

THE DISHONEST MANAGER

(Final in series on Parables of Jesus)

Introduction: why would Jesus use a story of a dishonest manager?

- Jesus gives insight not only for the future, but also for how to live now.

1. Be Intentional

Luke 16:1-8 (TPT) *Jesus taught his disciples using this story:*

Once a very rich man hired a manager to run his business and oversee all his wealth. But soon a rumour spread that the manager was wasting his master's money. So the master called him in and said, "Is it true that you are mismanaging my estate? You need to provide me with a complete audit of everything you oversee for me. I've decided to dismiss you."

The manager thought, "Now what am I going to do? I'm finished here. I can't hide what I've done, and I'm too proud to beg. I have an idea that will secure my future. It will win me favour and secure friends who can take care of me and help me when I get fired!"

So the dishonest manager hatched his scheme. He went to everyone who owed his master money, one by one, and asked them, "How much do you owe my master?" One debtor owed \$20,000, so he said to him, "Let me see your bill. Pay me now and we'll settle for 20% less". The clever manager scratched out the original amount owed, and reduced it by 20%.

To another who owed \$200,000, he said, "Pay me now, and we'll reduce your bill by 50%. And the clever manager scratched out the original amount owed and reduced it by half.

Even though his master was defrauded, when he found out about the shrewd way this manager had feathered his own nest, he congratulated the clever scoundrel for what he'd done to provide for his future.

- Why was the dishonest manager commended?
 - It wasn't for his honesty!
- Why did Jesus make that statement in verse 8 ?

UNPACKING THE PLOT:

(A) The Owner: A business man

- Profit is his bottom line
- He suspects fraud, but not yet proven.
- Is determined to let his manager go



(B) The Manager

- Knows he is going to be sacked
- He continues to defraud the businessman to gain favours from his clients



(C) The Owner suspects fraud

- Prefers to get some of what he is owed rather than wait and go through the court system.
- The owner's compliment to the manager is not about honesty but foresight and intentional planning.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHREWDNESS AND WISDOM?

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

Illustration: Shrewdness v Wisdom

Shrewdness: Imagine a business person who hears that their company will soon downsize. To protect themselves, they quickly network, secure references, and line up another job before the layoffs happen. Their actions are clever, resourceful, and forward-thinking. That's shrewdness – using practical strategy to secure a short-term future.

Wisdom: Now imagine another person in the same situation. Instead of only thinking about personal gain, they ask: *'How can I honour God in this transition?'* They treat co-workers with kindness, share resources, and trust God's guidance while planning responsibly. Their decisions are not just clever, but rooted in righteousness and eternal perspective. That's wisdom: choosing what is right in God's eyes, even if it costs more in the short term.

2. Make your Treasure Count

Luke 16:9-12 (NLT) *Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.*

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

- Be intentional with your resources
- Use resources to benefit others for the Kingdom
- Through your faithfulness, others will greet us in our eternal home.

Matthew 6:19-21 *“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”*

- Whatever you treasure will have your heart.
- Jesus Checklist:
 - Faithful in little – faithful in large
 - Dishonest in little – dishonest with greater responsibilities
 - If you are not trustworthy with worldly wealth, can you be trusted with spiritual things?
 - Will you be faithful with other people's things?

Jesus' Checklist:	
• Faithful with little	• Faithful with more
• Dishonest with little	• Dishonest with greater responsibility
• Not trustworthy with worldly wealth	• Can you be trusted with spiritual things? • Will you be faithful with other's things?

3. Who Do We Serve?

Luke 16:13 *“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”*

- For many people, hating one and loving another is too extreme
 - Devoted to one, despise the other
 - Devoted = being extremely loyal, loving or dedicated to someone or something
 - Despise = deep dislike, contempt, scorn, not worthy of respect.
- Enslaved: when money / resources control you and you do not manage it.
- Knowledge = information
- Shrewdness = clever strategy
- Wisdom = God-centred discernment, rooted in reverence and obedience.

4. Start with Opening the Door

