

YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO HANNAH

by Christine Ferguson



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**CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS
EDUCATIONAL SERIES**

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Parable: The Shrewd Manager

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SYNOPSIS: An employee blows her expense account on Gucci bags and fine chocolate. When her boss fires her, she spends her last day reducing the debts of some desperate clients and gifting them with her purchases.

BIBLE VERSES: Luke 16:1-12

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male, 4 either)

HANNAH STEWARD (f) Free-spending employee.
 JONESIE (f/m)..... Hannah's assistant.
 MR. COPIOUS (m)..... The owner of Copious Industries.
 CLIENT 1 (m/f) Owes \$500,000.
 CLIENT 2 (m/f) Overdue on payments.
 CLIENT 3 (m/f) Applying for a loan.

DURATION: 10 minutes.

SETTING: An office.

TIME: Present.

SET

Place a desk and chair at center stage. Pile (empty) boxes of various sizes all around the desk. The boxes should be marked with expensive contents, such as "Caviar," "Finest Wine," "Swiss Chocolate," "Cuban Cigars," etc.

COSTUMES

Work attire for MR. COPIOUS, HANNAH, and JONESIE. CLIENTS 1-3 may dress more casually.

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PROPS

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Cordless or cell phone
- ☐ Pen
- ☐ Boxes as described above

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Parables are earthly stories intended to reveal a heavenly meaning. They are by nature stories that people could relate to and which would inspire questions and discussion, thus providing the opportunity for revelation of the truth. We have brought these parables into present time where the listener can relate and once again ask questions, which will reveal the true meaning.

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PARABLE: Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ²So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ ³“The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg—⁴I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ ⁵“So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶“‘Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ ⁷“Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ “‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’ ⁸“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹⁰“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? (Luke 16:1-12)



AT START: *HANNAH lounges at her desk, telephone in hand. JONESIE enters carrying a clipboard and takes center stage.*

JONESIE: *(Addresses audience.)* I work in a modern office building downtown, at the headquarters of Copious Industries. The owner, Mr. Copious, is a fair man. He treats his employees well; I can't complain. I like to read my Bible on my lunch break, and sometimes we have good discussions. I'd been reading Jesus' parables when I got stuck. Luke 16:1-12, the Parable of the Shrewd Manager—or the Unjust Steward, according to some versions—just didn't make sense to me. *(Reads the parable from Luke 16, stopping at verse 9.)* Why was the dishonest manager commended? I didn't understand. But then something happened at work that made me stop and think. Here—I'll show you what happened. *(Nods toward HANNAH.)* It involved my supervisor, Miss Hannah Steward.

HANNAH: *(Talking on the phone.)* Yes, two Gucci handbags, one in black and one in beige. And the luggage set—Louis Vuitton will do nicely. The leopard print shoes—size 8 1/2—Prada, of course. You know what they say, “The devil wears Prada”—ha ha! Put it on my expense account—that's Hannah Steward at Copious Industries. That's all. *(Hangs up.)*

JONESIE: *(Aghast. Walks toward the desk while HANNAH is on the phone.)* Hannah, what are you doing?

HANNAH: Jonesie! *(Points to a small box of chocolates.)* You've got to try the chocolate-covered kumquats. They're marvelous!

JONESIE: *(Motioning toward all the boxes.)* But, all this stuff... surely you didn't charge this to the company.

HANNAH: Why not? I've got a generous expense account, and they never check it. *(Picks up a box of cigars.)* Here, have a cigar!

JONESIE: I don't smoke, and neither do you!

HANNAH: *(Sniffs the box.)* But Jonesie, I like the way they smell. They smell expensive.

JONESIE: Yeah, right. All this stuff is expensive! You're never going to get away with this! Your expense account is for Copious Industries business only, not for your personal use!

HANNAH: Well, Mr. Copious is stinkin' rich, and as for my expense account—they never check.

JONESIE shakes her head.

HANNAH: *(Sing-songy.)* They never, never check, they never check—

MR. COPIOUS has entered, quietly sneaking up behind HANNAH as she speaks.

MR. COPIOUS: Miss Steward!

HANNAH: *(Startled, stands up and turns to face MR. COPIOUS.)* Mr. Copious!

MR. COPIOUS: *(Irate.)* We certainly do check these things, and you are in a heap of trouble!

HANNAH: But I... I just thought—

MR. COPIOUS: You thought? You thought? You just thought about yourself and took advantage of my generosity. *(Looking around, motioning to all the boxes.)* You have until the end of the day to clean out this office, and don't bother coming back tomorrow. You're fired! *(Angrily stomps offstage.)*

HANNAH: *(Deflated.)* Whew!

JONESIE: *(Shakes her head.)* Too bad, Hannah. What shall I do about the clients waiting to see you? Send them home?

