

TEXT Luke 19:12-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE 1 Chronicles 29:1-17

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain how God expects those who claim to be His followers to utilize the resources and abilities He has given them for His service.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Keep that which is committed to thy trust. — 1 Timothy 6:20

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **Used of God**

**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Being a Faithful Steward**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The word *steward* is a translation of the Greek word *oikonomos*, meaning “a house manager.” Great confidence was placed in these officials to whom was often entrusted the entire management of princely households. Paul describes Christian ministers as the stewards of God over His church (Titus 1:7). Believers are also said to be stewards of God, of God’s gifts and graces, as in our key verse, 1 Peter 4:10.

Our text deals with the relationships between “a certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive for him-

self a kingdom, and to return” (an obvious reference to Christ), and his “servants.” The word translated *servant* is the Greek word *doulos* which means “slave” or “bondman,” but can also mean “servant of a king.” In following Christ, we have become willing slaves or bondmen of our Lord and Savior, and have given ourselves up wholly to His will and dominion. In so doing, Christ, in turn, has made us “stewards of the manifold grace of God.” To be a good steward we must manage carefully and faithfully those gifts and graces (talents) which have been given to us.

YOUR OPENER

Being a Faithful Steward

TEXT: Luke 19:12-28

KEY VERSE: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

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RESPONSES

1. The nobleman is representative of Jesus Christ. The nobleman went away to receive a kingdom, and then returned. Christ, after His resurrection, ascended to His Throne at the right hand of the Father, and we are now awaiting His second coming. See Acts 1:11.

2. The servants represent Christians. In following Christ, they have become willing slaves or bondmen of their Lord and Savior. They have given themselves up wholly to His will and dominion. As His disciples they are, in fact, His servants.

3. Unlike the parable given in Matthew, each one of these servants was given an equal amount of money—one pound. While our gifts or talents from the Lord may vary according to our abilities, we all have been given at least “one pound,” one gift or talent, which we can use for Christ. Note verse 7 of 1 Corinthians 12 which says that the “manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man.” This is an opportunity to discuss with the students that God has given different gifts to different ones in the Body of Christ. Some of the gifts mentioned are as follows: governments (administration); words of wisdom (counseling); helps (helping people); words of knowledge (teaching); gifts of healing (working of miracles); prophecy (interpretation of the Word—preaching); discernment of spirits (different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues). To these, looking at the whole of Scripture, we could add intercessory prayer, testimony, musical ability, and others.

Jesus told the parable about the nobleman who was to go away, become a king, and return. This was one of Jesus' last teachings to His disciples, taking place just before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and less than a week before His crucifixion. Christ's purpose was to educate His disciples regarding His departure to Heaven, their responsibility to carry on His work after He went away, and His eventual return. Our study will concentrate on our responsibility as Christ's disciples to be faithful in using what He has given us for His service.

1. The word *nobleman* means “person of noble blood, usually princely.” Give evidence as to whom you think the nobleman represents in this parable. See Hebrews 12:2.

2. The word *servant* is translated from the Greek word *doulos* which can mean “slave, bondman, or servant of a king.” In the New Testament epistles, *doulos* often denotes “one who gives himself up wholly to another's will, or dominion.” With these facts in mind, identify whom the servants in this parable represent.

3. The nobleman had ten servants. Each servant was given one pound. List the various gifts or talents which you think the pounds might represent. Refer to 1 Corinthians 12:4-11,28.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Paraphrase the nobleman's statement to his ten servants, "Occupy till I come."

5. Who are the citizens referred to in verses 14 and 27 of our lesson? How would you support this conclusion?

6. Verse 15 tells us that having received his kingdom and returned, the nobleman called his servants to determine how much each man had gained by trading. Describe some of the "gains" one can experience in working for the Lord.

7. Verses 20-26 deal with the other servant and his great error. Identify this error and interpret its meaning.

8. The nobleman, in verse 17, pronounced the servant whose pound had gained ten pounds as "faithful." Consider and note several actions which we could take to ensure a reward in eternity as a faithful steward of Jesus Christ.

4. Give your students an opportunity to give their answers. You might then explain that in the original Greek, the word *occupy* means to "carry on a business," often specifically, "to carry on the business of a banker or trader." A prospering business increases its assets and strives to engage a clientele of regular customers. Just so, the Christian is engaged in promoting Christianity. One marginal New Testament reading of this Scripture is, "Use this till I come." The students should understand that they must "take action" with whatever talent they have been given.

