



*Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus*  
*The Unjust Steward*

**Luke 16:1-13**

**Lesson 14**

There was a rich man who called his steward to account for wasting his goods. The story continues to tell of the steward's shrewd resourcefulness and his master's praise. What can we learn from such a story? God intends that we learn not to be unjust stewards as this man was, but faithful stewards who use our master's resources in a way that pleases Him, knowing as did this steward, that one day, our work on this earth will come to an end.

**OBSERVATION: Read Luke 16:1-13**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus, God, the master, the steward, and the debtors*  
*owe, faithful, unrighteous/unjust, and mammon*

3. Jesus made four conclusions for this parable. Record each of them.

verse 8b: *For the* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

verse 11 *Therefore if* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

verse 13a *No* \_\_\_\_\_; *for* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *other.*

verse 13b *You cannot* \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Although we have not yet studied this parable, using the conclusions stated above, what do you think are the lessons of this parable?

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How is a shrewd business person viewed in our society today?
2. In what ways does our society pressure us to compromise to gain money?
3. What often happens when we get our sights onto gaining things of this world?

### THE STEWARD CAUGHT: Read Luke 16:1-2

1. *There was a certain rich man who had a steward. A steward is one who manages the affairs of another, particularly their material possessions. What was the accusation that was brought to him regarding his steward?*
2. *The steward was told he could no longer be steward. However, before the steward would be dismissed, what did the rich man require of him?*
  - a. What do you think it would be like to *give an account* of how you handled someone's resources, knowing you would come up very short?
3. *The believer has been likened to a steward. What do each of the following verses reveal about the believer and stewardship?*

1 Corinthians 4:2

Ephesians 5:15-17

1 Peter 4:10

- a. Define the word “stewardship” as you understand your responsibility as a *steward* of what God has given to you.

### **THE STEWARD'S SOLUTION: Read Luke 16:3-7**

1. The *steward* realized that he would not only soon be out of a job, but he would no longer have access to his master's resources. What do you think he meant by the statements *I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg*?
  
2. Sometimes a person is overwhelmed by what they can't do or can't give. This *steward* didn't stop at what he could not do; rather he considered what he could do. Resolving this, what was his goal according to Luke 16:4?
  - a. Using verses 5-7, summarize what he did.
  
3. The steward's actions were unethical, but they were not illegal. He had the full authority to reduce the debts of those who owed his master. The actions of those in *debt* to the *rich man* were neither unethical nor illegal. The *rich man's steward*, his representative, had given them permission to reduce their *debt*. No longer in the same *debt* to the *rich man*, a new *debt* was created; a *debt* to the *steward*. What might that *debt* be?
  
4. Although he could not *dig* and would not *beg*, what resources did the *steward* use to secure his future?
  - a. What are some of your resources?

## THE STEWARD COMMENDED: Read Luke 16:8-12

1. So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. The steward retained his title of being unjust. It was not his actions the master commended; it was his shrewdness. This man misused his authority. God would not commend that. How do these verses verify that?

Luke 12:47

1 Peter 2:18

2. The word *shrewd*, as used in this parable, refers to wisdom or prudence. Another good definition, especially in light of the steward's actions, is taking advantage of a situation or making the best use of his resources. How did the steward take advantage of the situation or make the best use of his resources?
  - a. Keeping in mind that a parable is a story meant to present a spiritual truth, what spiritual lesson can we learn from this steward's shrewdness?
3. Consider the last sentence of Luke 16:8. In what ways can sons of this world (unbelievers) be more shrewd than the sons of light (believers) in terms of planning for their future?
4. What did Jesus suggest to those listening to this parable (verse 9)?
  - a. We are to use our possessions to *make friends*. In what way can we use our money or other possessions to *make friends* that will be in heaven?
  - b. *Unrighteous mammon* refers to riches. They are referred to as *unrighteous* in contrast to God as we will see in Luke 16:13. Why is using our riches for purposes related to our everlasting home more shrewd than using them for our earthly home?
5. Meditate on the truths of Luke 16:10 and write them below.
  - a. How have you discovered the truth that a person's faithfulness is revealed by their behavior in the little things?

6. God considers *mammon* to be a little thing. How would viewing *mammon* as God does help us to use it more *shrewdly*?
  - a. If we are not *faithful* in the use of *mammon*, what does verse 11 infer God will not *trust* us with?
    - 1.) Why is the use of our money a good indicator of our spirituality?
  - b. *And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's...*verse 12. In this parable, *what is another man's* refers to that which belonged to the *rich man*. In application, who is the *rich man*?
    - 1.) In what way do the possessions we refer to as "mine" really belong to God?

### **WHO WILL YOU SERVE: Read Luke 16:13**

1. *No servant can serve two masters...* What *two masters* was Jesus referring to? verse 13c
  - a. Using verse 13b, explain why.
    - 1.) How do the following verses relate to this truth?
      - Romans 8:5
      - James 4:4
      - 1 John 2:15
    - a.) These are very strong statements. Do you believe them? Why or why not?

**REVIEW: Read Luke 16:1-13**

1. What have you learned from this parable about God's expectations of his *stewards* to be *shrewd* (in a good way)?
2. How does it help to view yourself as a *steward* of God's money and possessions?
3. How have you been challenged to use the resources God has given you?
4. The unjust steward realized his time was short and began planning for his future home. In what ways can the use of money for our *everlasting home* make us a *servant* of God?

*She has not acknowledged that I was the one  
who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil,  
who lavished on her the silver and gold--  
which they used for Baal.*

*- Hosea 2:8 NIV*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 16:1-13

He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. <sup>2</sup>So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' <sup>3</sup>Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' <sup>5</sup>So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup>And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' <sup>7</sup>Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' <sup>8</sup>So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. <sup>9</sup>And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. <sup>10</sup>He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. <sup>11</sup>Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup>No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."