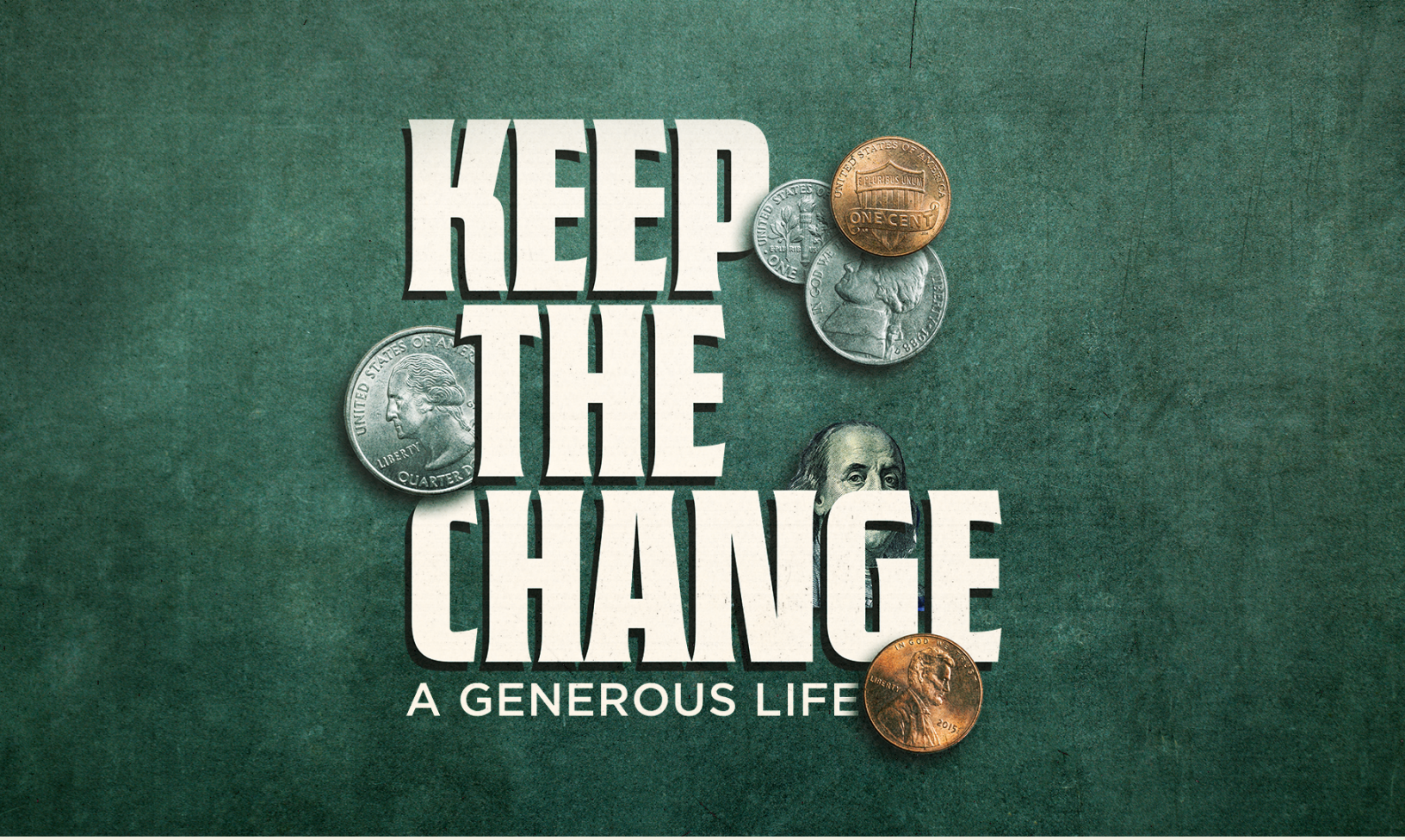


WEEK THREE · PASTOR JAY TEAL

What Are You Doing With What God Gave You?

Matthew 25:14–30

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL · SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Compassion CHURCH

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Faithful With What He Entrusted

DAY 1 Everything You Have Belongs to God

READING · MATTHEW 25:14–15

Jesus tells of a man going on a journey who “called his servants and entrusted to them his property” (Matthew 25:14, ESV). The property stayed his. The servants only cared for it while he was away. That is the posture of a steward. You may say you earned what you have, but who gave you the ability to work, the breath in your lungs, your very life? Dig back far enough and you find that you own nothing. Your money, your time, your abilities and even your children come from God, and you are called to steward them well. A steward does not just keep things the same; he helps them grow and find their purpose. Today, stop calling it yours and honor the One who gave it.

