

Connect360: How Much Can God Trust You?

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- *Lesson 11 in the Connect360 unit “Jesus Storyteller: Timeless Truths From His Parables” focuses on Luke 16:1-18.*

This parable in Luke 16 is one of the most unusual parables Jesus ever uttered. I call it the parable of the Crooked Manager. It's a story about an employee who "cooked the books" for his employer. He used dishonest methods to give an accounting of his company's assets, and it reads much like a deposition from a number of Congressional hearings on big companies who failed big time!

It's a parable about money, which shouldn't be surprising because of the 38 parables Jesus told, 19 of them dealt with handling possessions. Baptism is important, but there are 16 times more verses in the New Testament on handling money than are devoted to baptism. The Lord's Supper is important, but there are 32 times more biblical statements about Christian financial management than about the Lord's Supper. Since Jesus had so much to say about it, we'd better pay attention.

I hope you know you can trust God—but when it comes to handling God's money, how much can God trust you? The main reason God gives us worldly wealth is to test us. He wants to see how well we manage that kind of wealth.

Be shrewd, but be innocent

The Bible says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Children of the Light, wake up! The reason we all need a little dose of

worldly wisdom is because we operate in a world filled with dishonest, crooked people. If you aren't shrewd, you'll be eaten like a lamb in a pack of wolves.

Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Note the distinction. The crooked manager in the parable was as shrewd as a snake, but he was as guilty as sin.

What can we learn from the crooked manager? He knew he was facing a deadline. He formulated a plan, and he acted before the opportunity was gone. We are also facing a deadline. Do you have a creative plan to influence your world before that deadline? Are you letting opportunities pass by?

We must learn to be wise in the ways of the world, but we must remain as innocent as doves—and that's hard. In fact, like every other command in the Christian life, it's impossible without the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. That's the parable and the "moral" to the story, but Jesus is just getting started.

Based on a lesson by David O. Dykes, pastor emeritus of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler. To learn more about GC2 Press and the Connect360 Bible study series, or to order materials, click [here](#).