

The Joy of Managing God's Blessings *Week 2*

God Owns ... We Manage

In our capitalistic system, we are allowed to own private property. We become owners through deeds, certificates, and other legal instruments. Ownership is part of the American dream. Most of us would rather own than rent.

As legal owners of so many things, it is sometimes difficult for us to acknowledge that God is the real and ultimate owner of everything. We don't always recognize that he is the owner and that we are merely managers of God's property. King David reminds us, "*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein*" (Psalm 24:1). God is the landlord. We are the tenants. We possess, we occupy, we use, we manage—but we don't own.



Scripture tells us, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). Out of nothing, God created life. The world and all who live in it are gifts from God. In order that we might sustain life, he gives us the ability to produce wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). He gives us strength, wisdom, knowledge, and all we need to live our lives on earth for his purpose.

God's plan from the beginning was that we should be in charge of his kingdom. "*Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion...'*" (Genesis 1:26). God has made us, his stewards, responsible for all the gifts he has entrusted to us. As wise managers, we understand that we will be held accountable for how we manage God's possessions. If we manage what we have been given wisely and responsibly, we will one day hear God say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your master*" (Matthew 25:23).

Seeking God's Wisdom

In order to have a proper attitude toward money and to manage it faithfully and responsibly, we need God's wisdom. His wisdom gives us a proper perspective toward money, which is to see it as a tool to provide for our own needs, the needs of others, and to help spread the Gospel, so many people can "*be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4). God's wisdom enables us to understand the importance of consciously using all of our wealth for the glory of God. Using our money for God's purposes fills us with joy and draws us closer to him.

Even with God's wisdom, money issues will cause life to be challenging and confusing. Because we live in a fallen world, God's wisdom will not eliminate setbacks, problems, and

disappointments with our money, but we know that he is in control and provides for us and uses these setbacks for our ultimate good. He will help us make proper choices and decisions with our money. We see a greater purpose for our lives and money. No wonder Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:13-14, *“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding.”* Wisdom is more *“precious than jewels...”*

As faithful managers, filled with God’s wisdom, we are mindful that it is God’s resources that we are managing. To manage God’s money according to his will, we need to prioritize how we are going to manage his resources. As faithful stewards, we are to put God first with our money, time, and our talents.

Parable of the Talents

In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the master (Jesus) was planning to go on a long journey. Before his departure, he entrusted three servants (you and me) with various amounts of money, which in Jesus’ time were called talents. The master knew his servants differed in ability, so to the one who was most gifted he gave five talents, to another, two, and to the last, just one.



The master’s observations and assessments of his servants’ abilities were correct, because the servant who was given five talents and the one given two talents went out without hesitation to invest their talents faithfully and deliberately. The servant who received five talents gained five more and the one who received two earned two more. The master applauded their individual efforts, commitment, and faithfulness with these words to each of them: *“Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your master.”* The servant who received one talent hid it in the ground. The master’s response wasn’t so kind. He admonished him saying, *“You wicked and slothful servant!”*

By telling this parable, Jesus lets us know that he is concerned about the management of our money. He wants and expects us to use and multiply the resources he entrusts to us. The following are some truths we can learn from this parable:

- Everything we have comes from God.
- Our financial lives are important to God.
- Wise management of money pleases the Lord.
- Poor management displeases him.
- God does have high expectations of us as we use, manage, and invest his resources.

Some day we will be held accountable. What will God say about the way we managed our money? When we have managed faithfully the resources God has entrusted to us, we will find joy and fulfillment, and God will be pleased.