

## A POOR INVESTMENT • STEWARDSHIP



Photograph by Greg Schneider/Worldwide Challenge

### WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

This study deals with Jesus' parable about the Ten Minas. The focus of the parable and study is faithful stewardship with the gifts, teaching, and resources that God has entrusted to our care for use in building His kingdom.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this study to [cru.comm@uscmm.org](mailto:cru.comm@uscmm.org).

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

#### LUKE 19:11-27

##### Context

Luke lets us know that Jesus teaches this parable right before entering Jerusalem. This placement is important for two reasons. One is that, as Luke explains, many thought that in Jesus' arrival, the kingdom of God would appear all at once, probably in spectacular fashion. In the parable, the man of noble birth is made king and returns home—obviously referring to Jesus' death, resurrection, and departure into heaven. Jesus then, is forewarning His disciples that the kingdom will not be administered in the way in which they were thinking, and that His servants will be left to magistrate the kingdom during His absence.

The second probable reason that Jesus is telling this story here, is that the Pharisees and religious leaders themselves, were the subjects that hated him. They are also premier examples of servants given a stewardship who buried what they were given. Jesus warns His disciples to act as better stewards than the Pharisees had been.

##### The Servants

The first two servants show themselves faithful, while the third buries his money in the ground. The master asks the unfaithful servant why he didn't at least put the money on deposit so that it could have earned interest. It would seem that the thrust of the question is to reveal the fact that the reason this servant buried the money is he didn't really believe his master would return. He buried it because when the master didn't return he would be able to keep it for himself.

##### The Principle of Stewardship

What follows is a lesson in God's stewardship. The man who did not make any return on his investment lost what he had, and those who had been faithful were given even more. Jesus then summarizes the lesson in 19:26, "To everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away."

The prime focus of this stewardship relates to God's word. The disciples were entrusted with God's word and were expected to put it into practice and to spread the gospel to others. This is what is in view when Jesus speaks of putting "the money to work." Conversely, the Pharisees had been poor stewards of the word,

hiding its true meaning from the people of Israel; they would be judged severely for their poor stewardship.

On an individual level, this stewardship principle has several applications. When someone responds to Jesus' teaching and applies it to their life, Jesus is always faithful to get them more teaching, and give them more insight into His word and His will. To hear Jesus teaching, and to ignore it, often leads to greater darkness of insight and understanding to the ways and words of God—they lose even the little they had.

### **The Broader Scope of Stewardship**

While God's word is the primary focus of our stewardship that we are entrusted to apply and spread to others, we have also been entrusted with other gifts and abilities where these same principles apply. If we have been given a brilliant mind, we should use it to serve God and His kingdom, and not simply ourselves. If we have been entrusted with wealth, we have a similar obligation to be faithful stewards of it in advancing God's kingdom. As Christians, we will someday need to give an account of all of the resources God has entrusted to our care, and are therefore encouraged to live in such a way as to hear Jesus speak the words, "Well done, good, and faithful servant."

**This study is accompanied by an article. Take the time to read it over before the study. Hand it out to the group at the end of the study and have them read it this week.**

## WHAT IF THERE'S A PROBLEM?

Jesus' words and actions seem rather harsh to the wicked servant. Our minds will never fully grasp the grace and mercy God has shown us in our salvation, for God is more gracious than we can fully comprehend. Similarly, for those who reject God's mercy and forgiveness, He is more just than we can fully understand. To face true justice for all of our sinful thoughts, actions, and motivations is truly a terrifying picture that neither Jesus or the Scripture hides from us.

## WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

The application for this study is found in the last question. All Christians have some gifts, resources, and Christian teaching that they have the responsibility of stewardship over. It is essential that Christians take stock of their resources, and seek to “make a profit” for the kingdom. While all Christians have eternal life, we will all be judged by Christ in regards to heavenly reward. The basis for this judgement will be our stewardship

## HOMEWORK

This ends Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem. On your own this week, read the rest of the gospel of Luke and the events that transpire upon Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem.

## WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

1. Luke tells us that Jesus taught this to clarify that while He truly was their king, He would reign from heaven in this current age, leaving His followers as stewards of the kingdom.
2. Jesus is the one of noble birth who becomes king. The subjects that hated Him were the religious leaders. The stewardship is primarily His teaching. His going away would be His death, resurrection, and departure into heaven.
3. His teaching.
4. He was expecting His disciples to apply His word, spread the gospel, and faithfully teach His words to others.
5. He didn’t truly believe his master was going to return.
6. Paul saw himself as entrusted with the gospel and the teachings of Christ.
7. Allow the group time to write a list
8. Allow the group to share their thoughts.
9. You might begin by sharing an example from your own life.
10. When someone responds to Jesus teaching and applies it to their life, Jesus is faithful to get them more teaching, and give them more insight into His word and His will. To ignore it, often leads to greater darkness of insight and understanding to the ways and words of God.
11. Without the master there, it becomes most evident who truly desires to serve. The heart is truly free to express, or not express, obedience.
12. The disciples did apply Jesus’ word, spread His teaching, and use their gifts and talents for the kingdom. The Pharisees buried the knowledge of God, and what they had was taken from them.
13. That His disciples might follow the path of the Pharisees.
14. Allow the group to share in what areas they desire to be better stewards.