5. Your students will likely respond by saying that these "citizens" represent those who reject Christ. Verses 14 and 27 obviously refer to a group of people other than the nobleman's ten servants. You may wish to elaborate on this answer by bringing out that since Christ's own citizenry were Jews, the reference first of all was to the Jews who rejected Christ as their Messiah. Because all have sinned, the whole world participated in Christ's death in that He died for all. Thus those who accept Him become Jews by faith, and those who reject Him take their part with the Jews who earlier rejected their Messiah. See Romans 11:13-24.

6. Your students' answers might include such things as power in prayer, testimony, and musical ability. Discuss each answer. Using the "pound" of intercessory prayer, they can witness conversions of the unsaved for whom they have earnestly prayed. They may never see some of these people as their prayers might have been specifically answered in another part of the world. As surely as they engage their prayer pound in intercession for lost souls, just so surely God will multiply that pound for eternity. Our testimony is another pound which must be used for the Lord—every Christian has a testimony. The students should realize that God has given some the responsibility to help people, others the gift of administration, others a musical talent. Whatever their calling, they will endeavor to develop it so as to give their best to the Lord. The point should be made that as they do this they will gain as well as others.

7. This servant laid up his pound in a napkin. He failed to use it. We find that the nobleman confiscated that pound upon his return. This left the servant with nothing but the nobleman's displeasure. The students should be impressed with God's "rule" for His gifts to us: Use Them or Lose Them!

8. Your students' responses to this question can be developed to bring out the importance of faithfulness. Wrap up the lesson by emphasizing once more that God expects those who claim to be His followers to utilize the resources and abilities He has given them for His service.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is a steward of the Lord?

Considering yourself a steward (or follower) of the Lord, what would you say God expects of you?

What is the reward if you are found faithful in your stewardship?

In reading the text, how did the first two servants differ from the other one?

Do you feel it is equally important for us today, to use what God has given us, as it was for the servants in our lesson? Why?

Do you believe this lesson applies to the way we work in school or on the job?

Why was Julie, in the ANSWER story, not able to go to the young people's concert?

The Lord used Julie even when she had to stay home because of illness. What did this prove to her?

THINGS TO DO

Compute with the class a lifetime of cumulative interest at 10% on \$20.00, assuming the lifetime to be 70 years. If you have the right calculator, you will easily arrive at the total principal plus interest after 70 years as \$1,047,856 plus; subtract \$20.00 to get the interest! Liken the interest shown here to the gains which we can achieve by devoting a lifetime to the service of God.

Invite a missionary to visit your class (a worker who visits nursing homes, the ships, people on the streets, etc.). Ask him to explain the great joy there is in contacting people with the Gospel.

Show your students articles that have been started but not completed: embroidery or other needlework, model airplane/car, painting, etc. Explain to them that God tells us in His Word to go on to perfection. This means to complete the work He has called us to do. When we let our interest lag, we look, in God's sight, like this incomplete work, an incomplete person. The Lord doesn't want us to be quitters so He urges us to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." We can be encouraged by this reminder: "that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Discuss with your students the fact that every Christian should be faithful in the job they do for the Lord. Show them a clock or watch, with hands (not digital), and tell them that when you look at this clock or watch you can

see the hands. They are important because they show you what time it is. The small parts that are inside don't show, but are just as important. Without them the hands couldn't do their job. Perhaps you are a "spring" in God's work. Your job may be small and unnoticed but you are important. If you aren't doing your part, others will notice and the work for God will be slowed down or may even stop. Remember, no matter what job you may have, it is very important that you do it well. Then others will see Jesus through you.

Using a chalkboard or a magic marker board, have students help you list some of the resources and abilities that God has given us. Next to each word write some way these can be used for God. For example:

HANDS — Bake cookies for visiting seamen.
Write letters to missionaries.

MOUTH — Clean house for a sick person.
Read Bible to an elderly person.
Tell of Jesus' love.


ARTISTIC — Help put up teachers' bulletin boards.
Help decorate for church dinners.

MUSICAL — Sing for Jesus.
Play an instrument in church.


Answers for ANSWER

Using What He Gave Me


If we are going to be good helpers for Jesus we must use what He has given us. He has given us the ability to do all the things listed below plus many more. Match each of the actions with the Scripture that tells about it. The first is done for you.




Read Bible Often




Love the Lord Very Much




Do Good Deeds




Resist the Devil




Go to Church




Sing Praise to God




Seek Wisdom of God



Tell Others About Jesus



Pray Every Day



Learn the Scriptures

James 4:7
Ephesians 5:19
Proverbs 3:13
I Timothy 4:13
Acts 22:15
Luke 18:1
Psalm 34:14
II Timothy 2:15
Hebrews 10:25
Matthew 22:37