REFLECTION

Which part of your life do you most quickly call yours: your money, your time, your talent or your gifting? What would change if you saw it as God's?

TRY THIS WEEK

Write down three things you think of as yours. Beside each one, write who gave it to you, then spend five minutes thanking God and handing each one back to Him.

DAY 2 Faithful With What You Already Have

READING · MATTHEW 25:15–17

The master gave five talents to one servant, two to another and one to another, “to each according to his ability” (Matthew 25:15, ESV). A talent was not a skill. It was a large sum of money, so even the servant with one had been trusted with a great deal. The master gave according to each one's ability to steward it. We often pray, God, give me more. The better question is, God, what am I doing with what You have already given me? It is easy to think you would be more generous if you had more, but generosity is attached to the heart, not to an amount. Before you ask for more today, be faithful with what is already in your hands.

REFLECTION

Where have you told yourself you would give, serve or step up once you had more money, more time or more experience?

TRY THIS WEEK

Choose one resource you already have, such as an hour, a skill or a set amount of money, and use it this week to bless one person without waiting for more.

DAY 3 Don't Bury What God Entrusted

READING · MATTHEW 25:18; MATTHEW 25:24–25

While the first two servants went to work, the third "went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money" (Matthew 25:18, ESV). When the master returned, the servant explained why: "I was afraid" (Matthew 25:25, ESV). He did not live a wild or immoral life. He simply did nothing, and his inactivity was disobedience driven by fear. We do the same when we bury our gifts because we feel unqualified, hold back generosity because we fear there won't be enough, or wait for a perfect time that never comes. The enemy will try to make you afraid to use your strengths, because as long as you are inactive, you pose no threat to him. A pack of seeds shut away in a kitchen drawer, every seed accounted for, was made for more than a safe place. Dig it up today.

REFLECTION

What have you buried because you were afraid, and what fear sits underneath it?

TRY THIS WEEK

Name one thing you have buried. Before the week ends, take one small step to put it to work, and tell one trusted person what you did.

DAY 4 Faithfulness Matters More Than Results

READING · MATTHEW 25:19–23

After a long time the master came back and settled accounts. The servant with five talents brought back ten. The servant with two brought back four. Yet both heard the same words: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21, ESV). The master did not say good and successful, or good and talented. The amount did not dictate the reward; faithfulness did. That frees you from comparison, which is exhausting and steals your joy. God does not measure your faithfulness by comparing your results with someone else's. We do that, not God. He is not asking you to become somebody else. He is asking you to be faithful with what He has given you. Today, stop measuring and start being faithful.

REFLECTION

Whose gifts or results do you tend to measure yourself against, and how has that comparison affected your joy or your faithfulness?

TRY THIS WEEK

Each time you catch yourself comparing this week, stop and name one thing God has entrusted to you. Aim to do this at least three times.

DAY 5 Live for Well Done

READING · MATTHEW 25:26–30

The master's words to the third servant are hard to hear. He called him “wicked and slothful” (Matthew 25:26, ESV) and said he ought to have invested the money. The master is a picture of the Lord, and we are the servants. Every one of us will have this conversation. One day you will stand before the Lord, and He will not look at your potential. He will ask what you did with your time, your resources, your gifts and your opportunities. Like a rental car you take care of because you must return it, what you hold is going back to its owner. The goal is not to reach the end of life with everything still in its original package, but to have stewarded it all. Live today for two words: well done.

REFLECTION

If you stood before the Lord today, what would you want to tell Him you did with what He entrusted to you?

TRY THIS WEEK

Spend ten minutes asking God to check your heart and your motives. Then write down one thing you will do this week to put your time, money or gifts to work.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, everything I have belongs to You. Forgive me for the things I have buried out of fear. Check my heart and my motives, and show me what You would have me do with what You have entrusted to me. Help me be faithful with what is in my hands, whether one, two or five, so that one day I may hear You say, well done.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

What are you doing with what God gave you?

OPENING PRAYER & ICE BREAKER

> *Open your time together in prayer, asking God to show each person what He has entrusted to them and how to steward it well.*

Ice Breaker: Have you ever rented or borrowed something, like a car, a tool or a friend's house, and taken extra care with it? What was it, and how did you treat it differently?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Pastor Jay walked through the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30, where a master entrusts his property to three servants and returns to settle accounts. He explored what it means to steward what God has placed in our hands, from money to time to gifts. We see that God owns it all, expects faithfulness rather than excuses, and will one day ask what we did with what He entrusted to us.

