

The Parable of the Unjust Steward



LUKE 16:1-13

TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

West Los Angeles Living Word Christian Center

Centro Cristiano Palabra Viva

Dr. Eddie Idefonso, Senior Pastor

6520 Arizona Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90045

Email: Pastoreddie@Wlalwcc.org

Web page: WWW.WLALWCC.ORG

THE SON OF MAN'S GREAT JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM: HIS TEACHING AND PUBLIC CONFLICT, [Luke 13:22-17:10](#)

The Parable of the Unjust Steward: Man and Money, [Luke 16:1-13](#)

[\(Luke 16:1-13\)](#) **Introduction— Unjust Steward**: this passage is looked upon as one of the most difficult passages in all of Scripture to understand. Verse eight is the primary reason. In studying the passage, two overall approaches can be taken. A person can read the parable and the comments about the parable made by Christ and take it only for what it says, that is, without adding any comment or seeing any application in it. However, a person can also see application in the parable as well as in the points taught by Christ. To help those interested in the latter approach, some application is given to the points of the parable.

The steward was a trusted slave who was put in charge of the landowner's estate. He was **highly regarded and esteemed, considered to be completely trustworthy**. The term "*steward*" is applied to ministers ([1 Cor. 4:1](#)) and to believers in general ([1 Peter 4:10](#); [Luke 16:1](#)).

1. [The unjust steward \(v.1-7\)](#).
2. [The worldly are more wise in their material pursuits than God's people are in their spiritual pursuits \(v.8\)](#).
3. [The Christian is to use material wealth for good \(v.9\)](#).
4. [The Christian is to be faithful in handling possessions: how he handles his possessions will determine what he will be trusted with eternally \(v.10-12\)](#).
5. [The Christian cannot serve two masters: he must choose God or riches \(v.13\)](#).

1. [\(Luke 16:1-7\) Parable, Unjust Steward](#): in the parable itself Jesus said four things about the unjust steward.

1. The steward was charged with embezzlement, with *wasting the Lord's "goods."* The steward was in charge of the Lord's property, of all the Lord's goods. Therefore, it was easy for him to use the goods for his own purposes just as he desired. The point is, God has given every man some "**goods**": **life, talents, house, property, money, duty, a sense of responsibility, conscience, family, and a host of other goods**. Every man is charged with embezzlement, with misusing the goods to some degree

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to

another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" ([Matthew 25:14-15](#); cp. [Romans 12:6-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:7f](#)).

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" ([Luke 19:13](#)).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" ([1 Cor. 4:2](#)).

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" ([1 Peter 4:10](#)).

2. The steward was required to prepare a final accounting.

Two facts are important in this point.

- a. The Lord hears that the steward has been misusing His "**goods.**" Note: the Lord had only *heard* about the embezzlement. The full evidence against the steward was not yet fully known. The Lord gave the steward a chance to prove his trust and faithfulness. The accounting did not mean that the steward would be dismissed from the Lord's estate (heaven, Kingdom of God), only that he must prove his trust and faithfulness. Of course, if the steward had not been faithful in looking after the Lord's goods, then he would be dismissed: "**Thou canst no longer [ou gar dunē] be steward.**"
- b. The final accounting is at death ([Hebrews 9:27](#)). If the steward is found to have been untrustworthy, he will be *dismissed and discharged* from the Lord's estate (**kingdom, heaven, eternal life. See below [Deeper Study # 1—Matthew 19:23-24](#). page # 5 for more discussion.**)

Thought 1. Death will take us away from all our earthly goods. If our accounting justifies us, then we shall be given a much greater responsibility, an eternal responsibility, for the Lord.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants" ([Matthew 18:23](#)).

"And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it" ([Matthew 21:34](#)).

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" ([Matthew 25:19](#)).

"And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading" ([Luke 19:15](#)).

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" ([Romans 14:12](#)).

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" ([Hebrews 9:27](#)).

"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" ([1 Peter 4:4](#)).

3. The steward knew he was guilty and was unwilling to change or ask for mercy.

Note two things.

- a. The words **"What shall I do...?"** The steward knew he was guilty and that the Lord was going to dismiss him.
- b. The steward thought over what he should do. He reasoned out two courses of action.
 1. He could dig. However, he was not willing to dig, not willing to be demoted to a field laborer and to serve in such a low capacity.
 2. He could beg. However, he was *too proud* to leave the Lord and openly beg. He would be ashamed.

