

INVITATIONS

COME.

The Shrewd Steward

Psalm 113; Amos 8:4-7; Luke 16:1-9; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

GETTING STARTED

Have you witnessed misuse of resources or poor stewardship this past week?

Have you ever been bribed? Did it work? (Share only what you are comfortable with. You may want to think of funny stories from your own family for example).

READ AND REFLECT

Read Luke 16:1-9. What is your initial reaction to this parable?

- What do you learn about the master in this story (make sure you look at both the beginning and the end)?
- How would you describe the change in focus in the manager?

The biblical word used for “manager” here is the word “*oikonomos*” from which we get the word “economics.” It literally means “steward of the house.” In the ancient world, no one other than the Master himself had greater authority than the “*oikonomos*.”

- How does this understanding deepen this story?
- “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards (*oikonomous*) of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (1 Cor 4:1-2 ESV). In other words, Jesus has made us managers of his resources.
 - How do these verses land personally with you?

ENGAGE AND DISCUSS

In the Parable of the Shrewd Manager there are at least four big ideas that Jesus is teaching us about living as Kingdom (Jesus) Followers:

- Understand you are charged with RESPONSIBILITY as a steward.
- Understand that with this responsibility comes ACCOUNTABILITY.
- Because of this accountability, like the shrewd manager, you should have appropriate HUMILITY. (Be honest about your current realities in light of your master.)
- Grow within yourself and take a step toward MUTABILITY (capacity for change).
 - Which of these points seem the most challenging, inspiring, or frightening for you? Why?
 - Two of these points are things to know. Two of these are actions (steps) one must take. Which is the bigger dilemma for most people in your observation—people don't understand or people don't apply what they know?

How would you describe the current state of Christian stewardship (investing time, talent, and treasures into long-term realities with God and others)?

Why are we not bothered more (in crisis fashion) about stewardship: With Christians? With our church? In our own lives?

Jesus challenges us to learn from how people work and pursue the things of the "world." What would change if people (you) invested into God's realities in the same way they pursue their own careers or retirement planning?

NEXT STEPS:

Give yourself opportunity to reflect on these question. You may want to use the bottom of this page or another place to write your responses.

- What's my current management plan?
- Am I conscious of being responsible and accountable for what I have and the way I use it? Explain.
- Am I humble enough to recognize that I may not have been managing in the way our ultimate Master has in mind? Explain.
- The evidence of those three qualities will be the presence of the fourth: I will be mutable. I will be willing to *change* the way I manage resources.
 - What needs to change in how I am a steward?
 - What will I do next to take a step toward change?
 - What are my goals for my stewardship in the months/year to come?