

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"A BAD MAN'S GOOD EXAMPLE" | LUKE 16: 1-13 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is the funniest money advice you've heard?

"The Parable" (Luke 16: 1-8)

In Jesus' story, a manager is fired for being wasteful with his boss' possessions, which is actually a theme in many of Jesus' parables. **What is wasteful according to our culture today? What is wasteful according to God?**

In the parable, the manager is commended for his shrewd plan and creativity that he used to secure his future. **How is living for the moment different than living for the future? How should Jesus' coming again affect how Christ followers live?**

"The Principles" (Luke 16: 9-13)

Jesus challenges people to faithful with their worldly wealth and not let it become their master. **What does being faithful with money look like? What are signs money is becoming someone's master?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian says money falsely promises safety, security and happiness, but that is a lie. Only Jesus can truly satisfy. **In what ways have you struggled with greed lately? Have you been practicing giving and tithing lately? Pray that God would enable you to be faithful and a good steward with He has entrusted to you.**

A Bad Man's Good Example

I. Announce:

- A. Slide 1-6 Lar: Women's Xmas. MP/dolls. CFLC. Sun Prayer. CK Xmas. Xmas x's.
 B. Prayer:

II. Slide 7a Intro: A Bad Man's Good Example

- A. **The Parable of the Dishonest Manager** (Unjust Servant. Shrewd/Crooked Manager).
- B. Luke 15 was the *most popular* of the chapters. Chapter 16 could be called the *most puzzling*. Commanding dishonesty?
1. Slide 7b One writer wrote about it saying, "*There are knots in it, which perhaps will never be untied until the Lord comes again.*"
- C. Ch. 16 is actually a *very practical* chapter.
1. The whole chapter is mostly about money. (vs. 1) there was a rich man. (vs. 19) there's another rich man. In between these in (vs. 14) it says that there were some Pharisees that were lovers of money.
 - a) In (vs. 1) he's specifically talking to his disciples to instruct them about the use of wealth. About leveraging everything they have for the advancement of the kingdom. Next week Jesus will talk to the Pharisees about the abuse of wealth.
 - b) This week is a *Wisdom* parable. Next week is a *Warning* parable.
- D. Slide 7c **3 reasons this is significant:** Meet yourself in this parable!
1. It's a reminder we need a biblical understanding of wealth & possessions.
 - a) Nearly 1/3 of Jesus' parables are concerned about money.
 - b) Jesus talks about *making it, saving it, investing it, anxiety caused by it.*
 - c) So wealth can be a blessing or a curse. People can use their wealth to control others, or just use it for themselves. Or it can be a great tool to *serve others and advance His kingdom.*
 2. Slide 7d It's a reminder that what we do in this life matters for Eternity.

3. It's a reminder to be creative and innovative with our Wealth.

a) To be *spiritual entrepreneurs*. To **invest** everything that we have into the spiritual well-being of others.

E. **Outline:** (2 parts) Looking at **The Parable** (1-8). **And then The Principles** (9-13).

III. Slide8 **THE PARABLE (1-8) READ**

A. We see that this man *wasted* his Masters possessions. **Same word** used for the prodigal son *waisting/devouring* his fathers property.

1. We actually have 3 stories in a row, about **waste**:

2. **Slide9a** The son who **wasted** his fathers inheritance. The manager **wasted** his bosses possessions. **Later**, a rich man who **wastes** his own possessions.

B. **Slide9b** This man realized he **owned nothing** **but** the privilege of **managing everything** for his Master. He was paid by his Master and was expected to be **honest and faithful**. **Like Joseph in Potiphar's house**.

C. **So**, the manager gets a pink slip from his boss. **He's fired!** We can all identify with **this crisis** where someone close to us lost their job. *He either foolishly mismanaged his master's money or spent it extravagantly.* **Now this fired executive** has to figure out what to do.

D. This manager needs **money** and a place to live, so he comes up with a plan *with those that owe his boss*. He thinks, *there may be some thing I can do on the way out that will secure my future.* (Keep in mind, the idea of having forethought)

1. It's about **thinking about the future**, **not** tomorrow **but** **Eternity**.

2. **Through all of your choices/resources** keep in mind **glory is about to come**

3. **What you are doing in this life matters.** (I think Madonna was 50% wrong singing, *This is a material world and I'm a material girl*) This is not just a material world.

E. **Slide9c** So Jesus tells a story about a guy giving forethought to his future in light of **his crisis**. So he comes up with *a very clever plan*.

1. He cuts what they owed, in both **oil** and **wheat**.

2. **50%** of the **oil** (about 3 yrs wages). **And** then **20%** of the **wheat**. You can imagine **now** those guys were his friends!

a) The guy is clever, he's thinking, *I know where I can get a job now, or maybe a place to live*. So he makes these deals, which were *very shrewd, very interesting, and forward thinking*.

F. He hands his boss the paperwork on the way out, **and** you can imagine the boss reading it is like, *Wow! That's pretty resourceful, pretty clever*. **Crafty as a fox!**

1. **Slide9d** He has praised **not** for his **integrity**, **but** for his **ingenuity**.

G. Some have tried to make him *an ethical figure* here, explaining away **that he just took off the interest that was being charged**. Which, for Jews they weren't allowed to *charge interest* from *fellow Jews*. That what he did was a righteous act. **But** you have to put a lot into the story to get there.

1. **Others say**, **that he cut out his own commission**. **But** that has the same problem *we aren't given that detail*.

