

### RESPONSIBILITY

#### Introduction

In this Bible study, you are going to study the parable of the talents. (A talent was a unit of coins worth more than a thousand dollars.) We will look at a man who didn't use the money he was given. Jesus calls this man wicked and lazy.

The present-day use of "talent" as an ability comes from this parable. As you listen to the parable, think about what Jesus might say to you about taking responsibility for your time, money and abilities.

Now, move into groups of 4 and discuss the questionnaire.

1. What would the *Wall Street Journal* call the way the master in the parable treated his servants?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> shrewd	<input type="checkbox"/> fair
<input type="checkbox"/> businesslike	<input type="checkbox"/> unfair
2. Are you more of a saver or a spender?
3. Which of the three servants in this parable can you relate to most easily?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> the one who was given five talents—I've been greatly blessed.
<input type="checkbox"/> the one who was given two talents—I've done okay with what I've had to work with.
<input type="checkbox"/> the one who was given one talent—I always get the short end!

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

<sup>14</sup>"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup>The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup>So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup>But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup>"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

<sup>21</sup>"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>22</sup>"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

<sup>23</sup>"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>24</sup>"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup>So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

<sup>26</sup>"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup>Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

<sup>28</sup>" 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup>And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

Matthew 25:14–30



4. How do you feel when you are given a lot of responsibility?

- nervous—I hope I don't blow it!
- proud—People believe in me!
- overwhelmed—I can't handle it!
- confident—I can handle it!

5. Write three talents you have discovered or which others have said you have. Then assign each talent a number (from the scale below) according to how well you're using that talent right now:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
burying it									fully invested

talent #1: \_\_\_\_\_ usage: \_\_\_\_\_

talent #2: \_\_\_\_\_ usage: \_\_\_\_\_

talent #3: \_\_\_\_\_ usage: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What motivates you to use your time, resources and abilities for God's kingdom?

- fear of the Master
- people's appreciation
- God's approval
- a chance for greater responsibility
- fellowship with the Master
- rewards in the next life
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the way you are "investing" your life?

- I am quite satisfied.
- I would like to make some changes.
- I'm not sure what it means to invest my life.
- I'm not being very responsible in this area.
- I feel like I'm on hold.



8. What are your goals for the future? What are you doing now to get you there?

9. What do you need to do to be a more responsible "servant"?

- have more confidence I can do what is asked of me
- become more aware of my strengths and abilities
- take my responsibilities more seriously
- trust in God to help me
- get more encouragement from others
- Responsible?—I just want to have fun!

10. If the Master returned today, how well would he say you have been using what he gave you?

11. Name one thing you can do this week to prepare for Christ's coming. How can the group support you in prayer?