

Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

SSBC Luke Bible Study #58

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Luke 16:1-15

Sermon Date: Oct 29, 2006

Your Money or Your Life?

In Luke's gospel, the prodigal son has now returned home and been given a great feast. His father doesn't say, "Welcome home, but what happened to all my money?" Rather, he extends unconditional grace to him, opening his arms, running to his son, and loving him. In effect, he has let go of half his life savings, and in turn seems to have gotten hold of his son's love, trust, and commitment. Like that father, our Heavenly Father gives us a pile of resources to manage. And like the prodigal son, we each do a less-than-perfect job of managing it. Sometimes we're generous and careful – other times we're lazy and selfish. Then along comes this "shrewd manager" in Luke 16:1-15. Through this story, Jesus challenges our use of the resources his Father has given us. However, like most of Jesus' teaching, it's also about our hearts. As John reminds us:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

As you begin this study, talk to God about your love for Him, and ask Him to help you hear and learn from Him.

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and posting at www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studieditor@southshorebaptist.com

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Bible Study:

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p>¹ Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² 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.'</p> <p>³ "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— ⁴ I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'</p> <p>⁵ "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'</p> <p>⁶ "Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.</p> <p>"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'</p> <p>⁷ "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'</p> <p>"A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.</p> <p>"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'</p>	

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p>⁸ "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. ⁹ "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.</p> <p>¹⁰ "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. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?</p> <p>¹³ "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."</p> <p>¹⁴ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵ He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."</p>	

2. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

- a. Select a few of your observations & questions from pages 2-3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.
- b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:
- What does it mean?
 - Why is this important?
 - What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
 - Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

3. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
 - **P**romises to believe
 - **E**xamples to follow
 - **C**ommands to obey
 - **K**nowledge to share
- (remember "SPECK")

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

Dig Deep:

4. Who/what does the rich man (also referred to as the “master”) represent? (God? Worldly wealth? Something/someone else?) What do you find in the rest of the passage to justify your answer?

5. According to Webster’s, **shrewd** means “marked by clever discerning awareness and hardhearted acumen.” The parable’s shrewd manager is affirmed by his master (v 8). Why does Jesus tell a story about a shrewd manager whose dishonest actions are affirmed?

6. Read Matthew 6:19-24:

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Now compare & contrast this Matthew passage with Luke 16:1-13. How does Matthew further illuminate your understanding of Jesus’ perspective on how we regard and handle money & possessions?

7. The manager was apparently not a faithful steward previously, and was about to get fired as a result. How faithful have you been with resources? When have you experienced consequences along the lines of the principle Jesus explains in Luke 16:10-12? What did you learn?

8. “You cannot serve both God and money.” God warns us about loving the world more than we love Him (see also 1 Jn 2:15-17).

a. Have you ever had to work in a role where you were led by two people with differing goals/priorities? What problems resulted?

b. In what ways does your love for the world and its “treasures” compete with your love for God?

9. What have you learned about God from these passages?

10. What do you see as the main point of Luke 16:1-15?

11. What could you do this week to apply that main point in your life?

12. Use this chart to consider some of your specific resources and how you might better glorify God with them.

What are Some Resources God has Given Me to Manage? (possessions, money, other)	How Could I More Effectively Use These to Love People and Help Grow God's Kingdom?

You may find it helpful and encouraging to close this study time with your sights set on God, who is a faithful steward and who does wisely invest his resources to advance His Kingdom and love His people.

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (1 Thess 5:16-24)