



## **“God > My Fears”**

**Matthew 25**

### **Small Group Plan**

*The wise man in the storm prays God,  
not for safety from danger,  
but for deliverance from fear.  
It is the storm within which endangers him,  
not the storm without.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Fear can keep a man out of danger,  
but courage can support him in it.*

— Thomas Fuller

*It is cynicism and fear that freeze life,  
it is faith that thaws it out, releases it, sets it free.*  
— Harry Emerson Fosdick

### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Are you more of a spender or a saver? Why?
- Why are some afraid to take risks while others are not?
- What would you be willing to do for God if you knew you would not fail at it?

### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### **— THE PRINCIPLE OF OWNERSHIP —**

**Matthew 25:14**

<sup>14</sup> Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

- Here at the very beginning, why is it significant that the players in this story are called “servants” rather than “partners” or “co-owners”?

- Even though there is not enough time to name everything, still take the time to give aloud a substantial list of what you have that God owns. And don't give the easy answer – “everything.”
- Which item(s) on the list are more difficult to relinquish to the principle of ownership? Explain.

**1 Timothy 6:7**

*For we brought nothing into the world,  
and we can take nothing out of it.*

- Why are some things easier to hand over than others?

**— THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION —**

**Matthew 25:15-18**

<sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

- What is happening in the minds of the two servants who act “at once” (v. 16)?
- What is ruling in the mind of the servant who does not act at all (v. 18)?

**— THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY —**

**Matthew 25:19, 24-30**

<sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them ... <sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received the one talent 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. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' <sup>26</sup> "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? <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

**Romans 14:12**

*... each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

- What do you think of the Master in the story — is he too harsh, not harsh enough or reasonable? Explain your answer.
- How does the one talent man actually blame his Master for his own failure to act (vs. 24-25)?
- What disappoints the Master the most? Why?

### — THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICATION —

#### **Matthew 25:23, 29**

<sup>23</sup> 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!” ... <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

- What matters the most to the Master — the amount entrusted (5, 2, 1), or the action taken? Explain.
- How did the Master honor the first two servants?
- Why is the third servant’s responsibility taken away?
- What is the Master attempting to communicate to him by this action?

### — THE PRINCIPLE OF REWARD —

#### **Matthew 25:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> "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!' <sup>22</sup> "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' <sup>23</sup> "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!'

- How can being given more responsibility (“many things” vs. 21, 23) be thought of as a reward?
- What does the Master mean when he invites the faithful servants to “share your Master’s happiness” (v. 23)?

## **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- In this story, what disappoints God more — being fearfully cautious or being fearlessly bold? Explain.
- How do you usually feel when you are given responsibility —  
anxious / proud / overwhelmed / secure?  
Explain your answer.
- Why did Jesus tell this story (context)?
- What is our version of digging a hole to hide what God has entrusted to us?  
How do we do it? What does it look like?
- How can we avoid fearful digging as we choose bold action?
- Close by asking God to help us to use what He has entrusted to us.