HANNAH: *(Purposefully sits back down at her desk.)* No, no. I've got until the end of the day. *(Raises her arm, motioning for them to enter.)* Send them in.

JONESIE goes offstage and comes back with CLIENT 1.

HANNAH: *(Motions towards CLIENT 1.)* Come quickly. How much do you owe on your account?

JONESIE hands HANNAH the clipboard.

CLIENT 1: Currently it's five hundred thousand.

HANNAH: *(Picks up the pen and crosses something out on the clipboard.)* Let's make that twenty-five. And here—take this. *(Gives CLIENT 1 one of the boxes.)*

CLIENT 1: (*Pleasantly surprised.*) Well, thank you, Miss Steward! Good doing business with you! (*Shakes HANNAH'S hand.*) Come see me in my office sometime!

CLIENT 1 leaves with JONESIE, JONESIE re-enters with CLIENT 2.

HANNAH: (*Looking at clipboard.*) I see here that you're overdue on your payments.

CLIENT 2: Yes, it's been a rough year, and—

HANNAH: No problem. (*Crosses out something on the clipboard.*) Let's cancel the late fees and reduce your invoice by twenty percent. How's that? (*Hands CLIENT 2 one of the boxes.*) Enjoy your weekend.

CLIENT 2: (*Taking the box.*) Gee, thanks, Miss Steward! I owe you a steak dinner! I mean it!

MR. COPIOUS enters unbeknownst to JONESIE and HANNAH and stands quietly at the rear of the stage, arms folded. CLIENT 2 leaves with JONESIE, who re-enters with CLIENT 3.

CLIENT 3: How do you do, Miss Steward? I understand you offer loans at twelve percent interest, and I'd like—

HANNAH: How would you like eight percent and a free gift? (*Hands CLIENT 3 a box.*)

CLIENT 3: I'd like it! Very much! How would you like a weekend cruise on my yacht?

HANNAH: (*Stands up.*) Gee, thanks! I could use some friends.

CLIENT 3 exits. HANNAH hands the clipboard to JONESIE.

HANNAH: Well, that's that, Jonesie. My work here is done.

JONESIE: Good luck, Hannah!

HANNAH exits as MR. COPIOUS comes forward. JONESIE notices him.

JONESIE: Mr. Copious! I guess you saw what just went on.

MR. COPIOUS: Indeed I did.

JONESIE: Shall I call the clients back and collect everything they owe you?

MR. COPIOUS: (*Shakes his head.*) No, no. That would make me look like a fool. And I'd rather have the business than not. (*Starts to chuckle.*) But you know, you've got to hand it to Hannah!

JONESIE: What do you mean?

Mr. COPIOUS: She was in a bad position—very bad. She lost her job and wasn't likely to get hired anywhere else if word of her dishonesty got out. So she did favors for our clients—big favors they're not likely to forget when she goes looking for a job. (*Shakes his head.*) That chick is shrewd—very shrewd. Yeah, you've got to hand it to Hannah!

MR. COPIOUS exits, nodding his head. JONESIE takes center stage.

JONESIE: Well, as you can imagine, I didn't understand Mr. Copious's reaction. Not at all, until I started thinking about the Parable of the Shrewd Manager. That man, like Hannah, was entrusted with great resources that were not his own, and he used them selfishly. When he lost his job, he used those same resources to pave his way back when he re-entered the job market.

In a larger sense, we are all entrusted with great resources that are not our own. Everything we have—our time, our money, our abilities—is given to us by God. How we use those resources matters for eternity. Our work on this earth will end someday, and there will be a day of reckoning. Listen to the rest of the parable: (*Reads Luke 16:10-12.*)

Both Hannah and the shrewd manager were heaping up wealth for themselves, not for their masters. When they knew they were going to lose their positions and be cast out into the cold, cruel world, they started handing out money left and right, trying to save their skin. Money talks!

So, what does our money say about us? Are we self-serving, using our resources selfishly, heaping up wealth in homage to the god of money? Or are we using our resources, given by God, to honor him and further his kingdom?

The unjust steward was commended for his shrewdness in spreading the wealth around for his own benefit, so that he would be welcome in society. How much more should we faithfully spread our wealth around in this life, wealth that has been entrusted to us temporarily, so we will be welcome in the kingdom of God!

Jesus said that “if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (*Luke 16:12*) and “if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” (*Luke 16:11*).

Hannah was handed riches that she misused until she shrewdly spread them around. Yes, you’ve got to hand it to Hannah. She was shrewd in the ways of the world.

I don’t know about you, but when my Master hands me riches, I want to use them for his glory. I don’t want to be like Hannah. Sure, in a way, you’ve got to hand it to Hannah. But I’d rather be handed the keys... to the kingdom.

THE END



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