Now note something not mentioned. He was too proud to beg forgiveness of the Lord, too proud to be known as a repentant embezzler (**sinner**). This is the dominant point, although not mentioned. Begging for forgiveness was the steward's only hope. He considered every course of action but this one.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" ([Proverbs 28:13](#)).

"Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" ([Isaiah 29:15](#)).

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin" ([Isaiah 30:1](#)).

4. The steward decided what to do: he would forget the Lord, and court the favor and returns of men. He did what he could to secure the acceptance and favor of men.

- a. He led them to be dishonest, to dismiss and lower their debts to the Lord. They were led to *embezzle and hold back* some of their goods.

Note: the steward was in a responsible position (a religionist) and misled others.

Thought 1. How many religionists mislead others through false teaching, causing so many not to use their lives and gifts for God.

- b. This act *stole* from the Lord; it stole the goods (life and gifts) of others from the Lord.
- c. The steward misled others to benefit himself, to secure his position and livelihood. And he did it in a most shrewd way, a way that was pleasing and profitable to the debtors. Anyone of them would gladly help the steward when he needed their support. (See below [Deeper Study # 2—Luke 16:6-7](#) for more discussion.)

"But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law" ([Malachi 2:8](#)).

"...judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" ([Romans 14:13](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 1

([Matthew 19:23-24](#)) Kingdom of Heaven: the Kingdom of Heaven evidently means the same thing as the Kingdom of God, eternal life, and salvation. The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are interchanged when Jesus says, **"a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"** ([Matthew 19:23](#)) or **"Kingdom of God"** ([Matthew 19:24](#)). Eternal life ([Matthew 19:26](#)) and salvation ([Matthew 19:25](#)) belong to the very same concept. Eternity and salvation, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, is the very subject being discussed in [Matthew 19:16-30](#). Having eternal life, being saved, or entering into the Kingdom of God or of Heaven is more difficult for a rich man than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

The Kingdom of Heaven and of God is revealed in four different stages throughout history.

1. There is the spiritual kingdom that is at hand; it is present right now ([Matthew 4:17](#); [Matthew 12:28](#)).

a. The present kingdom refers to God's rule and reign and authority in the lives of believers.

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all

things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" ([Ephes. 1:18-23](#)).

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" ([Phil. 2:5-11](#)).

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" ([Col. 1:13](#)).

b. The present kingdom is offered to the world and to men in the person of Jesus Christ.

c. The present kingdom must be received as a little child.

"But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" ([Mark 10:14-15](#)).

d. The present kingdom is experienced only by the new birth.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" ([John 3:3](#)).

e. The present kingdom is entered now and must be received now.

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" ([Matthew 21:31](#)).

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" ([Mark 10:15](#)).

f. The present kingdom is a spiritual, life-changing blessing.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" ([Romans 14:17](#)).

g. The present kingdom is to be the first thing sought by believers.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

2. There is the professing kingdom that is also in this present age. It refers to modern day Christianity in every generation. It pictures what the Kingdom of Heaven or professing Christianity is like, and what professing Christianity will be like between Christ's first coming and His return. This imperfect state is what is called **"the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"** ([Matthew 13:1-52](#), esp. [Matthew 13:11](#)).

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed [good men] in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [evil men] among the wheat, and went his way" ([Matthew 13:24-25](#)).

3. There is the millennial kingdom that is future. It is the actual rule of Christ or the government of Christ that is to come to this earth for a thousand years.

a. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom predicted by Daniel.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" ([Daniel 2:44](#)).

"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever....Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom....And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" ([Daniel 7:18, 22, 27](#)).

b. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom promised to David.

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom....And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Samuel 7:12, 16).

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (Psalm 89:3-4).

"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them" (Zech. 12:8).

c. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom pictured by John.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

4. There is the perfect kingdom of the new heaven and earth that is future.

a. The eternal kingdom is the rule and reign of God in a perfect universe for all eternity.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these

things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#)).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" ([Rev. 21:1](#)).

b. The eternal kingdom is the perfect state of being for the believer in the future.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" ([1 Cor. 15:50](#)).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" ([Rev. 21:4-5](#)).

c. The eternal kingdom is an actual place into which believers are to enter sometime in the future.

