

CAN WE USE WORLDLY WEALTH?

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.

[Luke 16:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸“And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.”

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 Corinthians 4:1](#)) and to believers in general ([1 Peter 4:10](#); [Luke 16:1](#)).

[1 Corinthians 4:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and **stewards** [*oikonomos*] of the mysteries of God.”

[1 Peter 4:10 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰“As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good **stewards** [*oikonomos*] of the manifold grace of God.”

[Luke 16:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“Now He was also saying to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a **manager** [*oikonomos*], and this *manager* was reported to him as squandering his possessions.”

Of the nearly forty parables told by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels, about one third of them deal in some way with money. That money played such a prominent role in the teaching of Jesus is not surprising, since it has a dominant role in society and the lives of individuals. People spend much of their time **thinking about money; how to acquire it, spend it, save it, invest it, borrow it, keep track of it, and sometimes give it away.**

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

The widespread preoccupation with money that dominates today's society results in **anxiety, covetousness, selfishness, greediness, discontent, idolatry, and pride.**

Scripture has much to say about money, including how to obtain it, how to regard it, and how to use it.

The Bible reveals both right and wrong ways to obtain money. The most important way to make money is through work.

Proverbs 14:23 (cf. **6:6-11**; **20:4**; **28:19**), says,

Proverbs 14:23 (NASB)

²³ "In all labor there is profit, But mere talk *leads* only to poverty."

Proverbs 6:6-11 (NASB)

⁶ "Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise,

⁷ Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler,

⁸ Prepares her food in the summer *And* gathers her provision in the harvest.

⁹ How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?

¹⁰ "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest"—

¹¹ Your poverty will come in like a vagabond *And* your need like an armed man."

Proverbs 20:4 (NASB)

⁴ "The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing."

Proverbs 28:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ "He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty *pursuits* will have poverty in plenty."

Paul wrote that those who refuse to work should not eat (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**).

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ "For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."

Second, money can be obtained by saving for the future.

Proverbs 21:20 (NASB)

²⁰ "There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up."

Proverbs 30:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ "Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise:

²⁵ The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer."

Third, money can be obtained through proper assessment of one's resources and wise planning. Solomon advised:

Proverbs 27:23-24 (NASB)

²³ "Know well the condition of your flocks, *And* pay attention to your herds;

²⁴ For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations."

Finally, money can be obtained through gifts ([Philippians 4:16](#)).

[Philippians 4:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“For even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.”

On the other hand, there are wrong ways to get money, including stealing (whether directly ([Exodus 20:15](#); [Ephesians 4:28](#));

[Exodus 20:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“You shall not steal.”

[Ephesians 4:28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁸“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.”

By fraud ([Psalm 37:21](#); [Hosea 12:7](#); [Amos 8:5](#); [Micah 6:11](#)),

[Psalm 37:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹“The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.”

[Hosea 12:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, He loves to oppress.”

[Amos 8:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“Saying, “When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat *market*, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales.”

[Micah 6:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“Can I justify wicked scales And a bag of deceptive weights?”

By charging exorbitant interest on loans ([Exodus 22:25](#); [Leviticus 25:36-37](#); [Nehemiah 5:7, 10](#); [Psalm 15:5](#); [Proverbs 28:8](#)),

[Exodus 22:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵“If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.”

[Leviticus 25:36-37 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁶“Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you.

³⁷ You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain.”

[Nehemiah 5:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, “You are exacting usury, each from his brother!” Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.”

Nehemiah 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury.”

Psalm 15:5 (NASB)

⁵“He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.”

Proverbs 28:8 (NASB)

⁸“He who increases his wealth by interest and usury Gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.”

By withholding from others what is due them ([James 5:4](#)), or gambling, which foolishly trusts in chance rather than in the providence of God.

James 5:4 (NASB)

⁴“Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.”

Scripture reveals both the right way and the wrong way to regard money. The right attitude is to acknowledge that God owns everything ([Psalm 50:10](#); [Haggai 2:8](#)),

Psalm 50:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.”

Haggai 2:8 (NASB)

⁸“The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,” declares the LORD of hosts.”

God is the source of people’s ability to earn money ([Deuteronomy 8:17-18](#); cf. [1 Timothy 6:17](#)).

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’

¹⁸But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.”

1 Timothy 6:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

The wrong way to regard money is to love it, which leads to disastrous consequences ([1 Timothy 6:10](#)).

1 Timothy 6:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”