

Parable of The Bags of Gold Matthew 25:14-30

God has entrusted each of us with resources to use in the furthering of his kingdom of love. We each have been called to invest the resources we have been given so they can grow and multiply.

Group Discussion. If someone loaned you a million dollars and you had to pay it back in ten years, what would you do with it?

Personal Reflection. In a moment of quiet, ask God's Spirit to show the resources God has entrusted to you for the sake of his kingdom. Thank him for these gifts.

Purpose: To consider the key role trust plays in our willingness to risk investing the resources God has given us for kingdom building. The emphasis is not on how much the master gave to each person. It is important to see what they did with what they were given.

We do not need to fearfully hoard or hide what we have been given. It is important that we not let fear trap us in this way. The results are tragic, as Jesus' parable of the bags of gold demonstrates.

Read **Matthew 25:14-30**.

Discussion:

1. What title might you give this story?
2. The master in this story entrusts the money to his servants based on their individual abilities. No one receives more or less than what he can handle. We know from the story that the master was traveling far away and not taking the money with him. We see these things in **verses 14-15**. We also know, from the remaining verses, that the lord of the servants had unspoken expectations for the money to be there when he returned with interest or a return on his investment.
 - If a servant failed in his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed.
 - God gives us time, gifts, and other resources according to our abilities, and he expects us to invest them wisely until Jesus returns.
3. "A bag of gold is equal to thousands of dollars. In today's currency, a bag of gold would be worth around \$300,000. The other two servants would, therefore, have been entrusted with \$1,500,000 and \$600,000. Use your imagination to put yourself in the story as the first and third servant. What thoughts, feelings, and beliefs would you have experienced if you were entrusted with that much money?
 - The first servant seems to have experienced trust in his master's goodness that allowed him to risk investing his gold.

- The third servant seems to have imagined terrible things about his master and, in fear, felt he needed to hide his gold.
 - Think in terms of the resources God has given us. What have we experienced?
4. As we compare the reactions of the master to the first and second servants (**vv. 19-23**), we see that the master is concerned about his servants' willingness to invest what they have been given without fear. He does not seem to be overly concerned with the amount of money gained.
- The master's identical statements of praise to the first and second servants show what was important was not the total amount earned, but faithfulness in utilizing their gifts and potential.
 - Faithful stewardship in this life will result in being given greater responsibility and stewardship in the life to come.
5. When we look at the statements of the three servants (**vv. 20, 22, 24-25**) we can infer that the first two servants felt secure enough in their relationship with their master to be willing to risk their portions in some business enterprise.
- The NIV, AMP, and ESV versions of the Bible use the words "*at once*" in verse 16. This shows the conscientiousness of the first two servants in executing their responsibilities.
 - The actions of the third servant reveal a very different attitude and relationship.
6. We see in **vv. 16-18** that perhaps their relationships caused two of them to take actions with the expectations of putting the master's money to good use. The third showed no expectation for gain. He dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. Since there were no formal banks in Jesus' day, it was a common practice to bury valuables in the ground.
7. Think about people you have done jobs for. Did your relationship with them have any bearing on your attitude toward the job?
8. The master is like God in that:
- He knows his servants' abilities and gives to them accordingly.
 - He (Jesus) is returning at a time unknown to us and there will be accountability for the resources given (loaned) to us.
 - He expects us to use what he has entrusted to us.
 - God will reward for the work done.
9. God is unlike the master in that he doesn't reap where He does not sow, and He is not like a hard (harsh and demanding, AMP) man.
10. Our relationship with God should affect our attitude toward what we do. He deserves our best because he has given us His best. We should also realize that we have to give an account of what we do with what He has given us. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 4:2**, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

- Paul also writes in **Colossians 3:17**, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - **Colossian 3:23-24**, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”
11. Using one’s God given abilities wisely and productively is a vital aspect of discipleship and will be rewarded with additional opportunities to serve God faithfully and fruitfully (**25:29**).
12. **Verse 30** is a typical description of the terrible suffering in hell and eternal damnation, occurring six times in Matthew and once in Luke (**Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28**).
13. To further his kingdom, God has given the resources of time, talent, treasures (money), skills, abilities, personalities, experiences and so much more. Each of us have gifts and talents that can be used for kingdom building.

Think about It:

How can we faithfully handle the responsibilities God has given us?

Now or Later

Thank God for the resources He has entrusted to you and to others you know.

Keep a journal this week noting the ways God allows you to invest the “gold” he has given you.