

## **The Dynamics of Stewardship**

*A steward is a servant who has temporarily been given the privilege, responsibility, and authority to work with his or her master's wealth in order to grow his or her master's influence. The master expects the servant to exert himself or herself through mental and physical labor, problem solving, creativity, business, industry, and wisdom to grow his influence and renown.*

- What might motivate a master to entrust his own personal wealth to a servant?
- What type of relationship would a master have to have with a servant before he would entrust that servant with his own personal wealth?
- What might motivate a steward to be faithful with his master's possessions?
- What type of relationship would a servant have to have with a master before he or she would work diligently to multiply the master's influence and renown?

## **The Call of Stewardship**

*Through this parable, Jesus infers that those who choose to follow Him have entered into a stewardship type of relationship with Him and have been summoned to exert themselves through mental and physical labor, problem solving, creativity, business, industry, and wisdom to grow His Kingdom, glory, and renown in the earth.*

- Which of the dynamics of stewardship that you just discussed is most impactful for you as you consider your own stewardship type of relationship with Christ?
- How does it make you feel when Jesus infers that He is your "Master"? And how does it make you feel to be called his "servant" (or maybe even his "slave")? What beliefs are hidden behind those feelings?
- How does the reality of the Gospel - the fact that Jesus first *served you unto death* by laying down His perfect life as a sacrifice on your behalf so that you could be restored to true life with God - change the way you think about the master-servant dynamic of stewardship Jesus has called you to?
- We are to view everything in our lives as a gift from God to be stewarded with faithfulness. How might this change the way you think about daily life (your physical health, your education, your finances, your time, your skills, the physical world, etc.)?

- In Jesus' day, a single talent was worth about 20 years of wages for the common person, so Jesus infers that He is entrusting His disciples not with pennies, but with *huge amounts* of responsibility, privilege, and authority. How might this change the way you think about your stewardship?

### **The Consequences of Stewardship**

- Does it surprise you that the master gives the same praise and positive consequences to the first two servants, even though they started with different amounts of money and made different amounts of money? Why or why not?
- What are the implications for us as we each pursue faithfulness individually, but in community with one another?
- Does the master's response to the third servant surprise you? Why or why not?
- We see a few indicators that point to the reason why the third servant was unfaithful: 1) he had a skewed perspective of the master that led to a paralyzing fear of failure (v. 24-25); 2) he was lazy (v. 26); 3) he was possibly lulled to sleep by the master's delay and did not prioritize his stewardship (v. 19). Do any of these three indicators affect you? Or are there any other factors in your life that inhibit your faithfulness to Jesus?

*In light of everything we've discussed today, is there any adjustment you need to make to the way you are thinking or living? If so, what is it and what might it look like to make this adjustment over the next week?*

*Want to think about this a little more? Take some time to work through the Faithfulness Inventory this week on your own. You could even get together with someone else from your group and talk through it together.*