

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 25, The Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Luke, Session 25, The Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Daniel K. Darko's lecture, the twenty-fifth session on the Gospel of Luke, examines **Luke 16:1-18**. The session begins with an analysis of the **parable of the shrewd manager**, exploring its controversial nature and various interpretations concerning the steward's actions and the master's commendation. **Darko then transitions to Jesus' teachings on divorce**, addressing the Pharisees and highlighting the continuity and points of tension between Jesus' message and Mosaic Law, as well as differing Pharisaic views on the matter. **Throughout the lecture, Darko emphasizes the importance of faithful stewardship for disciples and the condemnation of hypocrisy for all.** He also acknowledges the complexity and ongoing scholarly debate surrounding both the parable and the teachings on divorce.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Darko, Luke, Session 25 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Luke).



Darko_Luke_Session25.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Darko, Luke, Session 25, The Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18)

Briefing Document: Jesus on the Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18)

Overview: This briefing document summarizes Dr. Daniel K. Darko's lecture (Session 25) on Luke 16:1-18, which covers the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (or Dishonest Steward) and Jesus' teachings on divorce in his interaction with the Pharisees. The lecture highlights the shift in Jesus' audience from Pharisees and scribes (concerned about his association with sinners) to his disciples, and then back to the Pharisees. Dr. Darko emphasizes the controversial nature of the parable and the complexities surrounding Jesus' statements on divorce, urging careful interpretation and application.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

I. Transition and Audience Shift:

- Following the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and sons in Luke 15 (aimed at the Pharisees and scribes), Jesus transitions to addressing his disciples in Luke 16. This shift indicates a change in focus towards leadership responsibility within the coming Kingdom.
- Later in the chapter, the audience shifts again to the Pharisees, prompting a discussion on law, morality, and divorce. This change is significant as Jesus addresses different concerns and perspectives.

II. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-13):

- **Controversial Interpretation:** Dr. Darko acknowledges the highly debated nature of this parable, cautioning against the modern scholarly tendency to prioritize controversial interpretations solely for the sake of novelty.
- **The Steward's Actions:** The parable depicts a manager who, facing dismissal for wasting his master's possessions, shrewdly reduces the debts of his master's debtors to gain favor and secure his future.
- Quote: "He also said to the disciples there was a rich man who had a manager. And charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions." (p. 1)
- Quote: "So that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses." (p. 2)

- **The Master's Commendation:** The most perplexing aspect is that "the master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness." (Luke 16:8, quoted p. 2). Dr. Darko raises key questions about the identity of "master" (the earthly master in the parable or Jesus) and the nature of the commendation (approval of dishonesty or recognition of shrewd foresight).
- **Three Views on Interpretation:** Dr. Darko outlines three main scholarly interpretations of the steward's conduct:
 1. **Commendation of Foresight:** Jesus highlights the steward's foresight in securing his future, even if his methods were dishonest, as a lesson for kingdom leaders. Quote: "Perhaps what is going on here is that Jesus is interested in highlighting the foresight of a dishonest man as a lesson for kingdom leaders to observe." (p. 5)
 2. **Steward Forfeiting Commission:** The steward generously forgoes his own commission (a portion of the debt he would have received upon collection) to win favor. This interpretation minimizes the negative aspect of dishonesty. Quote: "This guy is saying I am generously giving out my commission to win France." (p. 6)
 3. **Focus on Shrewdness, Not Honesty:** Jesus is primarily interested in the steward's shrewdness in using available resources for future security, without necessarily endorsing his dishonesty. Quote: "Jesus is not talking about the macro picture of every detail of the parable but perhaps very interested in the shrewdness of the steward and his ability to be able to secure a place for himself in the future." (p. 6)
- **Key Takeaways for Disciples:** Dr. Darko emphasizes that Jesus is likely teaching his disciples about:
 - **Faithful Stewardship:** The importance of managing God's entrusted resources with faithfulness, which will be rewarded. Quote: "Faithful stewardship may be a central issue in this parable, in which Jesus is very interested in making sure that his disciples understand that if they take good care of the possessions of the things that are entrusted in their hands and they become faithful stewards, that faithfulness will be rewarded." (p. 6)
 - **Consequences of Dishonesty:** Unfaithfulness with what belongs to another will prevent God from entrusting true riches. Quote: "When one is unjust about that

which belongs to the other, God could not trust that person to be faithful so as to give that person possessions of their own." (p. 6)

