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Ask the bigger questions

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Acting now in light of the future

A cost benefit analysis of following Jesus:

What does Jesus require of me? Is it worth it?

- Session 6

The words of Jesus

Luke 16:1-15

1 Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 2 So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

3 "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— 4 I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' 5 "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6 "Nine hundred gallons^(a) of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.'

7 "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"A thousand bushels^(b) of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

8 "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. 9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? 13 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

Footnotes:

(a) Luke 16:6 Or about 3,000 liters

(b) Luke 16:7 Or about 30 tons

This is one of Jesus' most intriguing parables because he uses a dishonest man to teach a point.

You would expect the rich man to be rightly displeased by his manager's actions. After all, the manager's actions in the writing down of what is owed will cost the rich man a fortune. But that is not the reaction of the rich man in the parable.

Q1. Why does the rich man commend the dishonest manager? (verse 8)

Q2. How does Jesus apply the point of the parable to his followers in verses 8-9?

Q3. "You can see what people are passionate about by looking at their credit card statements". Do you agree?

Q4. If someone said to Jesus "It's my money because I've earned it and therefore I am free to spend it the way that I want" - how would Jesus reply based on verses 10-12?

Q5. Why can't we serve God and money? (verse 13)

Q6. How we spend our money now really does depend on the future we see. How do we know heaven is really there and is worth making sacrifices for?

Q7. What if I say I'm a follower of Jesus but not writing out large cheques to enable other people to hear about Jesus?

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