

# Using Unrighteous Mammon To Make Friends – Luke 16:9

**This statement is the concluding part of the parable of the shrewd and dishonest manager.**

**Recent study of Jewish law has suggested that the steward may not have been acting dishonestly at this point, he was merely releasing the debtors of the huge interest payments which had been imposed, quite illegally, when the loans were made in the first place.**

A steward looked after his master's estate, dealt with other employees and tenants, and in general should have relieved his master of all concern about the day-to-day running of his affairs.

But the time came when the master discovered that due to incompetency and negligence his affairs were in a bad way, and ordered the steward to turn in his books, for his employment was terminated, [Luke 16:1-2].

**Luke 16:3-7** [New King James] *“Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’ So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’”*

Before the steward returned the books to the master he took some hasty measures with an eye to his future interest.

**Luke 16:8-9** [New King James] *“So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”*

**The master may have recognised some analogy between the steward's conduct and the methods by which his own wealth had been amassed; both had no thoughts beyond this present life, yet will sometimes behave more sensibly and providently than other worldly people, “the children of light.”**

**If such people can use material wealth to prepare for earthly future, why cannot the “children of light” use it to prepare for their eternal future?**

It is called “*unrighteous mammon*” because it is too often acquired unjustly and used for unjust ends. It is ethically neutral in itself, it is people's attitude to it and ways of dealing with it that are reprehensible.

**It is not the money but the “love of money” that is “the root of all evils,” [1 Timothy 6:10].**

But how can material wealth be used to procure friends who will receive us “into the eternal habitations”?

**This parable is followed by a collection of sayings, several of which are concerned with the subject of wealth.**

**Luke 16:19-25** [New King James] *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores,*

*who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.'*"

**This rich man had plenty of “unrighteous mammon” and used it all to secure comfort and good cheer for himself in this life, giving no thought to the life to come.**

The time came when the rich man would be very glad to have even one friend to welcome him into “*eternal habitations*,” but he found none, yet he had every opportunity of securing such a friend during this life time.

If the rich man had used a little of his wealth to help Lazarus, he would have had a friend to speak up for him on the other side.

**Every one of us could make the same mistake, but we will have no-one to blame but ourselves.**