2. **What's best is just to highlight what Jesus is highlighting**.

3. This guy is commended **for his shrewdness or forethought**, **not** his **integrity**. We shouldn't think, *Well if it advances the gospel, we can do some shady deals*. Be like an ocean's 11 missionary, ha!
Or be a Robin Hood, *steal from the rich, and give to the poor*.

4. **"Improvement in part does not mean endorsement of all."**

H. If this makes you *uncomfortable here*, understand **Jesus does this a lot**.

1. He uses an example of **an unjust judge** (ch.18).

2. He speaks of his own coming as **a thief** (not that Jesus is a thief, **but** comes when you're not expecting).

3. He simply drawing out a memorable story, to remind us to think about our **future** of one day, standing before God, and being accountable, for **all that we had, & how we spent it**. Did we spend it *in light of the gospel*,

the kingdom, the hurting in this world. How might we invest in ministries, and gospel advancement?

- I. He's saying, not all clever people should be crooks, we need some clever people in the church.
1. Thieves can be really clever! There was a story in Liverpool, were 3 crooks stole a car. They brought it back 3 days later. They had it **washed**, and placed **a note** in the car that said, *Thank you for the use of your car, it's a very nice car. It's serve our purpose well. For your inconvenience we bought you **2 movie tickets** so you could go out and enjoy a night on the town.* When they went to the movie on that evening, **they stole everything in their house!** - That's clever!
- J. We'll see in a minute, it's **not for** our sakes, or self interest, **it's for heavens interest.**
1. In Matthew 10, he sends his disciples out **as sheep among wolves**, and tells them, **Be as shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.** (it's important to hold both of those together)

IV. Slide10 **THE PRINCIPLES (8-13) READ**

- A. Slide11a [1] **Be Wise & Forward Thinking w/your Wealth** (8,9) [3 Principles]
1. Think of *everything you do now ...* in light of the **future**.
 2. (8b) **The sons of the world** - the way he phrases non-Christians.
 - a) They are very resourceful, creative, very innovative. **But often for their own motivation, their own self interest.** **But** that doesn't mean *they don't have something they can teach us.*
 - b) **Even this dishonest manager has some thing to teach us.** **So** yes, it's OK to read secular business books, leadership books, you can glean some great **things from them.** Not everything is transferable, but there are lessons to learn.
 - c) Jesus says, they are better than us (*the sons of light*) in this area of the worlds wealth.

3. We as *sons of light* can be *naïve, or lazy, passive, or mindless* when it comes to **investing** and such. **Be energetic and focused!**
4. **Act prudently with divine things as unbelievers do earthly things. “Use earthly resources for heavens purposes.”**
 - a) Mt.25 the Talents (5,2,1) 5 & 2 invested it, and acted industrially, & had great return. The man with 1 *buried it*, and was rebuked.
5. **Slide11b Eccl.11:1,2 Cast your bread upon the waters** (or, send out your grain ships), *for you will find it after many days* (It'd be months/years before they would return, so this would take faith/patience). **2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth** (send cargo on 7 or 8 ships – some of them are bound to give a return on your investment. **Don't put all your eggs into one basket.** Diversify your Portfolio. Here Solomon suggests spreading out your wealth, not to put everything into one adventure).

B. Slide11c [2] Be Faithful With What You Have (10-12)

1. I've heard many Christians say, *“If I had \$1 million I would give this much and do this & that.”* One writer said it this way, *There is a real easy way to tell if that's true, what are you doing now with what you have? Your character doesn't automatically change when your bank account does!*
2. Our **character** is built by *little choices* over time. We think *little things* aren't very significant. **But Jesus** is *underscoring* how significant they are. They produce *patterns* in our lives.
3. (12) These are **God's** resources.

C. Slide11d [3] Do Not Let Money Be Your Master, But Place It and Everything Else Under The Lordship of Jesus (13)

1. Here is the fundamental issue brought home.
2. Something *will be* your Master (**God or Money**). One of these will rule your life.
3. **I hope** you're not listening and thinking, *I'm glad someone else got to hear this today!* - No one thinks they're greedy. So Jesus said, ...

a) (Lk.12:15) *Take care, and be on your guard against all **covetousness**.*

b) Timothy Keller, *Greed is one of those **sneaky sins** that no-one tends to think they are committing.* It hides in the recesses of your heart.

(1) Money whispers, *If you have me, I will give you **safety, security, and happiness**.* (The reality - only *Jesus* gives you those things)

(2) See *Jesus* never **lies** to you, like money often has.

D. *Jesus* is an *infinitely better Master!*

E. As in the song *Crowns/Hillsong*, *I will not boast in **riches**. I have no pride in **gold**. But I will **boast** in *Jesus*. And in His Name alone!*

F. *Communion:*

G. Questions if time:

H. *Instead of* destroying his future, by living only for the present (like the prodigal), *or* destroying his present by hoping for the future (like the older brother), *he could **live the present in the light of the future**.* Warren Wiersbe, *Windows on the Parables*.

1. Which philosophy of life do you hold to? *Prodigal, Elder brother, Manager*

I. Does it come as a shock to you that you do not own anything? You may possess many things, but you do not own them. **God owns them**. He is the **Master**, and we are the **stewards**.

1. 1 Cor.4:2 *NLT* *Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful.*

J. Are you practicing giving, tithing, or stewardship?

K. Are you faithful in the little things?

L. Keywords: stewardship, Jesus.