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 8:11](#)).

d. The eternal kingdom is a gift of God that will be given in the future.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" ([Luke 12:32](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 2

([Luke 16:6-7](#)) Measure— Oil— Wealth: a measure of oil (*batous*) was about 8-3/4 gallons. Therefore, the payment was a sizeable 800 gallons. The measure of wheat (*korous*) was about 10 bushels. This too was sizeable, about 1,000 bushels

2. (Luke 16:8) Dedication— Worldly— Materialism: the worldly are more wise in their material pursuits than God's people are in their spiritual pursuits.

Note **two points**.

1. Jesus said the unjust steward did "**wisely**."
 - a. He looked out for himself, his personal welfare. In this he was very wise.
 - b. He was dedicated and sold out to taking care of his future.

Jesus was not commending the steward for his cunning deceit. He commended him for his concern about the future and his dedication and energy. The steward was ***sold out*** to pursuing a goal, and that part of his life was commendable. His mistake was being sold out to pursuing material wealth and comfort instead of Christ.

2. Jesus said the worldly are wiser "**in their generation**" than believers. Why? Because they dedicate so much energy and effort to caring for their earthly welfare.

The point is clear. Every disciple should be just as dedicated and sold out in spiritual pursuits as the worldly are in their material pursuits. The disciple is not to be outdone in the exertion of energy and dedication.

Thought 1. Note how much more initiative and energy this man of the world exerted in his pursuits than many Christians exert in theirs.

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" ([Matthew 13:23](#)).

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1](#)).

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" ([Proverbs 3:5](#)).

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" ([Proverbs 23:26](#)).

3. (Luke 16:9) Stewardship— Wealth— Riches— Materialism: the Christian is to use material wealth for good.

The Christian is not being told to seek the friendship of the wealthy; he is being told to use his wealth to help others. By so helping, the disciple will gain friends and influence them for Christ. Then when the disciple finds himself without resources in this life, he will more likely be helped by those whom he helped.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" ([Luke 18:29-30](#)).

"And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" ([Exodus 23:25](#)).

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" ([Malachi 3:10](#)).

Note another significant point: if the Christian is not helped in this life, then at death he will certainly be welcomed abundantly into heaven. His compassionate initiative in helping others will assure God's approval. (See below [Deeper Study # 3—James 1:9-11](#) page # 12 for more discussion.)

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" ([Matthew 6:20](#)).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" ([Luke 12:33](#)).

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:33](#)).

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" ([2 Cor. 5:1](#)).

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" ([Phil. 3:8](#)).

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" ([1 Tim. 6:19](#)).

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" ([2 Peter 1:10-11](#)).

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" ([Rev. 3:18](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 3

([James 1:9-11](#)) Temptation— Life, Lot in— Life, Status in: How can a believer conquer trials and temptations? Second, he must rejoice in his status in life. It does not matter whether a person is poor or rich, healthy or unhealthy, crippled or sound, he is to rejoice in the Lord.

1. First, the believer of lowly status is to rejoice in the Lord. This does not mean that he is to rejoice because he is poor, unhealthy, or crippled. It means that he rejoices in Christ despite the circumstances—no matter how terrible. Christ loves the lowly person. Christ has saved the lowly and has promised to exalt him as a king and prince throughout all eternity. Therefore, the believer of lowly status is to have a spirit that is as strong as the spirit of a king and prince. He is to have the strongest of spirits now, while he is on earth despite his circumstances of poverty or ill health. Jesus Christ has exalted him to rule throughout all eternity in the new heavens and earth. Therefore, the believer of lowly status on this earth is to behave like a prince and a king—all as a testimony to Christ and His power to change lives. (See below [Rewards—Luke 16:10-12](#).)

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" ([Luke 19:17](#)).

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations" ([Luke 22:28](#)).

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge [rule, hold authority over] the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge [oversee, hold authority over] angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" ([1 Cor. 6:2-3](#)).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" ([2 Tim. 2:12](#)).

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" ([Rev. 1:5-6](#)).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" ([Rev. 3:21](#)).

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name" ([Psalm 91:14](#)).

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" ([Daniel 12:3](#)).

Thought 1. This is too often not the case with the lowly of this world. Too often the poor and unhealthy.....

- ✓ allow their circumstances to dull, numb, or destroy their spirit and joy in life.
- ✓ become bitter against those who have more and seek to take some of what they have.
- ✓ develop a sense of inferiority and inadequacy and take on a withdrawn or slavish type of behavior.

