

Lesson One

Use God's Gifts

The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Matthew 25:14-30

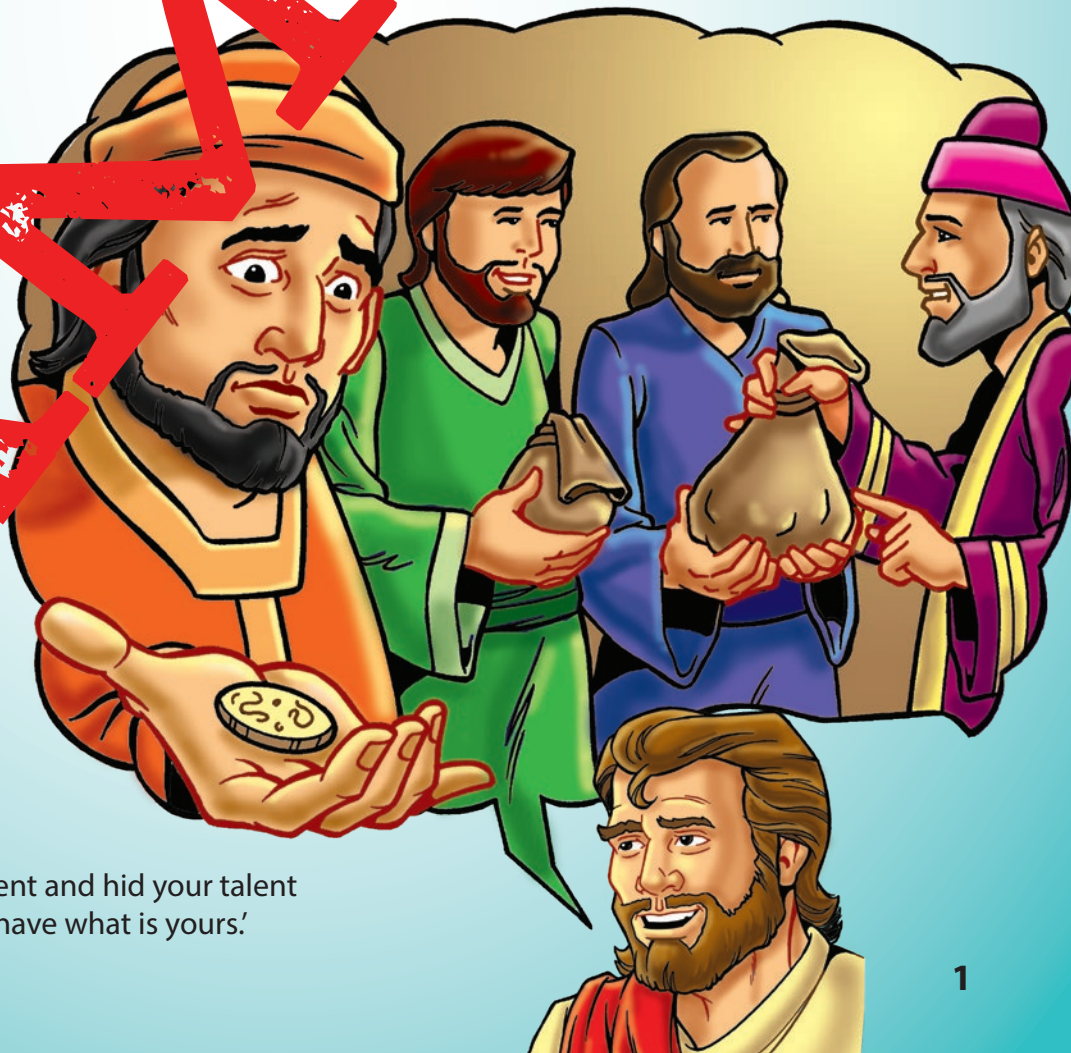
¹⁴ "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵ And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶ Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. ¹⁸ But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. ¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰ "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹ His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' ²³ His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

²⁴ "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I know you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

²⁶ "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you know that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bank, so that at my coming I would have received back with interest.' ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents."

²⁹ "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."



SADDLE UP FOR HIS SERVICE

Have you considered how many opportunities we waste every day? The opportunity to say thank you, the opportunity to encourage, the opportunity to lend a helping hand, the opportunity to share the gospel, or the simple opportunity to give a smile: these opportunities come and go every hour every day. When we look back over our lives, is there anything we will regret more than missed opportunities? Opportunities are gifts from God, special moments when God has given us the chance to both grow and affect the lives of others at the same time.

The Parable of the Talents teaches us more than the responsibility to use our money or abilities wisely. Its lesson encompasses all the gifts with which we have been entrusted. Perhaps this parable could be more appropriately named the Parable of Opportunities, looking at each talent as if it were an opportunity. Each of God's gifts to us is exactly that, an opportunity to do His will and glorify His name.

An Inventory of My Gifts

Possessions

Abilities

Characteristics of a Productive Steward

Characteristic Number One: Takes a proper _____ of his _____ (James 1:17)

Characteristic Number Two: Focuses more on his own _____ and _____ than he does on the _____ and _____ of others (Romans 12:6)

Characteristic Number Three: Realizes his _____ is never _____ (Luke 12:48)

“EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMES DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM THERE IS NO VARIATION OR SHADOW OF TURNING,” JAMES 1:17

1. Why did the man in the parable entrust each servant with a different amount of talents?
 - a. He liked some servants more than others.
 - b. He wanted to see if the servants would become jealous of each other.
 - c. He entrusted each servant with what he knew they were capable of managing.
 - d. He had no reason. It was merely random.
2. Why did the servant who was given one talent not manage his talent as the first two had?
 - a. He was ashamed that he did not have as much as the other two.
 - b. He was afraid that he would fail.
 - c. He was lazy.
 - d. We do not know. He could be a combination of any of the above.
3. What do you believe the man expected from the one talent servant?
 - a. He expected him to have at least ten talents when he returned.
 - b. He expected him to have at least four talents when he returned.
 - c. He expected him to fail.
 - d. He expected him to do his best, which was not necessarily equal to the other two.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Read Luke 10:13-14. What does Jesus' condemnation of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida say about our responsibility to bear fruit according to our blessings?

What do you believe God expects from you?

A Message of Responsibility

Color or trace all of the number 1 squares to form a letter. Fill in all the number 1 blanks of the puzzle with that letter. Continue with numbers two through twenty to discover an important message of responsibility.

1	2	3	4	5	4	3	6	7	8	2	9	10	2	11		
	11	12	13	10	14	15		5	4	7		1	3	2	11	
		10	14	11				9	14	17	17		18	4		
					4	19	12	14	3	4	20					

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1	1	0	0	11	11	0	11	11	0	20	20	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0			
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3	3	10	9	10	10	0	9	19	0	19	19	0	5	0	0	12	12	12	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0			