

# The Spirit of Creativity



How can I choose bold faith over paralyzing despair?

An unbreakable spirit is one that believes in what's possible rather than succumbing to despair. We see this spirit in a parable of Jesus about a man who responds to crisis by taking creative action:

Now Jesus was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager [of his estate], and accusations [against this man] were brought to him, that this man was **squandering** his [master's] possessions...The manager [of the estate] said to himself, 'What will I do, since my master is taking the **management** away from me? I am not strong enough to dig [for a living], I am ashamed to beg. **I know what I will do**, so that when I am removed from the management, people [who are my master's debtors] will welcome me into their homes.' So he summoned his master's debtors one by one, and he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He said, 'A hundred measures of [olive] oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' And his master commended the unjust manager [not for his misdeeds, **but] because he had acted shrewdly [by preparing for his future unemployment]; for the sons of this age [the non-believers] are shrewder in relation to their own kind [that is, to**

**the ways of the secular world]** than are the sons of light [the believers]." And I tell you [learn from this], make friends for yourselves [for eternity] by means of the wealth of unrighteousness [that is, use material resources as a way to further the work of God], so that when it runs out, they will welcome you into the eternal dwellings.

– LUKE 16:1, 3-9 AMP

Luke 16:1-9 presents us with an unexpected hero—a dishonest manager who, when faced with crisis, chooses creativity over despair. Traditional interpretations of the Bible stumble over his dishonesty, missing the profound truth that Jesus himself highlighted: this man's faith was manifested in action. Rather than becoming paralyzed by his master's judgment, he boldly creates a future for himself where none seemed possible.

This parable's message, however, must be balanced with the clear biblical teaching that our freedom in Christ and his gracious forgiveness should never become a license for intentional sin or moral compromise (Galatians 5:13, Jude 1:4). God's grace frees us to live boldly by faith, not to live unwisely in sin. However, sometimes our greatest sin may not be the visible transgressions we so carefully avoid, but the invisible prison of unbelief that keeps us from acting on our faith.

# The unbreakable spirit of creativity

When life is beyond our control, we can despair or create. **Despair is passive**, the response of the timid and unbelieving. **Creativity is active**, the response of the bold and believing. Yet many Christians become so focused on maintaining a spotless record that they forget the essence of faith itself—the audacity to believe in possibility when faced with impossibility.

Despair makes us preoccupied with critics, traditionalists, and the constant refrain of "It's never been done that way before." In our fear of failure, judgment, and mistakes, we can choose the passive path of inaction—and in doing so, fail to live by faith at all.

God's message through this parable of the shrewd manager is revolutionary: he would rather see us act boldly in faith, even if that means imperfection, than remain paralyzed by the fear of wrongdoing. The master's praise of the manager teaches us that God's perspective is far more expansive than our rigid religious thinking allows. He sees beyond our missteps to recognize the deeper victory of choosing to believe in possibility.

The spirit of creativity is about daring to act when despair seems more reasonable. It's about moving forward in repentance rather than becoming stuck in judgment. When aligned with God's will, our God-given dreams and divine callings require us to risk failure to pursue faith-filled action. This is not reckless living, but rather the bold obedience of those who trust in his purposes and promises.

## The spirit of creativity in *Jingle Jangle*

Jingle Jangle was the first movie to come to my

mind when I considered the spirit of creativity for our seventh devotional in this "Unbreakable Spirit of Christmas" series. Four lessons from the movie can inspire us to embrace the spirit of creativity:

- 1 Despair can trap us like a prison, making us abandon creativity.** After experiencing betrayal and loss, inventor Jeronicus Jangle lets his creativity fade. His once-vibrant workshop devolves into a pawnshop—a symbol of dreams lost and creativity abandoned. The song "Over and Over" reflects the cyclical nature of his despair, a pattern many of us face amidst setbacks.
- 2 A catalyst of fresh faith can break the cycle of despair.** Transformation comes from Jeronicus's granddaughter, Journey, whose fresh perspective and unwavering belief mirror the boldness of the manager in Luke 16:1-9. While others see impossibility, Journey perceives the "Square Root of Possible." Her faith reignites the creative spirit in Jeronicus.
- 3 Challenges and crises can be opportunities to create.** Journey and Jeronicus, like the shrewd manager in the Bible, learn to think beyond conventional solutions. Their creativity, coupled with faith, transforms crises into opportunities. Both the manager's cunning and Jeronicus's renewed invention arise from believing in possibilities rather than succumbing to despair.
- 4 God's creative spirit can work through those who are willing to believe.** The film ultimately teaches us what the parable of the shrewd manager suggests: God's spirit empowers those who break free from despair, reimagine what's possible, and trust he can work through their imperfect but faith-filled actions.