This is wrong and destructive both to the lowly person and to everyone else involved—including family members, friends, communities, society, and the world at large. Every lowly person on the face of the earth should struggle and struggle and never cease to struggle to improve his status in life—even to the point that he can help others. This is the clear teaching of Scripture ([Ephes. 4:28](#)). But no person is to allow circumstances—no matter how terrible—to destroy his joy or make him bitter and inferior or withdrawn and slavish. Every human being, no matter how lowly, is needed to make his contribution to society and the world. This is especially true with believers. Believers must never forget God nor the glorious salvation and exaltation to which God has raised them. Rejoicing in one's status in life—facing it squarely in the face and setting out to conquer it—is one of the ways to conquer the trials and temptations of life. A lowly person who does not allow his status to defeat him, but rather who conquers his status develops a strong, strong spirit. He develops such a strong spirit that with the wisdom of God He can conquer any trial or temptation thrown against him.

2. Second, the believer of rich or high status in life is to rejoice in that he is made low by God. **What does this mean?**

a. First, a rich or high person is not accepted by God because of who he is or what he has. His rich and high status means absolutely nothing to God. Even if he were the ruler and owner of the whole earth, it would mean nothing to God. What is such status or wealth in comparison to the whole universe? The rich and high have to approach God bare—as nothing and as having nothing—approach Him as a little child, poor and without anything. This is the only way God accepts any person; therefore, the rich and high are no better off than the poor and lowly. All men—no matter their status in life—stand before God as equals. Let the rich and high rejoice in God and in the fact that God accepts him, not in his rich and high status.

b. Second, a rich and high person must use all that he has and is—all of his riches and high influence—to help meet the desperate needs of the starving, impoverished, diseased, homeless, sinful, dying, and lost of the world. This is a fact that is neglected, ignored, explained away, and in some cases denied. Nevertheless, let Scripture be true and every man a liar—as Scripture says. It is the clear teaching of Scripture (see [Matthew 19:16-22](#); [Matthew 19:23-26](#); [Matthew 19:27-30](#)). The rich and high are to give and live just as sacrificially in meeting the needs of the lost and needy of the world as the middle and lower classes of society. This is not saying there is to be a classless society. There is not. A person of high status—a leader or manager of a business or nation—needs larger and more in order to deal with his equals in other businesses and nations, for most of them are not committed to Jesus Christ. They will not do business or respect a leader who holds the world in contempt. But when a person, especially a believer, meets his needs, that is all he is to do. He is not to hoard and bank beyond securing his family. He is to use all to meet the needs of this world—its desperate need for the gospel and for food, water, medicine, education, clothing, and housing.

Note what this passage says: the rich and high must remember a critical fact:

"As the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" ([James 1:10-11](#)).

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" ([James 4:14](#)).

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" ([1 Peter 1:24](#)).

"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth" ([Isaiah 40:6-7](#)).

"I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass" ([Isaiah 51:12](#)).

"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope" ([Job 7:6](#)).

"Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good" ([Job 9:25](#)).

"Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" ([Psalm 39:5](#)).

"Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" ([Psalm 49:12](#)).

"For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again" ([Psalm 78:39](#)).

"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" ([Psalm 103:14-16](#)).

"They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep" ([Psalm 64:6](#)).

4. ([Luke 16:10-12](#)) Rewards: the Christian is to be faithful in handling possessions, for his faithfulness determines what he will be trusted with eternally.

1. Money and possessions are the least trust given a person ([Luke 16:10](#)). They are nothing compared to eternal salvation and to love, joy, peace, and the absolute assurance and confidence of life eternal. They are nothing compared to the presence and companionship, the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. They are nothing compared to possessing the Word of God and the promises of God. They are nothing compared to knowing God personally and to being made an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ.

2. Unfaithfulness in the use of money and possessions disqualifies a person from true, heavenly riches. A person may think his life and possessions are his own to do with as he wills, but they are not. His life and possessions are God's. God has trusted the person with life and possessions only as long as he is on this earth. The holder is only a steward of all he is and has. He cannot take his life or possessions with him out of this world when he dies. He has both life and possessions only temporarily—as a trust. If he handles his life

and possessions badly, he shows he is not fit to be trusted with responsibility in the new heavens and earth.