- **Foresight:** The necessity for disciples to think beyond the present and plan for the future, especially in matters of service to the Kingdom. Quote: "Looking ahead to be able to secure one's future is a prudent thing for those who exercise leadership in the kingdom of God." (p. 7)
- **Jesus' Conclusion:** The parable concludes with principles about faithfulness in small things leading to being entrusted with much, the rewards of faithful service, the consequences of unfaithfulness, and the importance of good foresight. Quote: "Jesus concludes that parable by highlighting that the one who is faithful in little will be entrusted with much." (p. 7)
- **Serving God and Money:** Jesus' concluding statement, "You cannot serve God and money" (Luke 16:13, quoted p. 7), underscores the conflict of loyalties and the need for disciples to prioritize God.

III. Jesus and the Pharisees on Money and the Law (Luke 16:14-17):

- **Pharisees' Reaction:** The money-loving Pharisees ridicule Jesus upon hearing these teachings. Quote: "The Pharisees who were money lovers, who were lovers of money, had all these things that he was telling the disciples, and they ridiculed him." (p. 8)
- **Jesus' Rebuke:** Jesus exposes their hypocrisy, stating, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16:15, quoted p. 8). Dr. Darko suggests that while the Pharisees preached simplicity, Jesus perceived a love for opulence in their actions.
- **Continuity of Law and Kingdom:** Jesus asserts that "The law and the prophets were unto John. Since then, the good news of the kingdom of God is preached..." (Luke 16:16, quoted p. 8), emphasizing that his message is a continuation of, not a contradiction to, the Old Testament. He notes the debate around the phrase "everyone forces his way into it."
- **Enduring Nature of the Law:** Jesus affirms the lasting authority of the Law: "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void." (Luke 16:17, quoted p. 8).

IV. Jesus' Teaching on Divorce (Luke 16:18):

- **Strict Stance:** Jesus states unequivocally, "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery." (Luke 16:18, quoted p. 8 and p. 14).
- **Context within Judaism:** Dr. Darko highlights that the Law of Moses permitted divorce (Deuteronomy 24) and that there were varying views on the grounds for divorce among different Pharisaic schools (Shammai vs. Hillel).
- **Comparison with Other Gospels: Mark:** Presents a similar strict view, applying it to both men and women. Quote (from Mark, referenced p. 13): "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."
- **Matthew:** Includes an "exception clause" ("except on the ground of sexual immorality," πορνεία) which is absent in Luke's account to the Pharisees. Quote (from Matthew, referenced p. 14): "...everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery..."
- **Jesus' Intent with the Pharisees:** Dr. Darko suggests Jesus' strict stance on divorce here might be to align with some Pharisees who held a more conservative view (like the school of Shammai) and to challenge the more lenient views prevalent at the time.
- **Importance of Marriage:** Jesus emphasizes the sacred and lasting nature of marriage.
- **Addressing Modern Concerns:** Dr. Darko acknowledges the difficult questions surrounding divorce in modern contexts (abuse, abandonment, etc.) but notes that these specific scenarios are not explicitly addressed in this passage. He urges careful study of the text and seeking resolution whenever possible. Quote: "As a pastor, I've often said, even in the case of pōinir, if at all means possible, try to resolve the issue with your spouse and seek to live lives together that will glorify God." (p. 15)
- **Hypocrisy and Sincerity:** Ultimately, in addressing the Pharisees, Jesus calls for sincerity and faithfulness before God, condemning hypocrisy in all areas, including their perceived love of money and potentially their varying stances on marriage.

