

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Luke 16:1-15
Lesson #22
Shrewd Stewards
02/23/2020

DECISION MAKING



How can we make better decisions?

1

Context

Immediately before - The Prodigal son & brother

- The clash of two kingdoms.

Luke 16:1-13

Luke 16:1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' 5 And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. 9 And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. 10 He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Immediately after -

"14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. 15 And He said to them, **"You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."**"

2

Luke 16

"1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as **squandering** his possessions."

- "Squandering" is the same word used of the Prodigal son's blowing through his inheritance in a distant country. (Lk:15:13)
- In vs.8 the man is called "the unrighteous steward".
- Like the Prodigal son in a distant land, **this unjust steward is in trouble and has to make a decision.**

3

"2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward. 3 And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.'"

- He reasons that he can do something that will save him "looking forward".
- Like the Prodigal **he sees a way to secure his future.** 15:17?

4

"5 And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'"

- The strategy is to take this opportunity to make friends of the master's debtors by lowering their bills, **with the hope that they will bless him in the end.**
- When the master discovers this we would expect **these deeds to be exposed as evil.**

5

“⁸ And his master **praised** the unrighteous steward because he had acted **shrewdly**;

- “Shrewdly” - suggests “**giving thought for the future**” (Matt.25:2 wise virgins).
- The unjust steward is not commended because he “cooked the books” but because **he responded in the present so as to ensure his future.**

In the same way that Rahab **the harlot** was praised for protecting the Hebrew spies, **not for her lying or harlotry** (Jas.2:25, Josh.2:1-21).

6

“⁸ . . . for the sons of this age are more **shrewd** in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. ⁹ And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the **eternal dwellings.**”

- Worldly people manage money so as to ensure their future **TEMPORAL** security.
Godly people should do the same to ensure their future ETERNAL security.

1.
Good decisions
have the end in mind.

7

Three things that motivate us to follow Jesus

1. **LOVE** - God’s love and grace toward us.
2. **LAW** - God’s plan for His people.
3. **LOGIC** - God’s promise for our future.
 - This parable appeals to the **LOGIC** that should lead us to respond and obey.
 - This is a **faith / promise / hope** thing.
 - This is a renewed **mind** thing.

Do my choices reflect the fact that I see the light at the end of it all?

8

Hebrews 12

“¹ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who **for the joy set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Romans 8:18

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory that is to be revealed to us.**”

9

“In this life we carry a cross **to a banquet.**”

Clark Pinnoch



10

“¹⁰ He who is faithful in a **very little thing** is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a **very little thing** is unrighteous also in much. ¹¹ If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?”

2.
Good decisions
give attention to
little things.

11

Every day I want to:

1.

Learn something

2.

Be thankful for something

3.

Give something



12

**It's not how much we give.
It's how much we sacrifice to give
that reveals our values.**

Luke 21

"1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3 And He said, 'Truly I say to you, **this poor widow put in more than all of them**; 4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.'"

13

**Our tongue can give to others
riches that money can't buy.**

Proverbs 18:21

"Death and life
are in the **power of the tongue.**"

Isaiah 50:4

"The Lord God has given me the tongue of disciples, **that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word.**"

14

"13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"

3.

**Good decisions
start with big issues.**

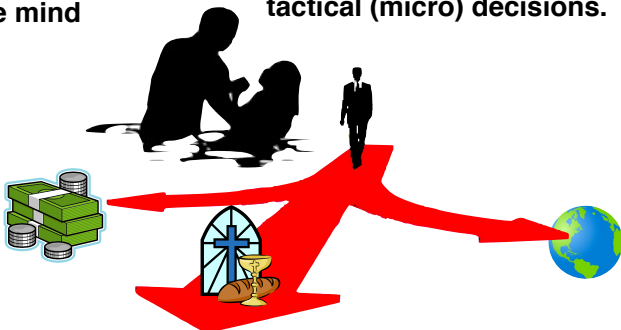
We must take our baptism seriously.

**This world is not our home and
mammon is not our Mamma.**

15

**Facing in the right direction
makes it easier to find the path.**

- **Take your baptism seriously** - renew the mind
- Strategic (macro) decisions **set the stage** for good tactical (micro) decisions.



16

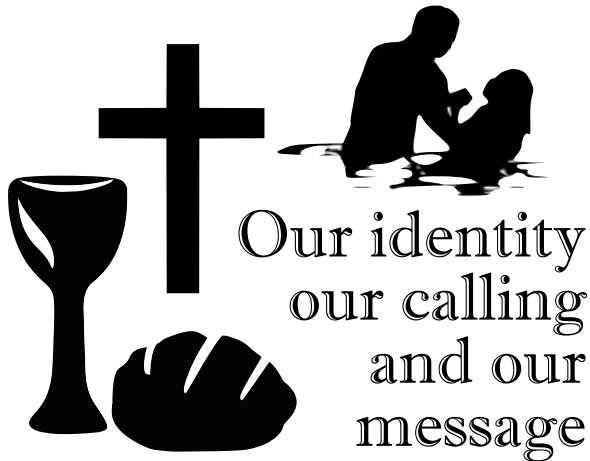
"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values (goals, & priorities) are."

Roy Disney



17

The symbols of the faith



18

Signs of my true home and calling

Matthew 6

“¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

If it **can rust or be stolen**
it is an earthly treasure.

Anxiety and anger will
tell me a lot about my
investments in this life.



19

“¹⁴ Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. ¹⁵ And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. ¹⁶ The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and **everyone is forcing his way into it.**”

4.
**Good decisions
respect the sovereignty of
God’s kingdom.**

20

American values that can affect the church

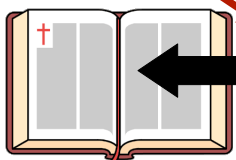
1. **God will save me with my toys and crutches.**
2. **If it produces tangible results it’s of God.**
3. **God’s plan is for my personal happiness.**
4. **Competition makes everything better.**
5. **Growth & size define success.**



21

Traditional cultures

Ancient culture
Early American culture



ancient cosmology,
political dueling,
concubines,
slavery,
etc.

Modern Western culture

Pluralism
Autonomy
Democracy
Narcissism
Materialism
Nationalism
Pragmatism
Individualism



It is hard to critique our culture’s lens.

22

If you could be assured that by living on a welfare level for the rest of your life you would insure the material security of your children and grandchildren,

would you do it?

What if it would only insure
their spiritual fruitfulness?

What if it were the spiritual
fruitfulness of 10 total
strangers?



23

Guides for better decisions.

1. **Think ahead** - Does this decision have God's end goal in mind?
2. **Be consistent** - Do the little things get the right amount of attention in my life?
3. **Take your baptism seriously** - Does this decision tell the world that I am an alien / ambassador?
4. **Fear and Anger** - Is this decision motivated by the right things?

24

New simple
IRS tax form

TAX FORM

How much
did you make?

\$ _____

Send it in.



25

Luke 14:33

“no one of you
can be my
disciple who
does not give
up all his own
possessions.”

Akiane Kramarik (painter)

26

How much
do you have?

How much
do you have?

How much
do you have?

How much
do you have?

How much
do you have?

Akiane Kramarik (painter)

27

Send
it in!

Akiane Kramarik (painter)

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