Scripture says that the *true heavenly riches* and rewards are beyond comprehension:

Rewards Dealing with our Nature or State of Being

1. Being adopted as a son of God ([Galatians 4:4-7](#); [1 John 3:1](#)).
2. Being made blameless and harmless ([Phil. 2:15](#)).
3. Being given eternal life ([John 3:16](#); [1 Tim. 6:19](#)).
4. Being given an enduring substance ([Hebrews 10:34](#)).
5. Being given a glorious body ([Phil. 3:11, 21](#); [1 Cor. 15:42-44](#)).
6. Being given eternal glory and honor and peace ([Romans 2:10](#)).
7. Being given eternal rest and peace ([Hebrews 4:9](#); [Rev. 14:13](#)).
8. Being given the blessings of the Lord ([Proverbs 10:22](#)).
9. Being given the knowledge of Christ Jesus ([Phil. 3:8](#)).
10. Being given durable riches and righteousness ([Proverbs 8:18](#)).
11. Being made priests ([Rev. 20:6](#)).
12. Being given a crown of incorruption ([1 Cor. 9:25](#)).
13. Being given a crown of righteousness ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)).
14. Being given a crown of life ([James 1:12](#)).
15. Being given a crown of glory ([1 Peter 5:4](#)).

Rewards Dealing with Work or Position or Rule

1. Being made exalted beings ([Rev. 7:9-12](#)).
2. Being made ruler over many things ([Matthew 25:23](#)).
3. Being given the Kingdom of God ([James 2:5](#); [Matthew 25:34](#)).
4. Being given a position or rule and authority ([Luke 12:42-44](#); [Luke 22:28-29](#); [1 Cor. 6:2-3](#)).
5. Being given eternal responsibility and joy ([Matthew 25:21, 23](#)).
6. Being given rule and authority over cities ([Luke 19:17, 19](#)).
7. Being given thrones and the privilege of reigning forever ([Rev. 20:4](#); [Rev. 22:5](#)).
8. Being given the privilege of surrounding the throne of God ([Rev. 7:9-13](#); [Rev. 20:4](#)).
9. Being made priests ([Rev. 20:6](#)).
10. Being made kings ([Rev. 1:5](#); [Rev. 5:10](#)).

Rewards Dealing with our Inheritance or Wealth

1. Being made an heir of God ([Romans 8:16-17](#); [Titus 3:7](#)).
2. Being given an incorruptible inheritance ([1 Peter 1:3-4](#)).
3. Being given the blessings of the Lord ([Proverbs 10:22](#)).
4. Being given durable riches and righteousness ([Proverbs 8:18](#)).
5. Being given unsearchable riches ([Ephes. 3:8](#)).
6. Being given treasures in heaven ([Matthew 19:21](#); [Luke 12:33](#)).

3. Unfaithfulness disqualifies a person from all he would receive. The other man in [verse 12](#) refers to God. Our lives and possessions are His. If we are not faithful in using them, how can we expect to be compensated? Note a person never has all he would have if he fails to pursue God and to give others what is due them. (Cp. [Matthew 19:29](#); [Mark 10:29-30](#); [Luke 18:30](#).)

"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" ([Matthew 25:27-29](#)).

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" ([Mark 8:36](#)).

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" ([1 Cor. 3:13-15](#)).

"Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you" ([Jeremiah 5:25](#)).

5. ([Luke 16:13](#)) Decision—Spiritual Struggle: the Christian cannot serve two masters; he must choose God or riches.

Note three significant points.

1. There are two masters in life, either God or the things and riches of this world.
2. A person serves one of the two masters. He gives himself either to one or the other.....
 - a. He focuses himself upon the things and riches of the world or upon God.
 - b. He turns himself over to the things and riches of the world or to God.
 - c. He thinks primarily upon the things of the world or upon God.
 - d. He gives his time, energy, and effort to the things of the world or to God.
 - e. He allows his worldly pursuits to control Christ, or Christ to control his pursuits.

3. A person struggles against God or else struggles against the things and riches of the world.

No man can serve both God and mammon.

- a. He hates the one and loves the other.
- b. He holds to one and despises the other.

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" ([Matthew 4:10](#)).

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me" ([Mark 10:21](#)).

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" ([1 Cor. 10:21](#)).

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" ([James 1:18](#)).

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" ([James 4:8](#)).

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" ([Deut. 30:15](#)).

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD choose you this day whom ye will serve" ([Joshua 24:15](#)).

"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" ([1 Kings 18:21](#)).