



YES
NO
MAYBE

^| AGREE or DISAGREE? God would prefer for us to ease the regulations of the church, rather than to hold members accountable to the highest standards of religion.

READ Luke 16:1-15 [NIV]

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.'

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.'

5 "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6 "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.'

7 "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.'

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.

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?"

13 "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."

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 others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight."

^| What have you been told is the main point of this Kingdom Tale?

Î THE WORDS THEY HEARD...

° (v. 1) **Manager** - [οικονόμον - *oikonómōn*] From οἶκος, a house, and νέμω, to distribute or dispense. Hence, one who assigns to the members of the household their several duties, and pays to each his wages. The paymaster. He kept the household stores under lock and seal, giving out what was required; and for this purpose received a signet-ring from his master.

° (v. 1) **Wasting His Possessions** - [ὡς διασκορπίζω - *hos diaskorpizon*] Lit., as *wasting*, or *was wasting*; not merely a past offence, but something going on at the time of the accusation.



° (v. 2) Give an account - [ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον - *apodos ton logon*] Lit., "give back" the (τὸν) account which is due.

° (v. 6) Take Your Bill - [δέξαι σου τὰ γράμματα - *dexai sou ta grammata*] Lit., take back your writings. The bill is the bond which the buyer has given, and which is in the steward's keeping. He gives it back to the debtor for him to alter the figures. Sit down quickly. It was a secret transaction, to be hurried through.

° (v. 8) Shrewdly - [φρονίμως - *phronimos*] Having or showing sharp powers of judgement; astute; wisely.

↑ THIS BRINGS UP SOME MAJOR QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD'S CHARACTER:

- ∞ Why would God commend dishonest behavior...especially when it is the "Master's" wealth that is being played with?
- ∞ What does the "firing" of the manager represent in this Kingdom Tale, and how does that shed much light on this confusing scene?
- ∞ What do you think the "debt reduction" represents in this Kingdom Tale?
- ∞ So if God's personality is more inclined for us to act "shrewdly" like the manager, how do we need to shift the culture of how we do church? Does it change the way that we collect "debts"?
- ∞ Who is Jesus' audience for this story? What difference does that make? And who else is listening in?

1 How anxious am I to display generosity before I die?

2 Would God consider me "shrewd" right now in the way that I cancel others' debts?

3 What do I understand more clearly about God's character, now that I've looked at this Kingdom Tale?

MY
PRAYER

NOTES