



[Jesus said,] "No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other....You cannot serve God and mammon."

LUKE 16:13

STUNNINGART/SHUTTERSTOCK

## God or Mammon?

**J**esus tells a story that might sound confusing to us because it reflects economic practices of his time, not ours. His original audience likely recognized the situation as one that was familiar to them. In the story, an employee fails to oversee and enhance the material holdings of his employer. However, when it came to getting what he could for himself from the employer's assets, he shows remarkable ability. One might say: Good for him! Even the employer thought the employee's actions showed resourcefulness.

Jesus does not applaud the specifics of the man's behavior, acceptable or not, as the case may have been. Rather, he notes that the man used whatever was available to him to ensure his own comfort in the future. Jesus then states that the ingenuity of such a man is more noteworthy than that of children of light. What a condemnation!

Jesus goes on to condemn mammon. Just what is that? It is too easy to say that mammon is money, though money is part of it. A good definition is "the greedy pursuit of gain." This could be any kind of gain over others when we make that gain the primary value in our lives. The story shows that the employee was amazingly industrious in his pursuit. In comparison, the children of light (you and me?) too often fail to demonstrate comparable industry in pursuing the true wealth of which Jesus spoke. Once again, a choice is placed before us: God or mammon?

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### FOR Reflection

- ★ *What is the driving pursuit in your life? Is it worthy of you?*
- ★ *How committed are you to religious pursuits?*

