

AUGUST 1/2, 2020
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
ESSENTIAL STORIES | SUBVERSIVE PARABLES THAT SHAPE OUR LIVES
INVESTING THE DEPOSIT
MATTHEW 25:14-30

This week's Keystone Competency is: Continue to be people who live like Jesus by following in his steps and doing as he did by understanding and practicing the truth that "It's not my own, it's all on loan," or "God's gracious deposit demands my intentional investment." (In our With Jesus, Like Jesus, As Jesus model of discipleship, this is an As Jesus week. Therefore, we will talk about how to keep growing in our awareness and understanding of the talents he has given us as well as about how to continue to push ourselves to use those talents and to not be lazy or fearful.)

Engaging with Each Other

1. What is the coolest gift you ever received? Do you still use it? Why?

Or, "What is **one of** the coolest gifts you ever received? Do you still use it? Why?"

Three things came to mind. First, my smart watch. Still use it. Wear it almost everyday. I could live without it, but I sure love the convenience and how it does make my life easier. Second, my iPad. Still use it many times a week. I love to watch MLB.TV on it. It comes in handy. Third, a dirt bike I received one year for Christmas. That was an amazing gift because I could ride it in the fields and canyons that were near my house. I don't use it anymore, for obvious reasons.

What comes to your mind?

Engaging with the Scriptures

Read the passage here.

You will remember that our model for discipleship is Being With, Becoming Like and Doing As, and that our methodology is Learning, Practices and Community. Question 2 is a "learning" question and Question 3 is a "practices" question.

2. After re-reading the passage together, share with your group some observations about the servants and the master. In what ways are the servants the same? In what ways are they different? What do we learn about God from the master? What do you think about the fact that you are accountable to God for how you use your life? (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

Observations about the servants:

- Everyone has something.
- Not everyone has the same thing.
- We do have different abilities.
- Two of them understood that they were expected to do something with what they were given. They knew they were expected to multiply what they received. This point cannot be emphasized enough. It would be inconceivable to these two servants that the master

would give them something without an accompanying expectation to use it and multiply it to some degree. Yet, there are many professing Christians who do not have this conviction, and who are like the third servant, and who do not use what God has given them for his name's sake.

- The issue that the third servant was dealing with was laziness. That servant claimed it was fear, but the master says it wasn't.
- We are simply stewards of what God has given us. (You might want to ask here, "What do you think about that? A steward. How do you respond to that?")
- What else do you see?

Observations about the master and the master's expectations (and about what we learn about God from the master):

- God distributes talents as he sees fit.
- God doesn't give everyone equal talents.
- God clearly expects that people who receive the talents he gives will use the talents he gives.
- Simply giving back an un-invested talent to God won't be enough. God expects some return on his investment in us.
- People are held accountable for using what they do have (their talents and abilities) but not for not using what they don't have. (Sorry for all the negatives there!)
- Everyone will be held accountable.
- A return on investment is expected.
- Doing nothing is not okay.
- Excuses won't work.
- Faithfulness, not productivity, is the standard by which we will be measured. (You might want to ask here, "What do you think about that? The word *faithful* shows up four times in this parable, so it's very important. How does this concept of faithfulness work in the business world? The "raising kids" world? Those parts of the "world" that are not yet under the rule and reign of Christ?" I am thinking a lot about this right now.)
- The punishment for not bringing a return on investment is harsh.
- What else do you see?

What do you think about the fact that you are accountable to God for how you use your life? (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

Maybe read the passage out loud (and also read 2 Corinthians 5:10) and talk about them. Here are some questions that come to my mind. These are in no particular order.

- How does the fact that you will be held accountable impact how you live your life?
- How do you live in the balance of God's grace and God's accountability? (i.e. Does God expect us to work 24/7? Where does rest and grace come in?)
- We should have a legitimate fear of God. How do we balance a healthy fear of accountability before him with his patience, understanding, grace and mercy?
- Is it possible to be lazy while being faithful? Can someone claim faithfulness and really be masking laziness or wasted efforts? How do you hold yourself or others accountable

for being faithful when results would seem to indicate that you, or others, were being faithful?

- When you think about being held accountable, do you think of it more in negative terms or more in positive terms? Why? (Do you focus on the rewards you will receive or on the rewards you will miss out on? Why?)

3. Near the end of the message Ryan provided three things we might do to apply this message. Which one seems to be the most significant for you right now? Why? What is something you will do to apply this text during the week?

The three things were (and this is taken right out of Ryan's notes):

- Assess what you have, don't lament what you lack. God isn't asking you to invest something you don't have. No guilt, no shame. If you have money, look for ways to be generous. We're going to need a number of people to step up invest God's deposit as we move forward with Phase 2 of the building. But it might not be with money, it might be in your intentionality with the people around you (kids, grandkids). Your willingness to be interrupted. I have to say, for some of you doing more is NOT what God is calling you to. It might be about doing less. Equipping others to do. Or passing the baton.
- Reject fear and laziness and do something. For the servant in the parable it was fear of God, but for us it might be fear of others, fear of loss, fear of being stretched too far. Don't let fear stop you.
- Trust that God will use your life to make much of his name. He does reap where he doesn't plant or sow. That's true! So, you can focus on faithfulness, trusting that God will make it productive.

I'm going to be praying about what mine is.

Engaging the Scriptures with Life

4. What's one thing you can do to apply this text?

For this week, then, it's about learning (for some) and being reminded (for others) that "it's not my own but it's all on loan". Put another way, it's about knowing that "God's gracious deposit demands my intentional investment." This is what we talked about in Question 2. But it's not enough to know about it. Next we need to practice it. And that is Question 3. And Question 4 gives a place for a specific application and for your group to pray for one another.

Praying and trusting it goes well. Thanks, as always, for leading, for caring, for preparing, for praying, for being available, and for creating space for God to work.