



January 9, 2022

"Worldly Wealth for Heavenly Good"

[Luke 16:1-13](#)

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In an unfamiliar parable told only by Luke, Jesus wanted us to understand that money and material things by themselves are not bad. In fact, they can and should be sued for good... just don't love stuff as much, or more than, you love God. Pastor Gary shared five important principles from this parable about the role that money and material possessions play in the life of a Believer who wants to honor God as Lord as everything.

1. The Parable of the Unjust Servant

- a. This parable is only found in Luke's Gospel.
- b. [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. 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." 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. I have resolved what to do, that when I am out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "a hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." 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." 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. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 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. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been*

faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 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.”

- c. Pastor Gary said, “[The New King James Version and the King James Version use] this word ‘mammon,’ but almost all the other English translations use the word ‘money. . .’ Mammon is. . . derived from the Greek. . . Mammon is a broader term that doesn’t mean only money. . . but it also refers to material possessions in general.”
 - d. Pastor Gary said, “The Bible offers more than five hundred verses on the topic of prayer, a little less than five hundred verses on the topic of faith, but more than two-thousand verses on the topic of money and material possessions. Sixteen out of the thirty-eight parables that Jesus taught [have] to do with money or material possessions. God is always, and primarily, concerned about the heart. And your heart is where affection lies. . . And if God is to be supremely loved in our lives, then we have to be aware of the things that compete for that affection. And certainly, money or material things have the potential to capture our hearts.”
 - i. **Matthew 6:21** - *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*
 - e. Pastor Gary said, “When we become enamored with anything more than we are with God, then the Bible calls that idolatry. . . The human heart has a love affair with stuff. . . [Jesus taught] this parable. . . to steer our hearts toward God and to warn us about the things that try to steal our hearts away from God. Money and material things by themselves are not bad. In fact, they can and should be used for good. . . just don’t love stuff as much or more than you love God.”
 - f. Principle Players in the Parable
 - i. Rich Man
 - 1. The boss, the employer; he owns a business. He’s very successful. He’s wealthy. He deals with agricultural commodities.
 - ii. The Steward
 - 1. Manages the business and the owner’s possessions.
 - iii. Pastor Gary said, “The obvious parallel is that the master, the boss, is God. And that God owns everything. . . We are the managers. God has entrusted his possessions to us, and we are just to take care of [them], manage [them], use [them] for his good.”
2. We are all accountable for how we manage what God has entrusted to us
- a. **Luke 16:1-2** - *“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. 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.’ ”

- b. Pastor Gary said, “Everything we have belongs to God, and we just manage it.”
 - i. **Psalm 24:1** - *“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness . . .”*
 - ii. **Psalm 24:1** - *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it . . .”*(1984 NIV)
- c. Pastor Gary said, “Some of you might think, ‘Now wait a minute. I worked hard, and I got a degree, and I got a job and I’ve been successful, and I’ve earned this, and I’ve done that. . .and I own this, and I own that; it’s mine.’ Well let me share with you another verse. This is out of Deuteronomy 8.”
 - i. **Deuteronomy 8:17-18** - *“ You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”*(1984 NIV)
- d. Pastor Gary said, “The very talent and ability you have to produce an income was given to you by God. . . Not only is everything that we own really his; the things that we possess belong to him; but the very ability that we have - the talents, the resources, the skill set to accumulate the things that we now possess - that also has come from God. So, it’s all his.”

3. Sometimes unbelievers are wiser with their money than Christians

- a. Pastor Gary said, “The manager [realized] here that he [hadn’t] done a very good job managing his boss’s possessions. . . the boss says, ‘Word is that you’ve not been doing a good job of managing my stuff and you’re about to get fired. . .’ The manager says to himself. . . ‘I’m going to. . . look up some of the customers who owe money to my boss. And I’m going to ingratiate myself with them by reducing what they owe so that if I lose my job. . . maybe they’ll hire me. . .’ Look what happens at verse eight. This is where it gets a little peculiar. He gets commended. . . as a good example.”
 - i. **Luke 16:8a** - *“So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly.”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “Jesus [was] not commending the dishonesty of this guy. Here’s what’s implied in the story: the guy [was] seen as an unjust steward or a dishonest manager because of the previous ways that he has dealt with the customers. . . He’s commended in the parable because he [was] making right what he had done wrong previously.”
 - i. **Luke 16:8b** - *“For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”*
- c. Pastor Gary said, “Who are the sons of the world? Unbelievers. Who are the sons or the children of the light? Believers. So, what Jesus [was] saying here, and this [was] actually a gentle rebuke of Christians. . . sometimes unbelievers are wiser with their money than Christians. Jesus [was] basically saying, ‘Why