## How do we apply this today?

The spirit of creativity lives in those who choose bold faith over paralyzing despair. God honors those who refuse to surrender to apparent dead ends and instead create new possibilities through active faith.

This creative boldness, when aligned with God's purposes, transforms not just circumstances but souls. It helps us find purpose in our pain and help others do the same. When possessed by every believer, the spirit of creativity gives God's people the capacity to change people's lives for the better and, as a result, to change the world.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- In what areas might I be trapped in a cycle of despair and inaction?
- Where have I allowed fear of failure or criticism to stifle my God-given creativity?
- What innovative solution might God be prompting me to attempt?

### WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- 1 Choose faith over fear:** In dead ends, choose to reject despair. Like the dishonest manager and Jeroncus Jangle, decide to believe in possibility, which will ignite the spirit of creativity within you.
- 2 Create through crisis:** Develop a spiritual mindset that views challenges as God's invitation for creative faith. Instead of getting bogged down by tradition or past setbacks, use the resources and relationships God has given you to innovate. Embrace the possibilities in crisis, trusting that God rewards those who create amid despair.

- 3 Build for breakthrough:** Align your creativity with God's purposes. True breakthrough occurs when your personal transformation reaches beyond you—impacting your family, your community, and even the rest of the world. This approach ensures your creative courage not only benefits you but also inspires others.



Matthew 13:44-46, where a man sells all he owns to claim a hidden treasure. For Dickens, the treasure is the ability to see life with renewed imagination and hope. To reclaim this, he must take risks—facing the ghosts of his past, forgiving those who hurt him, and daring to see the world differently. His rediscovery of wonder is not a passive experience; it requires him to embrace creativity, confront pain, and reimagine humanity.

### 3. THE OPPORTUNITY OF WONDER: TURNING PAIN INTO PURPOSE

One of the most poignant elements of this movie is how Dickens's pain becomes a wellspring of empathy and inspiration. He comes to understand that the hardships of his life—working in factories as a child and seeing his father imprisoned for debt—deepen his understanding of human suffering. By confronting this pain, Dickens transforms it into a source of strength, creating a story—A Christmas Carol—that speaks to the universal needs of hope, generosity, and redemption.

### 4. THE SPIRIT OF WONDER: RISK AND TRANSFORMATION

The transformation of Charles Dickens in this movie reflects the core message of the spirit of wonder. Just as gratitude allows us to see God's artistry in our lives, Dickens's journey of forgiveness, imagination, and creativity allow him to see his own struggles through a new lens. Wonder often requires taking risks—letting go of bitterness, embracing hope, and daring to imagine a better world. For Dickens, this risk led to the creation of a story that redefined Christmas as a celebration of love and wonder.

### 5. THE LEGACY OF WONDER: A WORLD NEVER THE SAME

The result of Dickens's rediscovery of wonder was nothing short of transformative—not only

for himself, but also for the world. A Christmas Carol had a great influence on how we celebrate Christmas today, turning it into a global holiday of hope, generosity, and joy.

His story reminds us that wonder isn't just about experiencing joy in the moment; it's about allowing that joy to transform us. Through the spirit of wonder, we can see our pain as a foundation for something greater, enabling us to reflect God's presence and power in our lives.

## How can we apply this today?

Reclaiming wonder requires gratitude, courage, and a willingness to see life anew. It turns routine into awe, pain into purpose, and inspires hope that lights the way for others. It is worth fighting and struggling for, and can lead us to a legacy and impact beyond anything we can imagine.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What would I say is the defining quality of my walk with Jesus? If it's not wonder, what needs to change?
- What has made me lose my wonder?
- How can I rediscover my wonder with God today?

### WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Embrace gratitude daily.** Start each day by reflecting on the blessings in your life. Write down specific moments where you've seen God's hand at work. Gratitude opens our eyes to his artistry and helps us rediscover the wonder that's already present.