

Message.

Faithful stewardship is the natural response of a heart transformed by the gospel, recognizing that every resource—whether time, money, or talent—is a gift of grace entrusted to us by the King. Because money represents "stored time" or labor, how these resources are deployed reveals whether a person truly knows and values the Master's character. Followers of Jesus are called to live in the tension of the "already and not yet," shifting their focus from personal comfort toward the expansion of God's kingdom. The King entrusts us with grace to invest what He has given us until He returns. Ultimately, the Master evaluates success not by the volume of the return, but by the consistency and joy found in maximizing those entrusted gifts for His eternal glory.

Prayer.

Heavenly Father,
You deserve faithful servants. Guide me to faithfully steward the grace you have entrusted to us, investing our time and resources for your eternal glory as we watch for your return.
Amen.

Engage.

Observation of the Master's Trust:

In verse 15, the Master distributes talents "each according to his ability" before going on a journey. What does this specific detail suggest about the Master's knowledge of his servants and his expectations for them?

The Nature of the Investment:

Compare the actions of the first two servants (vv. 16–17) with the third servant (v. 18). Beyond the financial outcome, what do their physical actions—"went at once" versus "dug in the ground"—reveal about their respective attitudes toward the Master's departure?

A Question of Character:

Look closely at the third servant's excuse in verses 24–25. He describes the Master as a "hard man." How does this perception of the Master's character directly lead to the servant's fear and eventual inactivity?

The Meaning of the Reward:

In verses 21 and 23, the Master gives the exact same commendation to both the servant with five talents and the servant with two. What does this tell us about what the Master truly values and what it means to "enter into the joy of your master"?

The Weight of Accountability:

Verse 19 mentions that the Master returned "after a long time" to settle accounts. How does the reality of a final accounting change the way we view our current daily responsibilities and the things we consider "ours"?

The Warning of the "Worthless" Servant:

In the final verses (26–30), the Master calls the third servant "wicked and slothful" not for doing something evil, but for doing *nothing*. Based on the text, why is passive preservation considered a rejection of the Master's mission?

Day 1. The "Gift of the Day" (Focus: Matthew 25:14-15)

Concept: Everything we have is a gift from God, and He trusts us with it.

- **Object Lesson:** Give each child a small "treasure box" (or an envelope) containing 24 pennies or LEGO bricks. Explain that each piece represents one hour of the day God has given them.
- **The Activity:** Ask them to set aside 8–10 pieces for sleep. Then, ask them to move pieces around for school, play, and chores.
- **Discussion:**
 - If God gave you these 24 "hours" as a gift this morning, who do they actually belong to?
 - The Master in the story gave different amounts to different people. Does it matter who has more, or does it matter what we do with what we have?
- **Scripture:** *"To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability."* (Matthew 25:15)
- **Takeaway:** We don't "earn" our time or our talents; God entrusts them to us because He is a generous King.

Day 2. Money is "Stored Sunshine" (Focus: Matthew 25:16-18)

Concept: Money and resources are actually just "stored up" time and effort used for God.

- **Object Lesson:** Show a battery and a flashlight. Explain that a battery is "stored energy." When you put it in the light, the energy comes out. Money is like a battery—it is "stored work" or "stored time" that you can use later.
- **The Activity:** Look at a dollar bill or a coin. Ask: "If a 'talent' in the Bible was worth 20 years of work, how much 'work' do you think is inside this dollar?" (e.g., Maybe 5 minutes of raking leaves or helping mom).
- **Discussion:**
 - The third servant "hid" his talent in the dirt. Why is a battery useless if it stays in the packaging and never goes into a flashlight?
 - How can we "turn on the light" with our money or our time to help other people see God's love?
- **Scripture:** *"He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more."* (Matthew 25:16)
- **Takeaway:** Don't just sit on your gifts; use them to "light up" the world for the Master.

Day 3. The "Good and Faithful" Secret (Focus: Matthew 25:21-23)

Concept: God isn't looking for "the most"; He is looking for a heart that loves Him.

- **Visual:** Draw two circles on a piece of paper. In one, draw 5 stars. In the other, draw 2 stars.
- **The Lesson:** Tell the children that the Master said the *exact same thing* to the person with 5 stars and the person with 2 stars. He didn't say "Great job for getting more than your brother!" He said, "Well done, good and faithful servant".
- **Discussion:**
 - If you share your toys with a grumpy heart, are you being "faithful" to the King?
 - The third servant was scared because he thought the Master was mean. Do we serve God because we are scared of trouble, or because we know He is good and loves us?
- **Scripture:** *"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.'" (Matthew 25:21)*
- **Takeaway:** **The King entrusts us with grace to invest what He has given us until He returns.** He cares more about your heart and your faithfulness than the size of the gift.