

Assessment Of Christian Service



Foundations (Day 345)
by Derek Prince

This week we shall consider in greater detail the principles by which believers will be rewarded for their service. These are set forth by Christ in the form of two parables: the parable of the talents (see Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the minas (see Luke 19:11-27).

The central theme of both parables is the same. Each concerns a man of wealth and authority who commits a certain sum to each of his servants to administer on his behalf and then takes a journey to a distant country. After a considerable lapse of time, this wealthy man returns and holds an individual reckoning with his servants as to the way in which each has handled the money committed to him.

In both parables three servants are mentioned individually: the first two are faithful in administering their master's money; the third is unfaithful. This is how the money was distributed in the parable of the talents:

> "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability." (Matt. 25:15)

(A talent was a considerable quantity of money, perhaps as much as fifteen years' wages.)

Notice that this verse reveals the principle according to which the talents are distributed: "to each according to his own ability." That is, God distributes to each believer the maximum number of talents that his own ability will permit him to use effectively. God does not give to any believer either more or less than he is able to use effectively.

This is indicated by the fact that the words of commendation spoken to these two servants, recorded in Matthew 25:21 and 23, are exactly the same in each verse.

> "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"

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Each of them had originally received the maximum number of talents that his ability would allow him to use effectively; each of them had achieved the maximum gain possible – 100 percent. It is on their faithfulness, as expressed in the percentage increase achieved, that their judgement is based. The fact that one man originally received five talents and the other two is not the basis on which their faithfulness is assessed.

In this parable of the talents the third servant merely hid the one talent he had received and later brought it back to his lord in exactly the same condition in which he had received it. For this he was not only deprived of any reward, but he was also totally and finally rejected and cast out from his lord's presence.

We find this in Matthew 25:26-30:

> "You wicked and lazy servant… take the talent from him… cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth".

There can be no doubt whatever about the meaning of these words. This third servant not only received no reward; he was actually deprived of the one talent which he had originally received, and he himself was cast out from his lord's presence.

Devotional

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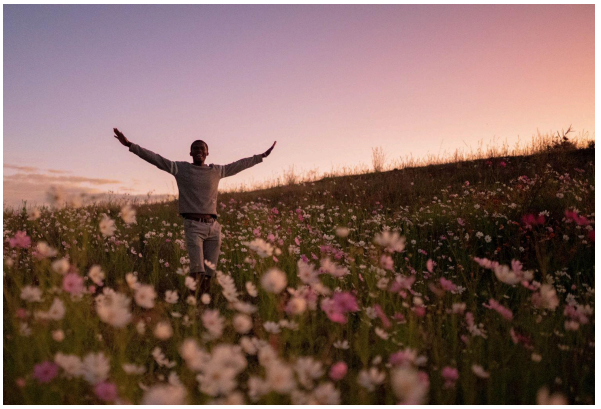

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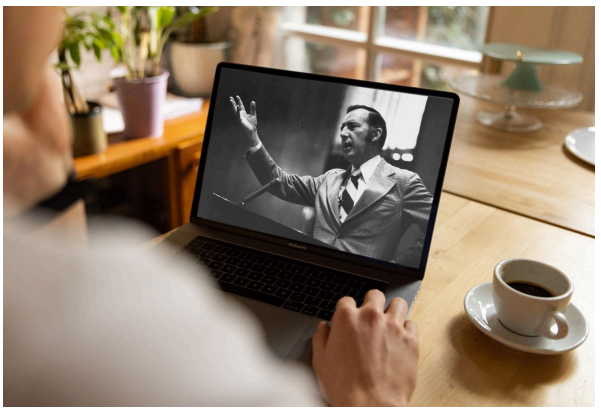

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