

STEP ONE PRAY for the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Law and Gospel themes to you.

STEP TWO READ the Bible passage repeatedly until you can retell it in your own words.

Matthew 25:14-30 ¹⁴For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'



STEP THREE REVIEW a Bible Commentary to understand the passage's common meaning.

The Gospel for the day explains that there will come a time when people are held accountable for their lives. The precise time may not be known, but the accounting will be certain. There is a certain amount of risk involved in trying to live according to God's will. When we help others or try to do what is best for others, we must give our time, our money, and ourselves. We may have to change our attitudes and our life-styles. Of course, we may decide to eliminate the risk and not help others. It was inactivity, failure to take a risk for someone else, which brought condemnation on the man of the parable. God has given us many gifts to be

used during our lifetime. We are accountable to God as to how we live and how we grow - how we use his gifts. The parable speaks of the action of the men almost as one would speak of a muscle of the body. The one who exercises the muscle will be able to do more with that muscle. The one who fails to use the muscle will eventually lose its use. Some of us may believe we have received few significant talents. However we have received life from God and forgiveness and new life in Christ. We have also received the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are listed in Gal. 5:22, as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. As God's people we can use the gifts God has given us in our lives. God has also given us an arena in which to exercise these gifts. We have our family, friends, our neighborhoods, or country, our world. God has made us his people through his creation and redemption. As his people we are responsible for what we do or fail to do. We are to live, not withdraw; what we do for other people affects our relationship with God. Each day our lives are shaped and molded by what we do and how we understand ourselves. God has blessed us with all that is necessary for life and growth. How will we use God's gifts?


STEP FOUR IDENTIFY GOD'S LAW

As you reread the passage, keep asking...*How does God's Law in this passage point out what I am unable to do without Christ?* It may be helpful to underline those words/phrases that speak to you as God's Law. If God's Law is implied in the passage, what is the implication?

Possible Law: *The infrequent judgments of God in this life cannot be compared to his final judgment.*

God's Law message for me is:

STEP FIVE IDENTIFY GOD'S GOSPEL

As you reread the passage, keep asking...*How is God's Gospel (Christ crucified and risen) in this passage freely offering me a new life with God?* It may be helpful to circle  those words/phrases that speak to you as God's Gospel. If God's Gospel is implied in the passage, what is the implication?

Possible Gospel: *The Lord who will judge us in the end is the one who has saved us.*

God's Gospel message for me is:

STEP SIX PRAY

Pray that the Holy Spirit might:

- + Bring into my life the power of Christ's death to change what I am doing or not doing.
- + Bring into my life the power of Christ's resurrection for me to live a new life with God.

Meditation Words: "outer darkness" / "joy"