



PRACTICAL STEWARDSHIP:

**Applying Biblical Principles
to Everyday Life**

LEARNER GUIDE | SESSION 5

Stewarding the Talents Entrusted to Us



SESSION IN A SENTENCE All of us have been given certain talents and God expects us to use them for His glory.

BIBLE BACKGROUND Jesus had resolved to go to Jerusalem with His disciples, knowing that He would lay down His life there on the cross for the sins of the world. As Jesus continued to teach His disciples important truths, He spoke to them in parables (short stories with illustrations from real life). Jesus used a talent, which was a currency in use at this time, as a metaphor to show the importance of being a good manager of the resources that the Master had entrusted to His followers. We shouldn't confuse the biblical term "talent" with the word talent as we use it today (to describe an ability that we have, such as the ability to paint, or the ability to play a musical instrument).

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TODAY God gives many blessings to His people today, and He expects them to be used for His glory. Some of those blessings are spiritual in nature and are called spiritual gifts. They are special manifestations of God's grace in a believer's life and are given after a person becomes a Christian; every believer has at least one spiritual gift. These spiritual gifts are not to be confused with natural talents and abilities we possess and develop over time. Perhaps you know someone who has practiced a sport or developed a skill from an early age. They have spent a long time honing their abilities, but those talents were not given to them as spiritual gifts. They can, however, be used to bring glory to God, just like spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts plus our own talents and abilities are to be managed in such a way that they bring honor to Jesus – we should not waste either kind. In today's Bible passage, Jesus affirmed two people who used their talents wisely (the word talent in the first century was another term for money). A third person who managed his master's money poorly was criticized for not making the most of what had been entrusted to him. The expectations of good stewardship (a biblical term for managing) taught in this parable are still viable expectations for us today. God expects us to use whatever He gives us in a wise, godly way that points people to Jesus.

MATTHEW 25:14-30

¹⁴ "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey. He called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one's ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately ¹⁶ the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. ¹⁷ In the same way the man with two earned two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I've earned five more talents.' ²¹ "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.' ²² "The man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I've earned two more talents.' ²³ "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.' ²⁴ "The man who had received one talent also approached and said, 'Master, I know you. You're a harsh man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering where you haven't scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' ²⁶ "His master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy servant! If you knew that I reap where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered, ²⁷ then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and I would have received my money back with interest when I returned. ²⁸ "'So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ³⁰ And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

POINT 1: GOD ENTRUSTS US WITH

(vv.14-18)

POINT 3:

IS NOT AN OPTION
(vv.24-30)

POINT 2: GOD HOLDS US

(vv.19-23)

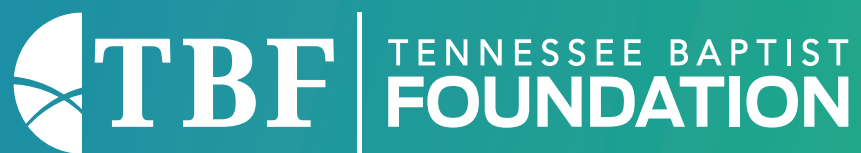
MY NEXT STEPS

1. **What am I doing with my talents?** – Take time each day this week to personally reflect upon how you are putting your talents to work for God. Ask Him to show you if you are using them in a way that they earn more. As He answers your prayers, celebrate with Him in areas that He shows you faithful and make the needed changes where He shows you to be less than faithful.
2. **Acknowledge your need for the Savior** – Jesus used some of the most direct and difficult words in all the New Testament to the servant who did nothing. The result was eternal separation. The Bible says, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). If you identify with the evil and wicked slave and do not want to spend another moment in fear of the Master, take this moment to confess your sins and ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.
3. **Seek wise counsel** – We can all be guilty of overestimating our efforts and outcomes. The counterbalance to this is to ask for an outsider’s perspective. Take time this week to connect with a trusted advisor and ask for honest feedback. Ask the person to evaluate how you are using the talents that God has given you while offering tangible means for improvement.

MY GROUP'S PRAYER REQUESTS



SERMON NOTES



TODAY'S PLANS.
TOMORROW'S IMPACT.

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