

Luke 16:10-12

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Jesus continues His teaching about money. He tells His disciple the faithfulness principle. He who is faithful in a very little thing will be faithful in much greater things. And He who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous in much. Jesus infers this principle to our earthly opportunities to be faithful or unrighteous in very little things now and the consequences this will have for the much greater responsibilities given or denied us in the life to come. Jesus also reminds His disciples that they cannot serve both God and Money.

This teaching has no apparent parallel in the gospel accounts.

After teaching His disciples to become more shrewd by using reciprocity to advance their eternal ambitions in the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward, Jesus continued to teach them about the true value of money.

He began with a parallel principle, known as the Faithfulness Principle.

The first parallel of the Faithfulness principle is positive. *He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much greater things.*

The second parallel of the Faithfulness Principle is negative: *He who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much greater things.*

Both parallels of The Faithfulness Principle highlight the importance of the *very little* things in life. The way we live in the everyday mundane, ordinary affairs of life will have a direct impact and a multiplying effect in the responsibilities we will have or not have in the life to come. By comparison, the things of this life are very little when measured against the *much* greater things of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

These *very little* things demonstrate the substance and quality of our faith. The *very little* things matter to Jesus and His kingdom. *Very little* things such as receiving children and spending time with them (Matthew 19:14); fetching a cup of cold water for someone in Jesus's name (Matthew 10:42); praying in secret (Matthew 6:6); or sacrificially giving two mites from your poverty (Luke 21:1-4) are all examples of small actions that are hardly noticed by men, but which matter *much* to God. Even the smallest acts of faith and love that serve others demonstrate true greatness, greatness that will be greatly rewarded.

The way we live out the seemingly insignificant moments of our lives is of colossal importance. The reason for this is because there are no insignificant moments. Every opportunity, whether obviously big or *very little*, matters to Jesus. Every moment is sacred. Jesus knew that it was important for His disciples to have this perspective and not estimate these eternal opportunities according to the shortsighted evaluations of the world.

He who is faithful in a very little thing has this perspective. Like the man who joyfully sells all that he has in order to buy a field with hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44), *he who is faithful* understands the true value of *very little* moments. *He* rightly perceives that being *faithful in* them is worth the cost of his earthly ambitions.

He who is unrighteous, however, does not have this perspective. This person does not see the hidden treasure buried in the fields of *very little* things. To *the unrighteous*, sacrificing their wealth and slowing down to attend *very little* things is a waste of time and a lost opportunity to acquire more earthly treasures or fulfill other appetites. *The unrighteous* do not understand that the way to gain life is to take up your cross daily and lose your life for His sake (Luke 9:23-25),

“For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
(1 Corinthians 1:18)

The point Jesus was making by stating this Faithfulness Principle was that the way believers live this life by faith (faithfully or unrighteously) matters *much* for the authority they will be entrusted with in the next life (Revelation 3:21).

God created people to have dominion and oversee the development of His good creation (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:5-6). We broke fellowship with God and were separated from our purpose at the Fall (Genesis 2:17; 3:17-24) and have mismanaged the development of His creation by selfishly exploiting it and others to satisfy our appetites. Despite our technological achievements, the results have not brought us fulfillment.

Tragically, our human advances often have been catastrophic and detrimental to human flourishing. Human history is one of war and enslavement. Our ambitions to gain the world has often been soul-losing to those who seek it, and it has been soul-crushing to the victims. The wages of sin truly has been death (Romans 6:23a). Death is separation, and humanity has too often been separated from its original design to flourish in harmony with God, one another, and nature.

But Jesus came to restore us to Himself and to recommission us to our original purpose and destiny. A major aspect of this renewal is to rule with Him in the New Heaven and the New Earth (Psalm 8; Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Timothy 2:12; 2 Peter 1:4; Revelation 3:21). The way we are restored to our divine destiny is by first receiving the Gift of Eternal Life through faith in Jesus as God’s Son (John 3:14-16) and then by inheriting the Prize of Eternal Life by faithfully following Jesus (Matthew 19:16-21; 2 Corinthians 5:7-10).

Both in the previous parable and in this teaching, Jesus is training His disciples in how to inherit the Prize, the reward of the inheritance, the experience of eternal life (Colossians 3:23).

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.

By comparison, the responsibilities God gives us on earth to manage are *very little* when they are compared to the *much* bigger responsibilities we are predestined for in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

If we learn to be faithful with the *very little* things on earth, we prove ourselves to be worthy of the glorious destiny God has in store for us (Romans 8:16-18; 2 Corinthians 4:17).

Consider what the Master told the faithful servants in Jesus's parable of the Talents:

“Well done good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few [very little] things, I will put you in charge of many [much greater] things; enter into the joy of your master.”
(Matthew 25:21, 23)

Consider also, how the master scolded the *unrighteous*, lazy slave when he proved unreliable in the same parable:

“‘You wicked, lazy slave... take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’

“For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”
(Matthew 25:26,28-29)

This life is our only opportunity to know and follow God by faith. It is our one chance to grow and live by faith and thus prove ourselves faithful of *much* in the life to come.

Jesus reinforces the Faithfulness Principle with two rhetorical questions.

His first rhetorical question is: *Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?*

The expected answer to Jesus's first rhetorical question is: *“If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, no one (including God) will entrust true riches to you.”*

The word, *therefore*, harkens back to the second (negative) parallel of Jesus's Faithfulness Principle which was: *and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much*. The term, *unrighteous wealth* also harkens back to Jesus's “Parable of the *Unrighteous Steward*” (Luke 16:1-9). The point Jesus is making here is that if we are *not faithful* with the temporary *wealth* and resources of this world which God entrusts to us, then He *will not entrust* us with *the true riches* of the New Heaven and the New Earth. These *true* and great *riches* include reigning along with Jesus, and experiencing the joy therein (Matthew 25:21,23; Revelation 3:21).

Jesus's second rhetorical question is: *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?*

The expected answer to Jesus's second rhetorical question is also, *If you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, no one* (including God) *will give you that which is your own.* God owns the world and all the things in it (Psalm 24:1). If we are not faithful with them, He will not give us partnership with Him in dominions in the New Heaven and Earth (2 Timothy 2:12; 2 Peter 1:4, 10-11). The word, *And* that begins the phrase *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?*, also hearkens back to the second (negative) parallel of Jesus's Faithfulness Principle which was: *and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*

If the servants of Jesus want to receive their divine reward of the inheritance and partner with God in reigning in joy with Him in the New Heaven and the New Earth, they must live faithfully to Him and strive to follow His commands in all things, including the small, everyday things of life (Colossians 3:23). His servants are His. And they will all spend eternity with Him in His presence. But only those *who* are *faithful* to live out the Faithfulness Principle will gain the greatest rewards.

Those *who* are *faithful* in small things will be entrusted with *much*, and those *who* are *not faithful* will not be trusted with *much*.

Biblical Text

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 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, 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?