

# MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Luke 16:1-2

*“Your Business”*

## OPENER

If someone called you up tomorrow morning and told you that you'd had a job change overnight and that you were now expected to act as chief operating officer and chief financial officer for a company you've not paid much attention to, what would your reaction be? How well equipped would you be to manage your new position?

## INTRODUCTION

Read Luke 16:1-2

God is the CEO of the business “us.” In his love letter to us he gives us the instruction we need to manage his business. In Luke 16:2 Jesus instructs his followers using the parable of the rich man and his manager. Although parables can be found in the Old Testament, Jesus, the Son of God, perfected this oral art. Let's look at the idea of a parable so we can better understand the instructions God has given us regarding our management position.

In the Greek, *parable* or *parabole* literally means, “a placing of one thing by the side of another.” So, through parables Jesus guided his followers by placing one thing alongside another for the purpose of making a comparison. By using stories that were couched in terms familiar to people of His time living along the Mediterranean Sea, Jesus was able to teach them things that very often ran against the grain of either their culture, human nature or both. In teaching about God's Kingdom by comparing it to things that were familiar, Jesus was able to instruct his followers and critics alike how to live a life pleasing to and expected by God.

You will find in Luke 16:1-2 (feel free to do further reading into this parable) that Jesus is illustrating a point about how we run God's business by telling a story in using circumstances that would have been very familiar to the people of that time. Re-casting this parable in terms we can understand, helps us understand that God outlines two management styles for his business, faithful and wasteful. Take an example from our culture that would be familiar to most people. Think. . . “The Apprentice.”

Donald Trump sets a group to the task of marketing a new product. As a part of the project, one of the individuals in the group must act as a manager and handle the budget the group has been given to complete the task. As they are called back to the boardroom, the individuals on the team must account for their choices. As a part of this report they reveal to Donald how the manager wasted the money in the marketing budget resulting in a poorly executed project. Donald then looks the person in the eye and proclaims, “You're fired!” and the person is asked to gather their things and leave the boardroom.

## DIGGING IN!

### Romans 14:11-12

<sup>11</sup>For the scriptures say,

*"'As surely as I live,' says the Lord,  
'every knee will bow to me  
and every tongue will confess allegiance to God.'"*

<sup>12</sup>Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God.

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1. If you have never thought of your finances as "God's business," what is your reaction to this idea? Have you ever thought of yourself as a manager before or have you thought of yourself instead in the role of an owner?
2. What difference would it make in how you handle your finances to think of yourself as a manager instead of an owner?
3. What kind of accounting records are you keeping? Take a moment to think back over your spending for the last 30 days. To what degree can you account for where your dollars have gone?
4. Would your personal finances look different if you were to approach them as if they were not your own, but someone else's business accounts? Would you approve of what you saw?
5. Think back to the parable in Luke. If your personal finances were an accounting record for a business, would you fire yourself as the manager? What kinds of things would you like to see a manager doing differently with the "you" corporation?

## MANAGEMENT 101

God's financial principles for management of his money are sometimes not what we want to hear, but exactly what we need to hear. Here are several verses from the book of Proverbs that very plainly lay out God's instructions to us:

Be generous in giving	11:24, 25; 22:9
Place people's needs ahead of profit	11:26
Be cautious of countersigning for another	11:15; 17:19; 20:16; 22:26, 27; 27:13
Don't accept bribes	17:23
Help the poor	19:17; 21:13
Store up for the future	21:20
Be careful about borrowing	22:7

1. Are your management practices reflective of what God has told us through scripture that He wants for his business? Does your spending reflect these same things?
2. When was the last time you actively engaged in any kind of planning concerning your finances? Depending on where you are in your life's journey, what help would you need or what steps would you have to take to create a simple plan on paper that would reflect a desire to make God's business your business?

## GETTING REALLY REAL!

1. There is a popular slogan on television that says, "There are some things money can buy, for everything else there's MasterCard." What does this statement imply?
2. Are you living in the space of "I want what I want when I want it?" What does that do to any kind of plan? How does it affect your debt load?

### Proverbs 22:7

*<sup>7</sup>Just as the rich rule over the poor, so the borrower is slave to the lender. -NLT*

3. What does carrying consumer debt do to your ability to follow God's plan for faithful money management? What percentage of your income does that represent? Are there changes you would like to make? How will you do that?
4. If you spent some energy on telling your money what to do before each paycheck gets deposited, how much more in control would you feel concerning the money in your life? If you were able to account for every dollar and were intentional about your spending, what kind of freedom might that create?

## IMPACT!

### 3 John 7-8

*"For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth." -NLT*

1. What place does church, community or God have in your regular expenditures? Why is that important?
2. What is your role in supporting those in full time ministry? How could your finances reflect your sentiments in this regard?
3. How would it look if a Christ follower had to financially depend on the people he/she was trying to reach? Would it be possible for a person called into ministry to reach the community without the support of other Christ followers?

## Acts 20:32-35

*<sup>32</sup> "And now I entrust you to God and the word of his grace--his message that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself. <sup>33</sup> "I have never coveted anyone's money or fine clothing. <sup>34</sup> You know that these hands of mine have worked to pay my own way, and I have even supplied the needs of those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> And I have been a constant example of how you can help the poor by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "*

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## RESOURCES...

If you would like assistance getting "your business" regarding finances in order, there will be an opportunity beginning Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. **Money 101** will examine what God and plain old common sense have to say about debt and how to gain financial freedom. For information about the **Money 101** class, refer to The WEEKLY or contact John Weldy at [john@bucketoflizards](mailto:john@bucketoflizards) or 978-0835.

For individual help you can send an email to [finance@threadschurch.org](mailto:finance@threadschurch.org).