

The Best Investments You Can Make

Jesus said a lot of difficult things, but the one I've had the hardest time wrapping my head around has to do with shrewdness. In Luke 16, he told a parable about a shrewd manager. The manager had been unscrupulous in his work, but to rescue his own skin, he made some shrewd business moves. In this parable, the manager was praised for his shrewdness. Check out the parable in Luke 16:1-9 and notice how Jesus concluded the parable:

"And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of worldly wealth so that when it fails, they may welcome you into eternal dwellings" (v. 9).

We think of shrewdness negatively, but it also means to use your head and be wise in your dealings with others. This was not a call to be unscrupulous nor take advantage of others, but use your relationships toward godly ends.

Think of your relationships in terms of investments—eternal investments. And this goes beyond just interpersonal relationships; use everything at your disposal to honor God, put the gospel on display, and point people to Jesus.

Granted, I'm not the best person to talk to about investments— or anything to do with money. But money is a part of life, and God has not left us alone in the area; the Bible talks about our finances. In fact, the Book of Proverbs is full of more nuggets of truth about our finances than Jim Cramer, the weird dude on CNBC, has stock advice. (And, Jim, if you're reading this, I'm sure I mean *weird* is the nicest way possible.) Even the Book of Ecclesiastes, known more for talking about the alleged meaningless of life, offers financial advice in its own wonderfully poetic way. Seriously, read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6.



- **Don't put all your financial eggs in one basket (vv. 1-2).** Diversify your investments.
- **Misfortune may arise but keep working (vv. 3-4).** Bad things happen and we experience unforeseen circumstances and problems. We should not use that possibility as an excuse for doing nothing. In other

words, some people will not do anything with their finances and assets until they are absolutely certain it is safe. We have no guarantees, so it's good to go ahead and act—provided we do so with wisdom.

- **Life is uncertain, so leave it all in God's hands (vv. 5-6).** Because the circumstances of life can be uncertain, it is wise to be diligent in our work and diversify our assets. We are to act, but undergirding our action is an ultimate trust in God.

What could I possibly add to that? **Whatever you have—money, stocks, possessions, relationships—use it as an investment for the kingdom of God.**

This life is over before we know it, so let's not spend all our money on ourselves. Or on widgets and do-dads that will end up in next year's garage sale. Investing in the lives of others—using your money to meet needs and minister—is an eternal investment.

I'm not an advocate for the prosperity gospel or these pseudo-preachers who want you to think God's one goal in life is to bless your socks off and flood your life with money so that every time He blesses your socks off, you can purchase another pair of \$1,188 socks. **But if God has blessed you financially, great—but use that blessing to be a blessing to others.**



\$1,188 a pair. Must be nice socks. Gives a whole new meaning to the old idea of keeping your money in your socks

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else" (2 Cor. 9:12-13).

And that gets to the heart of Jesus' hard-to-understand parable.

- Be wise with your resources and opportunities.
- Invest in God's kingdom.
- Make a difference.