KEY SCRIPTURE · MATTHEW 25:21

Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (ESV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1 · God Owns It All but Entrusts Us With Something

1. Read Matthew 25:14–30 together. What words or phrases stand out as the master entrusts his property, leaves, and then returns to settle accounts?
2. A gift comes with no strings attached, but something entrusted comes back to its owner, the way children left with a babysitter come home again. How does seeing your money, time and abilities as entrusted rather than given change the way you handle them?
3. Pastor Jay said, “stewardship begins when ownership dies.” We tend to call things ours: my talent, my money, my time. Which of these is hardest for you to hand back to God, and what would it look like this week?

4. Instead of praying for more, the better question is what we are doing with what God has already given. Generosity is attached to the heart, not to an amount. Where have you told yourself you would be generous once you had more?

Section 2 · God Expects Faithfulness, Not Excuses

1. If we always have an excuse, we can never correct anything, and when it is always someone else's fault, we play the victim and hand them the power. What excuse do you reach for most often, and what would change if you let it go?
2. The first two servants went to work. The third only dug a hole, driven by fear rather than the possibility of what could be. Without sharing more than you are comfortable with, what has fear kept you from putting to work?
3. We bury things for different reasons: gifts because we feel unqualified, generosity because we fear there won't be enough, opportunities because we wait for the perfect time, influence because we don't want to stand out. Which of these do you recognize in yourself, and why?
4. The third servant's problem was not an immoral life but inactivity, and his inactivity was disobedience. As long as you are inactive, you pose no threat to the enemy, and you can be a good person all day and still pose none. Where has being good become a reason to stay inactive with what God has given you?
5. It is easy to look at someone with five talents and ask why God didn't do that for you. Stewardship is not about comparison but faithfulness. Where does comparison wear you out or steal your joy, and what would faithfulness look like there instead?

Section 3 · One Day We Will Give an Account

1. The servant who brought back ten and the servant who brought back four heard the same words: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21, ESV). Not successful, not talented, but faithful. What does it mean for you that faithfulness, not the amount, dictated the reward?
2. We can't confuse potential with performance. One day the Lord will not look at your potential; He will ask what you did with your time, resources, gifts and opportunities. Where are you leaning on potential instead of putting something to work?
3. You take care of a rental car because you know you have to bring it back. How would your week look different if you remembered that what you hold will be returned to its owner?
4. Pastor Jay said, "When you want more, you better be prepared for more." More carries more weight and more responsibility. Before you ask God for more, what motives might He want to check in your heart?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ You own nothing. Everything you have, from your breath to your ability to work, comes from God.
- ✓ A gift has no strings attached, but what is entrusted comes back to its owner.
- ✓ Generosity is attached to the heart, not to an amount. More money will never cure a scarcity mindset.
- ✓ God expects faithfulness, not excuses. If you always have an excuse, you can never correct anything.
- ✓ One of the greatest threats to your stewardship is not crazy sin but inactivity, often driven by fear.
- ✓ Stewardship is not about comparison. God asks you to be faithful with what He has already given you.
- ✓ Faithfulness, not the size of the result, determined the master's reward.
- ✓ One day you will give an account for how you stewarded what God entrusted to you.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one or more to put into practice before your group meets again:

Option 1 Recognize God's Ownership

Write down three things you call yours, such as your money, your time or an ability. Pray over each one this week and tell God it belongs to Him.

Option 2 Release What You Buried

Name one gift, opportunity or act of generosity you have held back out of fear. Take one step to put it to work before your group meets again.

Option 3 Remember the Account

Each evening this week, take five minutes to ask yourself what you did that day with the time, money and gifts God entrusted to you. Write down one thing you want to steward better tomorrow.

Option 4 Check Your Motives

Before you ask God for more this week, spend five minutes asking Him why you want it and whether you are stewarding well what you already have.

PERSONAL JOURNALING

- What has God entrusted to me that I have been treating as mine?
- Where have I buried something because I was afraid?
- Why do I want more, and am I stewarding well what I already have?
- What am I doing with what God has already given me?

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

- Who will you tell about the one thing you plan to put to work this week, and when will you check in with them?
- What excuse are you asking someone to call out when they hear you use it?

CLOSING PRAYER FOCUS

- That each person would recognize that everything they have belongs to God.
- Give the courage to dig up what fear has buried and put it to work.
- That God would search each heart and check the motives behind asking for more.
- That each person would live faithfully with what they have been given and one day hear the words, well done.

LEADER NOTES

- In the parable, a talent is not a skill but a large sum of money, so the servant who received one talent was still trusted with a great deal.
- The message closed by naming the first step to stewarding well: knowing who the master is and accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. Be ready to pray with anyone who wants to take that step or rededicate their life.

> *"Stewardship begins when ownership dies because we've got to get to a place that we realize we own nothing.*
>
> PASTOR JAY

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