.**

**Yes, the Scriptures are quite clear that one very important aspect of this life on earth is tests—the Lord will test you! Over and over if you fail the test the first time but even if you pass you will still be tested again and you will be tested in other areas. And you will always be tested in the area of morality and the Word. Psalm 105 informs us that Joseph “was tested” by the Word. My very first visitation with Satan, when I was taken into his office under the earth in hell, made it plain to me that my primary “test” in life by the devil would be whether or not I would believe the Word vs. what Satan was trying to tell me. And I’m proud to say that I’ve passed that test over and over. I believe 2 Cor. 4:18 much more than anything I was ever shown by the devil. Remember, and the Lord Jesus knew this well during His temptations—and the Word makes it plain that He was “tested” in all areas like we are and He never sinned—the world and whatever you see in the world with your physical eyes is not the truth—it’s a fabrication by Satan to fool you. No, the truth is the Word, praise God. The truth is the Kingdom of God and the Word of God. If the world is**

**contrary to the Word, which one are you going to believe? And the Holy Spirit gave me this particular scripture, 2 Cor. 4:18, when He spoke to me about the spirit of cancer. In 1980, He spoke to me one day and said, “Son, the devil is going to put cancer on more and more Christians.” Now I never asked Him at the time just *why* or *how* the devil was going to be able to do this but this scripture is the key that He showed me. He said in 2008, “Christians are doing the opposite of what that verse says to do. Instead of looking at “the things that are not seen” (i.e., the Word and the promises of God for healing and deliverance from the spirit of cancer) they are looking at the “things that are seen” (i.e., they are looking at the tumors and saying, “Guess I wasn’t healed the tumor’s still there; in fact it’s growing larger.”)**

**The reason finances are so important as a test is because this is normally the last thing that a born-again person lets go of. And some people never do. But remember, anything you put ahead of the Lord is an idol whether it’s money, entertainment, glory, sex, etc. And Jesus told us first in the Ten Commandments—“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” So you can expect to be tested over and over again if you are not tithing and/or giving offerings and alms to the Lord.**

**Now in the text we are studying—and I pray that you will not just read this teaching article but also read and meditate on the text from the Bible yourself at least 5 times—we learn that this particular steward was “dishonest” or unfaithful. His master had entrusted him with the affairs of the house but then received a report that he was abusing his position through dishonesty or perhaps just having a cavalier attitude, after all, it was not his money. Now the Greek word translated “Master” is *kurios* which is normally “Lord” in all translations.**

**So the *Master* calls his steward and makes him give an accounting because he is being fired for being untrustworthy. And we should expect this too, in our jobs if we were found to be dishonest or not trustworthy. One of the biggest problems businesses have today is**

**finding honest employees. Employee theft is a huge problem as well as just putting in an honest day's work for your wages. Companies are looking for honest, productive employees. And the Lord expects this of us on our jobs as well because we are representing Him if we claim to be a Christian.**

**So in the text, when the unfaithful steward finds out that he is getting fired he uses wisdom because he doesn't want to be a beggar or do manual labor—he discounts the bills or in accounting terms the accounts receivable that people owe to his master. By doing this these former clients will owe him a big favor; after all, he's just saved one 50% on his bill and another 20%.**

**Now interestingly, the Master who was firing him commended him for his actions as being “shrewd” or “wise” in his financial dealings because he had made “friends” for himself that would benefit him in life since he was now out of a job. Although the Master was no doubt glad to get some “cash” back on the books this was not what he commended the steward for and the lesson is clear because Jesus emphatically states it in v. 8, “**For the sons of this age (or world, meaning *unbelievers*) are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light (i.e., believers).**”**

**But notice v. 9 or you will miss Jesus' point of stewardship as a principle: “**And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.**”**

**Jesus is saying that we as believers should use our “unrighteous mammon”—our money—as wisely as unbelievers. Unbelievers—to the extent that they are able—are shrewd or wise with one another in financial matters to win friends and influence people through money. This allows many of them to be rich and to provide well for their families. But the “sons of light” normally fail to properly use the resources that their Lord has given to them to *win* people over to the**

**Kingdom of God and thus they are not “welcomed into eternal dwellings.” The lesson in this portion of Luke 16 is that we should use *all* of our available resources to win people to the Kingdom of God so that when we go to Heaven there will be people there who would not be there if it were not for our giving of our finances and our time to win the lost.**

**Then the Lord Jesus informs us of something I’ve heard Christians say over and over again as an excuse for not giving their tithes and offerings: “I don’t have enough to give; I can barely pay my bills now. But whenever the Lord blesses me with more then I’ll give my tithe.”**

**Well, if you believe that lie then Jesus has a Word for you in Luke 16:10—“**He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in the least is also unjust in much.**”**

**In other words, you have failed the test of faithfulness! You are an unfaithful steward. And when the Lord spoke to me about this over 20 years ago He quoted v. 11 and spoke the following: “**The true riches are the souls of men.**” So maybe if you’ve been waiting on your ministry all these years it’s because you were never faithful in giving of finances to the Lord; He’s been waiting on you all this time to correct this deficiency and be faithful before He will entrust you with the true riches of the Kingdom.**

**Now v. 12 speaks directly about stewardship as well and especially the tithe because the Bible is clear that the tithe belongs to the Lord and so that first 10% does not even belong to us—it’s His and if we take it we are “stealing” from the Master—we are unfaithful stewards. The tithe is that “which belongs to someone else” in the case of finances and this verse can also speak to your ministry of being tested. Like Joshua of old, you will be tested in how you act and are faithful in another person’s ministry. If you are not faithful there, God cannot ever trust you with your own ministry. I don’t care if you have a 12” thick file of prophecies speaking about how great your ministry**

**will be it will never come to pass if you don't pass God's tests. And unfortunately here in America because only about 3% of Christians tithe or give offerings, most Christians never pass God's test.**

**But now also understand this—the tithe belongs to the Lord; not to your local church or xyz ministry. I believe you should support your local church if you go there and you should support genuine ministries that “feed” you but the Scripture is plain—the tithe belongs to the Lord. So maybe you should ask Him what He wants you to do with it? Don't be pressured to give as many are today in Nigeria to 5-6 offerings a service. You are welcome to give offerings to whoever you please though the point of this teaching text is that it should be sown into fertile soil but the tithe belongs to the Lord so you should spend time in prayer and then be faithful to give it where He tells you to.**

**In v. 13 we find a verse that is often quoted along with 1 Timothy 6:10 but it is seldom understood or else more Christians would be givers to the Kingdom. The implication in this verse is that *if* you are not serving God with your finances then you are a “lover” of money and you “despise” your Master Jesus, while serving Satan and the Power of Mammon who is one of the eight powers in the Dark Kingdom (see MSDK).**

**So I want to encourage you today—because many if not most of you have a problem in this area—to repent for your disobedience in the area of finances. Give to the Lord abundantly from your finances and you will reap rewards both here and especially later in Heaven. And you will take away a door of sin that the devil uses to attack your finances. I've shared many times a vision the Lord gave me just as I began preaching in Akure, Nigeria, in December, 1989, when the pastor asked me to teach on tithing. I didn't have any prepared notes but just began to read from Malachi and as soon as I began an open vision broke right in front of me. I saw Satan go before the throne of God and he said, “This person is not a tither so I have a right to attack**

**their finances.” And since that day, most of the time when Ev or I counsel people who have a lack in the area of finances it’s because they are not tither.**

**I pray that you will read over this teaching several times—it’s not for my benefit—you’re not paying tithes or offerings to us—but for your benefit both here and when you get to Heaven.**