

# PARABLES OF WEALTH

The Ten Minas - May 27



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| 1. The Rich Fool            | Luke 12:12-21 |
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## **The Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21**

1. If you had to teach a class on 'principals for using money' what points would you be sure to include?

*OR*

What would you be keen to hear about if attending such a class?

2. Read verse 13. Is this a fair request? What's surprising about Jesus response in vs 14-15? What does Jesus' response teach us about the subtlety of greed?

3. Read v 15. Do the contents of your house betray an "abundance of possessions?" What could you spend less money on?

4. Read vs 16-19. What blessing has the rich man received? What is his planned cause of action? In what ways might these actions have the appearance of wisdom?

5. What reality check is given in verse 20?

6. What *should* the wealthy be concerned with according to verse 21?

7. Does this Parable warn us against saving? Why or why not?

8. How do James 4:3 and 5:1-6 reflect Jesus teaching here?

9. In summary:

a. How does this parable help us define (or re-define) greed?

b. How does this parable instruct us to use money?

10. Identify areas where you have been hoarding things for yourself. Confess this sin and ask for the Holy Spirit to help you be rich towards God.

## Study Two - The Shrewd Manager - Luke 16:1-15

1. Read the parable found in verses 1-8. What questions do you have after reading the story? In general terms, can you determine what the *main* lesson is?

2. It's impossible to understand the details of this story without some background information. Read the following and see if the story starts to make more sense.

*In Israelite culture, it was against God's word to charge interest on debts (Exodus 23:19). By Jesus' time this law was routinely ignored, and some very high levels of interest were being charged. The level of interest varied according to what was on loan. Olive oil attracted a very high level of interest due to its vulnerability as a crop—as much as 100%. Wheat's interest was lower; 20-25% or so.*

*However, to maintain the appearance of keeping the law, debts were not itemized in terms of principal and interest, but with one figure identified in terms of the principal only. In our parable, the olive oil debt is recorded as 900 gallons. In reality, the principal (amount lent) would have been much less than this, with the balance being the interest. Can you see what the dishonest manager is doing? He's wiping out the illegal interest that was probably added by him in the first place (hence his 'dishonesty' – he shouldn't have added the interest). The 'wastefulness' identified by his master in v 1 is probably some other issue that remains unidentified in the story. The move to reduce the debts is actually a righteous action, one that the debtors would have been very happy with.*

3. Why is the master left with little else to do but commend the manager?

4. In what way was the manager shrewd? In light of the themes of this parable, in what ways might Christian people fail to act shrewdly before the future?

5. Which of the following interpretations of verse 9 make more sense? Why? Read the verse first!

a. Use money to purchase people's love, so that in the end you will enjoy heaven with them.

b. Use money in a way that is honest and therefore doesn't irritate others, and you will not endanger your eternal inheritance.

6. Have you ever seen a sinful use of money come between friends?

7. How might you summarise the warning of v10? How is this warning related to the parable in vs 1-8?

8. How do vs 13-15 diagnose the issue lying underneath our misuse of money? When do you feel the tug of war between these two masters?

9. In light of the passage, what is distinctive about how a true worshipper of God handles money?

10. Spend some time in personal prayer confessing any use of money that has been dishonest. Ask for God's help in using money in a way that demonstrates a more eternal perspective.

## **The Rich Man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31**

1. What would you list as your main responsibilities in life?

2. Read Luke 16:19-21. Why is the Rich Man particularly guilty? To what level has he paid attention to Lazarus? What is his level of responsibility towards Lazarus, as inferred by these opening verses?

3. Are there poor people in your life who've asked for help but are easy to ignore? Are there poor people—in any part of the world—that you see and hear?

4. Read vs 22-26. Where do the two characters go in the afterlife? How does v25 summarize the age to come? See also Matt 20:16.

5. Do you believe in hell? What does this parable teach us about it's nature and purpose?

6. Read vs27-28. What does the Rich Man get right in these verses? Aside from physical need, what other need do people have?

7. What is one purpose of the Old Testament according to v29? Should the fact of judgment and punishment be a surprise?

8. What event might v30-31 be alluding to? What does this allusion teach us about the nature of belief and unbelief?

9. According to this passage, is it enough to simply believe in Jesus? What ought to accompany faith? What should the Rich Man have done while he was alive?

10. Is your own wealth placing you in eternal danger?

11. Spend some time in quiet a prayer of repentance. Resolve to take some action.

## **The Ten Minas – Luke 19:11-27**

1. Can you easily overlook wastefulness around the house? Do you ever become angry over wasted opportunities that come and go?
2. According to v 11, why does Jesus need to tell this parable? What dangers are brought about by the slow growth of God's Kingdom?
3. Read the rest of the passage. Who might the 'man of noble birth' be? What is his going away and coming back a reference to? Are you a 'servant' or a 'subject'?
4. What is the task issued to each of the servants? How does the third servant fail?
5. What might be meant by the master "taking out what he did not put in and reaping what he did not sow" (vs 21-22)? Does the way this concept is expressed in Matthew 25:24-27 make its meaning any clearer?
6. What is the lesson for those who see themselves as God's servants? Does Christ's instruction to his servants instill a sense of fear or opportunity within you? How can you move from the former to the latter?
7. What's your assessment on the spiritual return that's being generated by your own personal skills and resources? If the return is minimal, what steps can you take to put your mina to work?



8. When the King returns, what are the consequences for:

- a. the servants who use what they've been given;
- b. the servants who don't do anything (see also 1 Cor 3:10-15);
- c. the subjects who reject the King's authority?

9. What is the reward for those who serve well? How large is the reward? When might this reward be enjoyed?

10. Identify those opportunities to put your own resources and skills to work. Pray for God's help and energy so that these opportunities are not wasted.