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko's lecture provides a detailed overview of Luke 16:1-18, highlighting the complexities and nuances within both the Parable of the Shrewd Manager and Jesus' teachings on divorce. He encourages listeners to consider the different interpretations of the parable, focusing on the themes of faithful stewardship and foresight. Regarding divorce, he emphasizes the strict stance presented in Luke in the context of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees and the broader Jewish understanding of divorce at the time. The lecture underscores the importance of sincere faith and conduct before God for all believers.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Luke, Session 25, The Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18)

Luke 16: The Shrewd Manager and Divorce: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. Why did Jesus tell the parables in Luke 15 before addressing the disciples in Luke 16?
2. Explain the central conflict or problem presented in the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-9).
3. What are two interpretations discussed regarding the master's commendation of the dishonest manager in Luke 16:8?
4. According to Dr. Darko, what are two key principles or lessons that Jesus is trying to teach his disciples through the parable of the shrewd manager?
5. How did the Pharisees react to Jesus' teachings, and what specific characteristic of theirs did Jesus highlight in Luke 16:14?
6. What does Dr. Darko suggest about Jesus' relationship with the Pharisees based on their interactions, particularly concerning hospitality?
7. What is the significance of the change in audience from the disciples to the Pharisees in Luke 16?
8. How did the Pharisees' views on divorce differ, and which school of thought did Jesus seem to align more closely with in his teaching on divorce in Luke 16:18?
9. While the Old Testament did not condemn divorce, what was Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage as recorded in Luke 16:18?
10. According to Dr. Darko, what is one crucial aspect to consider when interpreting Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage across the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus used the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost sons in Luke 15 to explain to the Pharisees and scribes why he dined with tax collectors and sinners, emphasizing that the lost are found and there is reason for celebration. This set the stage before he turned his attention to the disciples in chapter 16.

2. The central problem is that the rich man's manager is accused of wasting his possessions and is about to be fired. The manager then acts shrewdly by reducing the debts of his master's debtors to gain favor with them for his future.
3. One interpretation is that the master of the parable recognized a commendable foresight in the dishonest manager's actions, even if the actions themselves were dishonest. Another interpretation considers "Kurios" in verse 8 to refer to Jesus, who is highlighting the manager's forward-thinking despite his corruption as a lesson in prudence.
4. Two key principles are the importance of faithful stewardship of what is entrusted to the disciples, which will be rewarded, and the need for foresight in serving God's kingdom, thinking beyond the present and securing one's future.
5. The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, ridiculed Jesus when they heard his teachings to the disciples. Jesus highlighted their hypocrisy, stating that they justify themselves before men, but God knows their hearts.
6. Dr. Darko suggests that Jesus might not have been an enemy of all Pharisees, pointing to instances where they invited him for meals, indicating a level of hospitality and reciprocity not typically extended to enemies. He proposes Jesus might have observed inconsistencies between their preached simplicity and actual practices.
7. The change in audience is significant because it indicates a shift in focus. Jesus addresses the disciples on matters of leadership, stewardship, and foresight within the kingdom of God, while his discussion with the Pharisees centers on law, morality, and their hypocritical tendencies.
8. There were differing views on divorce among the Pharisees, primarily between the stricter school of Shammai, which allowed divorce mainly for adultery, and the more lenient school of Hillel, which permitted divorce for various reasons. Jesus' teaching in Luke 16:18 seems to align more with the stricter view, emphasizing the sanctity of marriage.
9. Jesus taught that anyone who divorces their wife and marries another commits adultery, and anyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband also commits adultery. This was presented without the exception clause found in Matthew's Gospel.
10. Dr. Darko emphasizes the importance of considering the audience (disciples vs. Pharisees), the specific context, and any variations or additional clauses (like the

exception for sexual immorality in Matthew) when interpreting Jesus' teachings on divorce and remarriage across the Synoptic Gospels.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-9). What are the main points of contention in its interpretation, and what lessons does Dr. Darko suggest Jesus intended for his disciples to learn from this parable regarding stewardship and foresight?
2. Compare and contrast Jesus' interactions and teachings directed towards the disciples in the first part of Luke 16 with his engagement with the Pharisees in the latter part (Luke 16:14-18). What does this shift in audience reveal about Jesus' multifaceted ministry and the different challenges he addressed?
3. Discuss the complexities surrounding Jesus' teaching on divorce in Luke 16:18, considering the historical context of Jewish views on divorce, the parallel accounts in other Gospels (Matthew and Mark), and the questions and concerns that often arise when interpreting this passage in contemporary society.
4. Explore the theme of hypocrisy as it is presented in Luke 16, particularly in Jesus' critique of the Pharisees. How does this critique connect with the preceding parable of the shrewd manager and the broader message of the Gospel of Luke regarding true righteousness and the nature of God's kingdom?
5. Evaluate the various interpretations of the master's commendation of the dishonest manager in Luke 16:8. Which interpretation do you find most compelling based on Dr. Darko's lecture, and how does this understanding impact the overall message of the parable for Jesus' disciples?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Steward (oikonomia):** A household manager or administrator, often a slave or someone entrusted by the master to oversee the household and its possessions. They held a position of responsibility and authority.
- **Shrewdness:** Keen awareness, sharp intelligence, and resourcefulness, often used in a practical sense to achieve one's goals. In the parable, it refers to the manager's clever, though dishonest, plan.

