

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## What Will The Judge Say?

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The Bible teaches that we all will give an account of our lives before the Lord (Romans 14:10-12). When that day comes, we should desire to hear Christ say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21 NKJV). But what if Christ our Judge says, "You have not done well"?

As a student, I remember studying hard for a test in one of my classes. After studying and memorizing, I felt prepared to take the exam. However, when the test was distributed, I discovered I had studied the wrong material. I wasn't prepared to take the exam, and needless to say, I failed the test and realized I misunderstood the instructions the teacher gave on what material would be included in the test. All along I had in my possession the knowledge needed to successfully prepare for and pass the exam. But I didn't pay attention to the instructions, and the result was failing the test.

In the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus Christ gave instructions to His disciples so they could be prepared for the coming judgment of God. The parable is the story of a rich man who gave his wealth to his servants before leaving on a long trip. To one servant he gave five talents of money, to another he gave two talents, and to a third he gave one talent. Upon returning from his journey, the rich man called each servant in to give an account of how they had used the talents of money given them. The first two servants each used their talents wisely and doubled them, so the master commended them for doing well. But the third servant, knowing his master would judge him, hid his money. The master condemned the slave for being a poor manager, took his one talent away from him, and gave it to the other servant.

It would be easy for us to say this parable speaks only about using our God-given talents to serve the Lord, but the context suggests otherwise. Jesus was teaching the disciples to use their worldly wealth for their Master. As stewards, everything we possess in life belongs to God; it does not belong to us. Once again, Christ is challenging His disciples to see their worldly wealth as God sees it.

God entrusts wealth to us so that we will use it for His kingdom. God doesn't say, "You can do whatever you want to with your income, house, car, clothes, possessions, and investments because they belong to you." No, God says, "I want this wealth to be used for My kingdom's sake, but I am going to give it to you and trust you to use it for My kingdom."

We struggle with understanding what God says because we don't see our wealth and possessions as God sees them. We are not owners. We are stewards, and we will give an accounting of our stewardship.

Jesus made this clear when He followed this parable with details on how God will judge the nations of this world (Matthew 25:31-46). Those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in strangers, clothe the needy, and visit the sick and prisoners will be commended by Christ. Those who do not will be condemned. God expects believers to use their possessions differently than unbelievers – to help others in need.

How prepared are you for the test? A good starting point is to tithe your income. Giving to your local church enables your church to reach and help the needy, both in your community and around the world. But a tithe is only a starting point. We should consider how we could use all our worldly possessions to help others. We have homes we can open and automobiles we can use to transport those in need. We have food we can share, and we can spend time comforting the needy. In doing so, we will be following our Teacher's instructions and preparing for the test! Are you using your worldly wealth in such a way to increase its value for the kingdom of God?

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BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: [bbcfoundation.org](http://bbcfoundation.org); e-mail: [info@bbcfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbcfoundation.org)