

Luke 6 (38) – A Wise Investment Strategy

In the course of our lives, in one area or another, or many, or just in general, we find ourselves on a road. We are travelling that road, and we want to improve our condition, our position. We want to move forward. We want to get ahead. We might start out struggling. We want to get to the place where we are stable. When we get to that place, we want to move on to being successful. And if we reach that place, where we aren't struggling anymore, and we are more than merely stable, but we are successful, then we start to think about being significant. We want to do something that really makes a difference. Going from struggling, to stable, to successful, to significant. This is the lifepath that most people are travelling on. We want to be a blessing.

Now, what if I told you that Jesus Christ has a plan for you to do just that? What if I told you that Jesus wants to teach you an investment strategy for your personal growth and personal ministry? Because he does, and you find it right here in our text. But it isn't what it sounds like at first.

Vs.38 is often used as a motivational tool. The idea is that if you give your money to a worthy cause, then God will make sure that people will give material things back to you. And then that worthy cause is defined by the one making that promise to you. And that worthy cause is the one they are promoting. And then to make it all sound spiritual, you might hear some statement such as "You can't outgive God." Or maybe, "God so loved the world that he gave..."

Well, of course that's true. You can't outgive God. And God gave his son Jesus for our salvation. And giving to gospel centered causes is good and right and necessary and it will bring blessings to you. Amen. But in this text, is Jesus actually teaching you that if you give money and material things, you'll get more money and material things? No, he isn't. He is teaching something much more powerful. And you will do well to find out what it is and how it's done.

In this text, Jesus is indeed making a promise about giving and receiving. But the context of this promise is vitally important. And the context of vs.38 makes it clear that Jesus is not strictly speaking about money or material things. Now, if you look at vs.30, you'll see that it could include money or material things. But the point is not about money. The point is about people. And Jesus is teaching you about a wise investment strategy. How to grow yourself, and help grow others. In other words, how to be blessed, and how to be a blessing. And they are inseparably connected.

We will look at Jesus' investment strategy in three parts. The type of investment, the means of investment, and the return on your investment.

First, the type of investment. When you look at vs.37-42, it reminds you of Matthew 7:1-5. Let's read that. Now, here in Luke, it gives you some extra detail. And now, let's read vs.27-36. Here you see other parts of what we see in Matthew and what we call the Sermon on the Mount. The point is that this is all related. And it is all about people. Jesus is talking about giving godliness, even when you haven't received it. That might seem really hard to do sometimes.

However, this is an investment strategy. And it will pay off. Big time. But this is not some strategy to make God give you more stuff. This is not some way to get God on your side or get God off your back. This is about investing properly in personal relationships. And remember, in Luke 6:38, Jesus makes a promise about a return on your investment. It will grow your godly character. And it will do much more, as we will see in just a few moments.

So, the type of investment Jesus is speaking about is relational, not material.

Now, let's look at the means of investment. What does Jesus say about how you should invest in people, even when you have problems with those people?

In Jesus' investment strategy, what are the means of investment? Vs.27, love. Vs.28, blessing and prayer. Vs.29, patience. Vs.30, giving. Vs.31, the Golden Rule. Vs.32-35, kindness to those who can't or won't reciprocate. Vs.36, mercy. Vs.37, instead of judgmental or condemning, forgiving. This giving of forgiveness, this release from retaliation is a summation of vs.27-37. This is the means of investment in people and relationships that will lead to a great return. Wouldn't you want people to invest in you this way? Yes, especially if you've given or had a hard time with them. This will work!

The type of investment is relational. The means of investment is forgiveness. Now how about the return on your investment?

What does Jesus say about the return you will get on your investment? He says there will indeed be a return. *Give, and it will be given to you.* He guarantees it. It is a promise. And it is abundance. Look at how Jesus describes it. *Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.* This is a powerful picture.

Jesus is describing a situation that took place when a person went to market to get grain. The customer would bring a container, and the seller would fill the container to the top. Then press the grain down and fill some more. Then shake the container so the grain will settle and then fill some more. Then fill the container until it overflows. Then the seller would catch the overflow grain and pour it into the pouch of his robe. Jesus is saying this investment will overflow to your benefit.

And notice what Jesus says about how this works. *For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.* The greater the measure you give the greater the return you get. So, now, let's break this down further, and you'll see just how powerful this promise is.

There are two types of return: you grow your account, and you grow other people.

- You grow your account (if you give, you'll receive – *give, and it will be given to you*)
 - You're giving love, blessing, prayer, patience, kindness, mercy, and forgiveness
 - You're receiving love, blessing, prayer, patience, kindness, mercy, forgiveness
 - If you will help others, others will help you (example, Matthew 5:7 – *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*. If you give mercy when someone may not deserve it, you will receive mercy when you may not deserve it)
 - If you don't, they won't (less likely, unless they know how to invest)
- You grow other people (if you give, they will give – *abundance will be put into your lap*). Your life teaches God's truth, and they respond
 - You can be part of the transformation process in people
 - If you will bring your best, it will bring out their best
 - You are teaching this to your children, one way or another
 - If you don't grow other people, you slow other people

You want to talk about personal growth? Jesus is teaching you how to grow more like him! You want to talk about a significant ministry? This is it! Of course, you can only give what you have, so what do you have? As a Christian, you have received mercy and forgiveness, so you give these. You give to others what you've been given from God. And you can receive more, a great return on your investment. You receive it from God, you give it to others, you receive it again multiplied. If you want to feel your forgiveness then help others to feel their forgiveness. If you need a reserve of mercy, start filling that tank up by being merciful to others. Even if you don't seem to receive something in this life, remember, in Matthew 6:20, Jesus said you *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*. This is a wise investment strategy!

I've messed this up at times, and I'm sure you have, too. So, what do you do now? Start doing the right thing right now. It's time to start investing. To grow, and help others grow, the Jesus way. Amen.