- **Unrighteous wealth (mamōna tēs adikias):** Material possessions or money that can be used for selfish or unjust purposes. Jesus uses this term to contrast with "true riches."
- **Hospitality:** The generous and friendly reception of guests or strangers. It was a significant cultural value in the time of Jesus, as seen in the manager's attempt to gain favor.
- **Reciprocity:** The practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. The manager hoped his reduced bills would lead to future hospitality.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish religious and social movement during the Second Temple period, known for their strict adherence to the Law and their influence on Jewish society. Jesus often engaged in debates with them.
- **Money lovers (philargyroi):** People who have a strong desire for wealth and material possessions. Luke specifically identifies the Pharisees with this trait.
- **Hypocrisy:** The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform. Jesus frequently accused the Pharisees of hypocrisy.
- **Divorce:** The legal dissolution of a marriage. Jewish law allowed for divorce, but there were varying interpretations regarding acceptable grounds.
- **Adultery (moicheia):** Marital infidelity; sexual relations between a married person and someone other than their spouse. Jesus' teachings on divorce and remarriage address this concept.
- **Sexual immorality (porneia):** A broad term referring to various forms of unlawful sexual intercourse, including fornication, adultery, and prostitution. This term appears in Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching on divorce.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar perspective and content in their accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. Comparing these Gospels is crucial for understanding nuances in Jesus' teachings.
- **Kingdom of God:** The spiritual realm where God's will is done. Jesus' parables and teachings often describe the nature and principles of this kingdom.
- **Eschatological era:** The period relating to the "last things" or the end times, including expectations about the future judgment and the culmination of God's plan. Dr. Darko suggests Jesus was preparing his disciples for their role in this era.

5. FAQs on Darko, Luke, Session 25, The Shrewd Manager and Divorce (Luke 16:1-18), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Luke 16:1-18

1. Why does Jesus address the parable of the shrewd manager to his disciples after speaking to the Pharisees and scribes in the preceding chapter (Luke 15)?

Jesus shifts his focus from the Pharisees and scribes, who were questioning his association with tax collectors and sinners, to his disciples in Luke 16. This transition indicates a shift in the subject matter. While the parables in Luke 15 aimed to explain to the Pharisees why welcoming the lost is a cause for celebration, the parable of the shrewd manager is directed towards the disciples, seemingly to instruct them on principles of leadership and stewardship as they prepare for their future roles in the kingdom of God. The discussion with the disciples assumes a level of leadership responsibility and emphasizes the need for foresight in their service.

2. What is the central point of the controversial parable of the shrewd manager, considering the master commends the "dishonest" manager?

The commendation by the master (and potentially Jesus) of the "dishonest" manager focuses on his shrewdness and foresight in securing his future, rather than endorsing his dishonesty. The manager, facing dismissal, acts proactively to make friends with his master's debtors by reducing their debts, hoping they will offer him hospitality later. The parable highlights the "sons of this world" being more astute in their dealings than the "sons of light." Jesus seems to be urging his disciples to be equally, if not more, forward-thinking and diligent in their service to the kingdom, using the resources available to them wisely for eternal benefit, even if those resources are described as "unrighteous wealth."

3. How should believers today interpret the actions of the shrewd manager in the parable, particularly his apparent dishonesty?

