

✚ **This has an element of shock in it as all Jesus' parables have had so far, shocker here is that everyone in this one is bad, either evil or complicit with evil, the very worst one is the one we are to be drawing out example from! This, strangely, becomes an illustration of how we should be living as believers and followers of Jesus.**

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### **1. This is not the only occasion the Lord uses evil people as an example, i.e., the unrighteous Judge, Priest, the Levite and good Samaritan, the prodigal.**

- ✓ Everyone is an example of some sort. You will either be an example of how to live or how not to live. What bothers people is that Jesus commends the worst guy in this story. "Learn from the behavior of the wasteful, profligate, prodigal, deceitful, thieving selfish, conniving, unprincipled person." Is that what He's saying? "A certain rich man," this guy is really rich, because he isn't directly overseeing his own stuff, he has a lot of debtors, and they owe him massive amounts of money.
  - ✓ A "Steward" or "oikonomos" which is "law of the house" is a title given to someone who can act on behalf of the owner, he then speaks for the owner. The word "Squandering" is the same word used to describe what the prodigal son did with his father's money. Not necessarily embezzlement, but more just irresponsible or incompetent. The rich man calls him to account and promises to fire him but then gives some time to get the books in order. Would you do that with a dishonest employee whose been stealing from you and your clients? No one would do this; Jesus is using an extreme example to make a point. He's losing his job, his home, his reputation.
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### **2. "What shall I do? I know what I shall do."**

- ✓ The employee is forced to think about his future. He has a eureka moment, "I will do whatever it takes to secure my future." He resets all the owners accounts receivables because he could, because he knows people are corrupt given the right price. He takes advantage of his temporary situation to set himself up for the future. "Each one of his master's debtors" which implies many debtors, not just two. A hundred measures of oil is one thousand gallons, it's worth 3 years wages and would take about 150 olive trees to produce. He gives a 50% discount! Who wouldn't want a 50% discount? Honest people! Notice, there is no question as to why or whether this was the wish of the actual owner. "A hundred measures of wheat" around 1 thousand bushels, taking about 100 acres of land to produce, he gives a 20% discount, the man can't sign quickly enough! Notice, they don't ask questions, "is this legal?", "is this right?," they're not dumb, they know. This guy knows that he's sucked them into his crime, so they aren't going to squeal on him because it would hurt their pocketbook. He also knows that when he says later, "can you give me a job?" or "can you give me a place to stay?," they are going to say yes!
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### **3. The commendation, verse 8.**

- ✓ Jesus frequently puts a shock element in His stories, here's the shock "his master praised the unrighteous manager." He's not praising him for his incompetence, wastefulness, cheating, cooking the books, or his deception. He's praising him because he acted shrewdly, that's all. Jesus commends the guy, not for being corrupt, but for taking advantage of an opportunity so that his future could be secure. Jesus says that we, "the sons of light", need to be at least as shrewd as the world is about the future that is coming for us. The difference is in the futures that are being referred to here: the unjust steward has only the immediate, temporal future; we have the forever future in eternity. Again, the praise and commendation is for his legitimate assessment of His future situation.
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#### 4. A legitimate assessment of the future.

- ✓ The steward is losing his job, his home, his livelihood in the immediate future, and does what he can with what he has to set himself up. What do we stand to lose? Everything in this world! It's all temporary, and we are headed somewhere that will be permanent, what are we doing to secure that future? Jesus' call in verse 9 is for us to legitimately assess our future. What did the unjust steward do? He took what he had while he had it and used it to make a difference in a future in which his condition would be completely different. He took the one thing he had: you're in a similar situation, you only have one life, one shot at making a difference, when it's gone, it's gone! He took someone else's stuff and used it for his advantage.
- ✓ You are in similar situation: your stuff is not your stuff, and your life is not your life; it actually belongs to someone else, and you are going to lose all of it. Whatever you do with what you currently have will set in stone forever your experience in the future. If you do nothing for the kingdom of God, reach no one, make no eternal difference in people's lives, that will be your permanent status in eternity. No service, no money, no sacrifice in this life will be what you are known for in the next life. You will reap no dividends in the next. Jesus is the one crafting this story, this isn't a suggestion, this is the Eternal One telling you what's coming and how to prepare for it. He literally says: "Buy (with your money, your talents, your time, your opportunities) friends who will be greeting you at the big gates when you arrive there." Are you doing that? You only get one shot at this!

**How to set yourself up for the eternal future. Invest yourself and your stuff in kingdom enterprises that bring the message of salvation to sinners. This is one of the most common messages that Jesus makes and remakes in the gospels: Matthew 6:20. Personal accumulation of money, memories, stuff just for the sake of it is not very smart, Luke 12:15-21. Again, none of it is yours, you will lose all of it; it can only be yours if you convert it into another form that will last for eternity.**

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