

# The Three Stewards

Lesson 05 in the series "Parables"

## I. One day when Jesus' disciples asked him about his second coming he told them a parable about three stewards.

Parable = a short story that explains spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships.

Steward = a person who looks after the property, personnel or finances of another; agent; manager.

"... the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip. "The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. "After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' "The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.' "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' Matthew 25:14-27 (NLT)

a. Everything we have belongs to God. We only manage his things for a short time.

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." Psalm 24:1 NLT

"For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Timothy 6:7 (NKJV)

*Life Application:* We need to use God's stuff to do God's will.

"Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)

b. God entrusts each of us with resources and opportunities in proportion to our abilities.

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Luke 12:48 (NIV)

*Life Application:* I must believe God has given me resources, abilities and opportunities.

"A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other... It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have."

1 Corinthians 12:7,11 (NLT)

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must not waste time comparing ourselves to others.

"Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others." Galatians 6:4 (MSG)

c. God rewards faithfulness and punishes laziness.

"Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance.

But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 25:28-30 (NLT)

## II. Our view of God determines whether or not we will be faithful.

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth...”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (NIV)

“A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. But what if the servant is evil and thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 24:45-51 (NLT)

“Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. “O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!” 1 Chronicles 29:12-14 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 10-16-16 • [john@centeringlives.com](mailto:john@centeringlives.com)

## Discussion Questions

1. What can we learn from the following passages about being good managers of God's treasures?
  - Matthew 25:14-30
  - Luke 12:48
  - 1 Timothy 6:6-10
2. What resources, abilities and opportunities has God given you? How can you multiply them for God's glory?
3. What resources, abilities and opportunities has God given your connect group? ...our church? How can we multiply them for God's glory?
4. Compare Deuteronomy 8:17-18 and 1 Chronicles 29:12-14. How does our view of God impact our faithfulness to God and His will?
5. How would you respond to the following statements?

"If God let's me win the lottery I'll start giving to the church."

"God can't use me for anything. I have no special talents or abilities."

"People have been saying, 'Jesus is coming soon!' for 2000 years. It's all a bunch of hype the church uses to scare people."

"Other people are far more qualified than I am. Let them do it."

"It's not fair that he gets more opportunities to sing/teach/lead than I do."
6. Read Matthew 24:45-51. If Jesus came back tomorrow how would he evaluate Christians in America? Why? What changes could we make to become "good and faithful servants" in God's eyes?
7. Discuss the following quotations:

"Men are not equal in talent; but men can be equal in effort." William Barclay

"At the end of your life on earth you will be evaluated and rewarded according to how well you handled what God entrusted to you." Rick Warren

"The world asks, 'What does a man own?' Christ asks, 'How does he use it?'" Andrew Murray

"People go through three conversions: their head, their heart and their pocketbook. Unfortunately, not all at the same time." Martin Luther

"If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life." Billy Graham