Interpreting the shrewd manager's actions is complex and debated among scholars. One perspective suggests that Jesus is commending the manager's foresight, urging believers to be equally strategic about their eternal future. Another view posits that the manager might have been forgoing his own commission on the debts, thus acting generously rather than dishonestly in the present moment. A third interpretation, which the speaker leans towards, emphasizes that while the manager's dishonesty is not condoned, his prudence in looking ahead and securing his future serves as a lesson for

the disciples to be faithful and have foresight in their stewardship of God's resources. The key takeaway is not to emulate dishonesty but to recognize the importance of wise planning and action in kingdom service.

4. What principles regarding stewardship and faithfulness can be derived from the parable of the shrewd manager and Jesus' subsequent teachings (Luke 16:10-13)?

Several key principles emerge from the parable and Jesus' direct teaching:

- **Faithfulness in small things leads to faithfulness in much:** Those who are trustworthy with minor responsibilities will be entrusted with greater ones.
- **Honesty with earthly wealth reflects one's character regarding true riches:** If someone is dishonest with "unrighteous wealth," they cannot be trusted with true, spiritual riches.
- **Service to others brings rewards:** Faithfulness in serving God and others will ultimately be rewarded.
- **Unfaithfulness has consequences:** Dishonesty in God's service will lead to negative repercussions.
- **Foresight informs conduct:** Disciples should live with an awareness of the future and the ultimate judgment, guiding their actions in the present.
- **One cannot serve both God and money:** Loyalty must ultimately lie with God, as devotion to wealth will conflict with serving Him.

5. How does Jesus address the Pharisees' reaction to his teachings, particularly their mockery due to their love of money (Luke 16:14-15)?

The Pharisees, described as "money lovers," ridiculed Jesus upon hearing his teachings. Jesus responds by highlighting their hypocrisy, stating that they justify themselves before people, but God knows their hearts. He emphasizes that what is highly valued by humans can be detestable in God's sight. This reveals a contrast between outward appearances and inner reality, a common theme in Jesus' interactions with the Pharisees. Jesus exposes their inconsistent values, where they may preach simplicity but harbor a love for wealth and public approval.

6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it" (Luke 16:16)?

This statement signifies a transition in God's redemptive history. The era of the law and the prophets, culminating in the ministry of John the Baptist, is now giving way to the era of the kingdom of God, inaugurated by Jesus. The phrase "everyone forces his way into it" is subject to different interpretations. It could imply an intense eagerness and striving to enter the kingdom, or it could suggest that the kingdom's arrival is so powerful that it breaks through existing barriers. Regardless of the precise nuance, the verse underscores the arrival of a new phase of God's work, though one that Jesus insists is continuous with the teachings of the Old Testament.

7. How does Jesus address the issue of divorce in Luke 16:18, and how does it relate to the teachings in other Gospels and the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 24)?

In Luke 16:18, Jesus states unequivocally, "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery." This is a strong statement that seems to uphold the sanctity of marriage and condemn divorce and remarriage. Unlike Matthew's Gospel, Luke does not include an "exception clause" for sexual immorality. While the Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 24 permitted divorce under certain circumstances, Jesus here appears to be emphasizing a higher standard for his followers, aligning more closely with the view that marriage is intended to be a lasting bond. This teaching was controversial in the context of first-century Judaism, where various schools of thought among the Pharisees held differing views on the permissibility of divorce.

8. What are some key takeaways for contemporary believers from Jesus' teachings on the shrewd manager and divorce in Luke 16:1-18?

For contemporary believers, this passage offers several important lessons:

- **Be forward-thinking in kingdom service:** Like the shrewd manager, believers should plan and act wisely to secure their eternal future and use their resources effectively for God's purposes.
- **Practice faithful stewardship:** Believers are entrusted with God's resources and should manage them with honesty and integrity, recognizing that faithfulness in small things matters to God.
- **Avoid hypocrisy:** Believers should strive for inner integrity and avoid the trap of presenting a righteous outward appearance while harboring worldly desires.

- **Uphold the sanctity of marriage:** Jesus' strong stance on divorce underscores the importance of commitment and the intended permanence of the marital bond, urging careful consideration of this covenant.
- **Engage with challenging teachings:** Like Jesus, believers should not shy away from difficult or controversial topics but seek to understand and apply them thoughtfully and prayerfully in their lives.