

Bible Study Luke 16:1-15

1. It's been said that Christians who fall away do so for one of three reasons: Gold, Glory and Girls (/Guys), ie Wealth, Pride, Sex. Of the three, Jesus spoke the most about the first – wealth, money, greed. What is it about wealth that could cause Christians to stumble?

2. **Read Luke 16:1-9.** Discuss the parable. Are there any details you don't understand?

NB The amounts the manager takes off in vv6 & 7 would have had a similar cash value because wheat was more expensive than oil. 800 gallons of oil was worth about 3 year's wages. 1000 bushels of wheat was worth about 2.5 – 3 times that. We can assume that more than just these two debtors were called in.

3. What is it about the manager that Jesus wants us to imitate? (What wouldn't Jesus want us to imitate?)

He assesses his current situation in light of an imminent and certain future (joblessness), he uses the resources at his disposal to "make friends for himself" in the future.

Jesus doesn't want us to be dishonest and self interested!

4. What is "worldly wealth"? How does the parable help us to understand what it is?

Lit'ly "the mammon of unrighteousness". It's any wealth, resources etc that are tied to this world. We have access to it now, it has relative value now, but one day (in eternity) it will be out of reach, useless and worthless to us.

5. Could v.9 mean that we earn our way into heaven? Why / Why not? If not, what does this mean?

No - Jesus is addressing his disciples – v.1 – people who are already going to heaven (by faith in him). But this parable is about using resources of this world to help people hear about Jesus, put their trust in him and so have eternal life, so that they will be 'there to welcome you'. Cf 15:7, 10 for the emphasis on sinners repenting and God's attitude to this.

6. **Read Luke 16:10-15.** In the context of this passage, what is it to be trustworthy or dishonest with wealth (literally, "mammon" – a broad term for all the 'stuff' we have that's of value in this world).

It's to serve God and let wealth serve you in his purposes, or to serve wealth and actually be opposed to God and his purposes. So it will be the difference between using wealth to extend God's kingdom, or to indulge yourself.

7. The only command Jesus gives is in v.9. The rest, especially vv10-13, is description. What does this suggest about wealth / money and one's use of it?

It will be a good indicator of what's in the heart and whether we really serve God or not. It's possible to say we serve God, but live a life that contradicts that. And money will be one of the key ways it will show. Refer back to Q.1.

8. What can someone (even you!) do who hears Jesus' words and feels exposed – that their use of wealth shows they serve the wrong master? (Note: One possible reaction is recorded in v14!)

Remember that this passage is addressed to disciples who, by definition, serve God. But if we take Jesus' words seriously and honestly feel they are convicting us, that's a good sign the Holy Spirit is at work. Repentance is always the way back to God. Ask him to forgive you, and change your heart so that actions will follow that honour him.

9. Think of ways that we do or could use our 'worldly wealth' to gain friends who will welcome us into eternal dwellings.