

Luke 16:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Analysis

Jesus states a principle: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' This maxim establishes that character, not circumstances, determines behavior. Faithfulness in small matters (ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ, en elachistō) proves faithfulness in large matters (ἐν πολλῷ, en pollō). Conversely, injustice in small things reveals character that will fail in greater responsibilities. Jesus applies this to money management—how you handle earthly wealth reveals how you'd handle spiritual riches. God tests us with little to determine fitness for much. Faithfulness isn't situational but essential—it characterizes the person, not merely specific actions.

Historical Context

This principle underlies God's economy of stewardship. Biblical examples abound: Joseph's faithfulness in small duties led to prime ministership (Genesis 39-41); David's faithful shepherding prepared him for kingship (1 Samuel 16-17); the parable of talents rewards faithfulness in proportion to responsibility (Matthew 25:14-30). Jesus Himself demonstrated faithfulness in obscurity for thirty years before three years of public ministry. The teaching challenges modern fixation on major opportunities while neglecting present responsibilities. Ambition for greater roles without faithfulness in current ones reveals character flaws. God promotes those proven faithful in small things.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this principle challenge the mindset that small tasks aren't worth full effort?
2. What 'small things' in your life might God be using to test and develop character for larger responsibilities?
3. How should churches apply this principle in identifying and developing leaders?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------------------|
| ὁ | πιστός | ἐν | ἐλαχίστῳ | καὶ | ἐν | πολλῷ |
| G3588 | He that is faithful | in | that which is least | also | in | much |
| | G4103 | G1722 | G1646 | G2532 | G1722 | G4183 |
| πιστός | ἐστίν | καὶ | ὁ | ἐν | ἐλαχίστῳ | ἄδικός |
| He that is faithful | is | also | G3588 | in | that which is least | he that is unjust |
| G4103 | G2076 | G2532 | | G1722 | G1646 | G94 |
| καὶ | ἐν | πολλῷ | ἄδικός | ἐστίν | | |
| also | in | much | he that is unjust | is | | |
| G2532 | G1722 | G4183 | G94 | G2076 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 25:21 (Faith): His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Luke 19:17 (Faith): And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Matthew 25:23 (Faith): His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Hebrews 3:2 (Faith): Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

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