

THE COMPARISON TRAP

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 March 9, 2025

"Two Bags Full" *(Parable of the Talents)*

OPENING PRAYER

Holy Spirit, reveal to us the lessons from the parable of the talents today. Open up a new understanding of your truth in our lives. Fill our minds with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Give us a spirit of understanding of the scriptures so that we may know you in a deeper way. As we come together, guide us into all truth and give us a better grasp of your teachings so we may apply them in our daily lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV) *The Parable of the Bags of Gold*

¹⁴ "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²² "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

²³ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴ "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶ "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

²⁸ "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

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INTRODUCTION

Comparison is being caught in the trap of constantly asking, “Does she have more than me?” “Are they better off?” “Is he smarter? Funnier? Richer?” We preoccupy ourselves with these questions, but God has a better plan. The parable of the talents illustrates the question God would have us ask - a question that will free us from the comparison trap once and for all.

We can't run someone else's race. When we compare ourselves to other people, we're telling God that our choices are his fault... that if he would entrust us with what someone else has we would behave differently. We need to take a breath, refocus on what God has given us, and run our own races. Celebrate what God has given others and leverage what God has given you.

QUESTIONS

1. In the message, Pastor Eric used the items on a bookshelf to represent the different aspects of our lives that define who we are. Talk about the items on your bookshelf: career, health, money, talent, family, skills, etc. How have they shaped you?
2. Which of the items do you most value? Why?
3. Which of the items is the least satisfying to you? Explain.
4. What is the one item on your bookshelf that is unique to you, the thing that makes you different from everyone else?
5. If you believed everything on your shelf—good and bad—was placed there by God, how would that change the way you view yourself? How would it change the way you use your money, skills, career, etc.?

FINAL APPLICATION

What is one thing you can do this week to begin to decide what you're going to do with what God has entrusted to you?