are you letting the world use all this worldly wealth to advance an evil agenda, when you as my children, should be using worldly wealth to advance the kingdom?'. . . Sometimes unbelievers are more innovative, more forward thinking than Christians are in our world today. . . How different would the world look if Christians led the way with innovation and creativity and technology and then used that wealth for the glory of God? . . . Imagine how different this world would look. Don't you ever feel discouraged about being successful as a Christian. . . Dream big, and then work hard to go change the world for Christ. . . Be wise with what God has given you and use it for the glory of God."

4. Our good management of money can be a testimony to unbelievers

- a. Pastor Gary said, "[Jesus was] saying, 'If you're a good manager of what I've given you, it will speak volumes to an unbelieving world. They will watch and they will look, and they will see how you've been blessed and how you use it for the glory of God and how you manage it properly.' Listen, when Christians manage their money wisely, when they save it wisely, when they give generously, it is a testimony to people about the goodness and faithfulness of God. . . And likewise, it also does damage to an unbelieving world when they see Christians mismanaging money. . . and it's not a good testimony. . . Listen, wise and generous money management that glorifies God can. . . be a testimony to people that might actually influence them for the kingdom and lead them to Jesus."
 - i. **Luke 16:9** - ". . . *make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.*"
 - ii. **Luke 16:9** - ". . . *use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.*" (1984 NIV)

5. God entrusts much to those who are faithful with little

- a. Pastor Gary said, "Success does not come overnight. Wealth does not come overnight. . . Promotions don't come immediately. Those things take time. And during that time, God is observing you and watching to see how well you'll handle the little that he has given you before he promotes you or entrusts you with more. There are. . . some people who can't manage more than what they have, and God knows that. . . but there are others who are being faithful with a little, and so God entrusts more. . . but not to hoard it, but for the purpose of using it to glorify God and for the sake of the kingdom. That's always why God blesses: to be a blessing. . . If you're faithful with the little, God will do much."
 - i. **Luke 16:10-12** - "*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.*"

Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

6. Make God your Master and money your servant
 - a. Pastor Gary said, "Serve God and use money. Don't use God and serve money. To be in bondage to money and material things is a burden. To be overwhelmed with debt that now it owns you, that's a burden. We need to be under the lordship of Jesus for everything. . . He is our master. Money is just our servant."
 - i. [Luke 16:13](#) - *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*
 - ii. [1 Timothy 6:10b](#) - *"Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* (1984 NIV)
 - b. Pastor Gary said, "That burden of being enslaved to the almighty dollar is grievous. . . John D. Rockefeller was the wealthiest man on the planet at the turn of the twentieth century. . . but his wealth was killing him, literally. He was dying because. . . he had so much anxiety about his stuff. . .he was living on milk and crackers. That's all he could stomach. He was wasting away. . . until he got saved. When he got saved, he applied the biblical principle of tithing. . . and he also said he that he applied the principle that John Wesley taught. . . 'Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.' When John D. Rockefeller started living by the principle of the tithe and that word of wisdom from John Wesley, his life and his health turned around. That guy lived to be ninety-seven years of age. And he [attributed] it to having a right understanding of God and material things. God has blessed us. Is he Lord of your life in this area, like he should be Lord of every area?"

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Luke 16:1-13](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Why does the Bible speak so much on money and material possessions? (See #1d above)
3. What did Pastor Gary say about loving money and material things more than God? (See #1f above)
4. Who really owns everything we have? (See #2b above)

5. Read Pastor Gary's comments and [Deuteronomy 8:17-18](#). How should we respond when we are tempted to think that we have earned the right to truly "own" our money and material possessions? (See #2c above)
6. Discuss the idea that Christians should be "leading the way" with things like innovation, technology, and creativity, and the potential impact for the kingdom of God. (See #3c above)
7. How can a Christians' good management of money be a testimony to unbelievers? (See #4a above)
8. Whom does God entrust "much" to and why? (See #5a above)
9. Compare "serving God and using money" to "using God and serving money." (See #6a above)
10. What happens to people who are enslaved to money and material possessions? (See #6b above)
11. Discuss the importance of allowing God to be the Lord of your finances and possessions. (See #6b above)
12. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)