

An orange envelope with the words "Open Invitation" printed in a white, serif font. The envelope is placed on a dark blue folder. A black fountain pen lies diagonally across the folder to the right of the envelope. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured background.

Open Invitation

A Shrewd Awakening

¹ Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So 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— ⁴ I 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. ⁹ I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

Jesus is addressing His disciples

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Two main characters: The Master and the Manager

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How many debtors did he have? "Each one" means "one by one by one"

“Squandering” - the same Greek verb as with the prodigal son

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Manager position - enviable - assumed identity of the Master



Eli ben-Elazar

Strategic Asset Manager | Specialized in Large-Scale Agricultural Debt & Estate Administration and Liquidation | Open to New Opportunities

Experience

- The Master's Estate (Chief Steward, Manager)

Skills

- Strategic Planning (Shrewdness)
- Debt Forgiveness and Negotiation
- Good with a Shovel (Beginner - Prefer office work)

People you may know



The Master (CEO of Everything)



Levi (Exec. Tax Strategy Consultant)



Mara (VP Textile Acquisitions)



Silas (Director of Bulk Commodities)



Debtor #1 (Olive Oil)



Debtor #2 (Wheat)

Manager settles debts, potentially between 20-50% each.

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Master was made to look generous, and is now in a corner.
Was the Master also being unlawful?

Jesus' response: Luke 16:8-9 | The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

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Is shrewdness a bad thing?

“Part of the problem lies in the anti-cerebral bias in the church and the unwillingness, if not inability, of many to conceive of thinking as a kingdom activity. Apparently, to be childlike is to be taken to mean naive, even though Jesus is said, according to Matthew 10:16, to have alerted his disciples to be ‘shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.’”

-Fred Craddock

Matthew 10:16-18

¹⁶ I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

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Luke 16:8-9 The Message

"Now here's a surprise: The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is right—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you'll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior."

Application: The manager used generosity to build relationships.

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So it is with us.

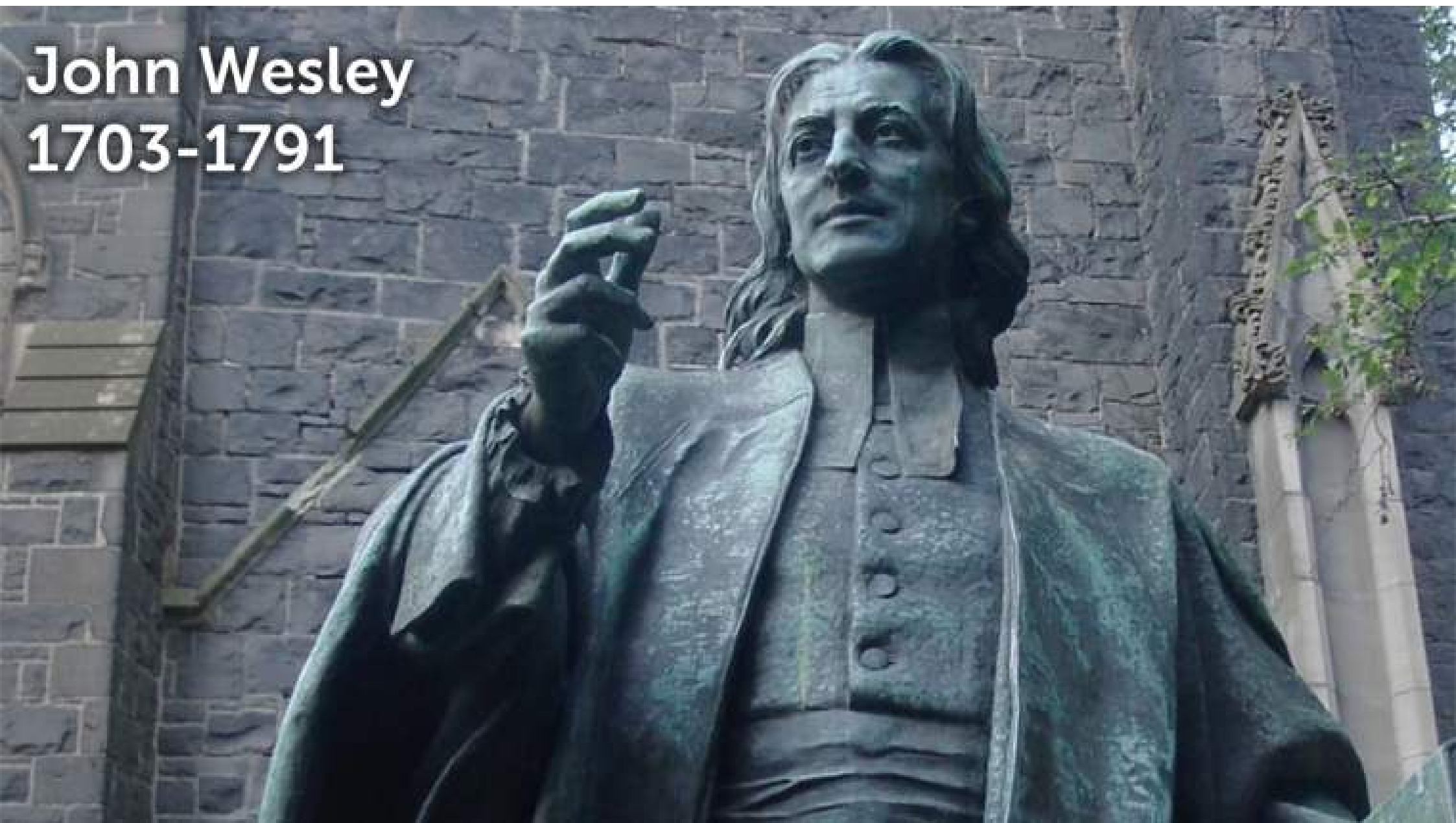
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In the Kingdom, relationships are not a means to an end. They are the goal.

John Wesley
1703-1791







"If you think you're self-made, ask yourself how successful you'd be if you were born on top of a Tibetan mountain in the 13th century."

-Tim Keller

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Deuteronomy 8:17-18

¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

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What would you do with a "two-week notice"?

Closing Reflections

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If you knew today that your “management phase” was coming to an end soon, what is the first Kingdom-focused phone call or invitation you would make?

What relationship do you feel God leading you to invest in? Is there a “worldly” asset (a meal, a skill, or your time) that could be “spent” to foster that relationship?

Consider your influence, possessions, and skills, and thank the Lord for all you have and all you are. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in using those things for His Kingdom.

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