

## L 4 ... Making a Difference in This World

[Matthew 25:14-30](#)

How many lives do you have to live? Just one, and you are free to choose how you use it. You can waste it or invest it. You are not here by accident. Before you were born, God had a plan for your life to make a difference in this world ([Jer. 1:5](#), [Eph. 2:10](#)). In this parable of the talents, Jesus reveals **kingdom living is making a difference in this world**.

Jesus is in Jerusalem and has just told His disciples the dazzling temple there will be destroyed, with not one stone left upon another. The disciples ask Him when this will happen, as well as what the sign of His coming and the end of the age, or world, will be ([24:2-3](#)). In the rest of chapter 24, Jesus tells them about the signs of His Second Coming.

He ends this discourse with two parables in [Matthew 25](#), the second of which is the parable of the talents. In this parable Jesus reveals **three** principles for **making a difference in this world**.

### 1. Utilize Your Gifts (25:14-18)

Jesus begins this parable by saying the kingdom of heaven is like a man preparing to go on a journey. He calls together his servants and entrusts them with his possessions ([25:14](#)). The man going on the journey represents God, who owns everything.

That's why in [1 Corinthians 10:26](#), Paul quotes what truth from [Psalm 24:1a-b](#)?

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God owns everything in this world, including everything we possess. It may be land, a business, money, intellect, abilities, or whatever. Everything belongs to God and is just entrusted to us for a short period of time.

Therefore, of what does [1 Timothy 6:7](#) remind us?

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The man going on a journey gives one of his servants *five talents*, another *two*, and the third only *one*. He gives to each according to his *ability* ([25:15](#)). As we learned in the last lesson, a talent was a large sum of money—6,000 denarii, or about 19 years' wages for the common laborer.

The first two servants **are eager to serve** their master and double what was given to them ([25:16-17](#)). However, what does the third servant do with his one talent ([25:18](#))?

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This parable reveals that some of God's servants are given greater responsibilities than others. Some live longer, some have more abilities, but God expects all to use what He has given them.

The first two servants felt the responsibility of what was entrusted to them. However, the third servant, who received only one talent, chose to hide his money rather than use it to increase His master's possessions. We are all on this earth with the same general purpose. God has entrusted us with certain gifts, or spiritual endowments ([1 Pet. 4:10](#)), with which we are to increase His kingdom, which means reaching people. In [Matthew 4:19b](#), how does Jesus express His expectation of everyone who follows Him?

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We don't follow Jesus to make God or His followers rich, but to increase the value of His kingdom with people. God wants us to use our abilities and gifts to reach men, women, boys, and girls for Christ. Therefore, to make a difference in this world, **utilize your gifts** and...

## 2. Visualize Accounting Day (25:19-23)

Jesus says, *After a long time* the master of the servants returns and calls each to give an account of how his money was used. The servant who was entrusted with *five talents* brings *five talents* more ([25:19-20](#)). Look at what his lord says to him: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord* ([25:21](#)). The second servant, who received only *two talents*, brings back four talents. His lord gives him the same commendation ([25:22-23](#)). Although he was entrusted with less than half as much as the first, the second servant was equally faithful. He wasn't jealous of the one given much more and didn't make excuses. You see, it's not how much we have that determines our faithfulness.

How does Jesus express this truth in [Luke 16:10a-b](#)?

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If we are not faithful with the small things God entrusts to us, we would not be faithful if God gave us much more. If you don't give back to God and tithe when you don't have much money, you wouldn't do so if God blessed you with the riches of Solomon or Bill Gates. If you don't use your influence at school, work, civic organizations, etc. for Christ, you wouldn't do it if you were the most influential, powerful person on earth. It's important to notice the man who returned with four talents was given the very same commendation and reward as the man who brought back ten. That's because we are not held accountable for the amount of the return but for being faithful with what God has entrusted us.

God will not judge me by the size of the church I pastor, the number of Bible studies I have written, or how many people I win to Christ. He will judge me by how faithful I have been to use the gifts He has given me.

Quoting from [Psalm 62:12](#) and [Proverbs 24:12](#), what does Paul write in [Romans 2:6](#) about accounting day?

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**Our reliability will be judged, not our ability.** Our *works* are what we do with the gifts God has given us. To make a difference in this world, **utilize your gifts, visualize accounting day**, and...

### 3. Realize Doing Nothing Is Wickedness (25:24-30)

The third servant who received only *one talent* comes forward and says his master is a *hard man*, which means difficult to please. He also says his master reaps crops he didn't sow and gathers where he didn't plant.

Therefore, the servant says he was afraid and hid his master's talent in the ground. The third servant then offers his one talent back to his master ([25:24-25](#)). The master responds with a scathing rebuke.

What does he call his servant ([25:26b](#))?

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As mentioned in the last lesson, the word translated **wicked** (**ponēros**, pon-ay-ros´) is the strongest word used in the Bible to describe sin. It includes evil, degeneracy, and viciousness. It is so strong Jesus seldom used it. He didn't call the women caught in adultery *wicked*. He didn't call the Romans soldiers who nailed Him to the cross *wicked*. However, He calls this third servant *wicked*.

Why? Because by his own admission, the third servant knew what was expected of him and chose not to do it.

How does [James 4:17](#) describe this?

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This is called the "**sin of omission.**" You don't have to be a murderer, rapist, drug dealer, prostitute, or thief to be *wicked*. You can come all dressed up to worship services every Sunday, listen to a biblical sermon, and still be sinful. This is because it is sin to know what God wants you to do with your time, talent, or treasure, and then refuse to do it.

The master also calls the third servant *slothful*, or lazy ([25:26b](#)). Like this *wicked* servant, lazy people are always good at giving excuses. Using the third servant's own words, the master says, *thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed* ([25:26c](#)).

That should have motivated the servant to invest the talent. If the servant had just a little faithfulness, the master says he would have invested his money with the bankers, and at least made some *usury*, or interest. Since the third servant did nothing, the master orders his talent be taken from him and given to the

one who has ten talents ([25:27-28](#)). Then, Jesus gives us the main point of this parable: *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath* ([25:29](#)).

Then, Jesus says the wicked servant was cast into *outer darkness*, where *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* ([25:30](#)), which refers to the place of unrelieved agony the Bible calls “hell.” This judgment results from the third servant being *wicked* because he did nothing. He was never really committed to his *lord*, or master. Jesus says not everyone who calls Him *Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*” ([Mt 7:21a-b](#)).

Then, who does He say will enter ([7:21c](#))?

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True believers are *good and faithful* servants who do God’s will. When Christ returns, will your life prove to have been a good investment for God’s kingdom? This parable reveals that if you are truly committed to Christ, you will use your abilities, assets, and aspirations to make a difference in this world for Him.

To make a difference in this world,

**UTILIZE YOUR GIFTS,**

**VISUALIZE ACCOUNTING DAY, AND**

**REALIZE DOING NOTHING IS WICKEDNESS.**