

EMBRACE INTEREST, REJECT WORRY

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey... 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”— Matthew 25:14–15,19 NKJV

REFLECTIONS

Instructions: Take turns reading the following paragraphs with your teammates. As you read, underline the ideas that catch your attention.

Last week, we learned about the anatomy of worry and how different worry topics are connected by the same thread: control. Although we’ve determined that our ability to control our lives is an illusion, we still have to address the question of how we can reject control and fear while still keeping in mind planning, preparation, and interest. Because here’s the key: God calls you to steward what you have in His hands. He gives you authority to make decisions about what He has entrusted to you.

In Matthew 25, Jesus told a parable about a master who went away for a long period. Before leaving, he gave a considerable amount of money to three of his servants. At first, Scripture says he gave five talents. To the second servant, the master gave two talents, and to the last, he gave one talent. The master left, and the servants managed the money. The first two invested and made use of it — but the third servant? He chose a different path. Afraid of his master and of the possibility of losing the money, he buried it. Better safe and underground than at risk and out in the open.

The master returned and praised the two servants who invested well. The master said they were “good and faithful” (Matthew 25:21 NKJV). They made a plan, prepared, and cared about the well-being of the work assigned to them. The master rewarded them by giving them even more than they were originally entrusted with.

Planning is not a bad thing. Being a good steward of our time and resources is one of the ways we can glorify God in this world. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15–16 NKJV)

Learn to plan without practicing worry. Planning is a constructive and tangible process in which steps and actions are linked together to achieve future results. When planning is done well, variables are considered and contingencies are prepared for the unexpected— without losing the confidence to move forward. Planning is about using the gifts and resources we have now and carrying them forward, step by step.

Worry, on the other hand, projects an endless chain of hypothetical scenarios that drain present effort and often bring fear and paralysis. Do you see the difference? The third servant in the parable of the

talents was paralyzed by the “What if...?” What if I lose the money? What if I’m not capable? What if the other servants outperform me? What if I get sick or injured? What if I fail? What if I lose my job, my family, or my home? Scripture says he was “afraid.” Isn’t it interesting that the result of being caught in the net of “What ifs” is fear? Remember how worry has its roots in fear? In this parable, we see that Jesus shows us that connection. While the first two servants cared and practiced good planning, this servant got stuck in a current of worry. And once he stepped into the current, he ended up trapped in the whirlpool of doubt.

In our fast-paced world, the “What ifs” can poison the heart and pull us away from the reality of today. While anticipating scenarios can be useful when planning, we can’t stay there or stop acting in the present. Most of those fears never come true and only rob us of energy and purpose. The future is important, but wise preparation must go hand in hand with present action, making the most of what God has given us today.

God places things in your hands according to your ability and His power to work in you and through you. If He has entrusted it to you, you can carry it out. If He is calling you to it, He will be faithful and help you overcome it. If He has put it in your hands, you don’t have to worry about where it will end up. You only need to prepare, plan, and be ready— because the King will return to settle accounts for what belongs to Him.

Choose something you underlined that is important to you. Take a minute to tell everyone what you choose and why it matters to you.

SELF-EVALUATION:

- **What has God placed in your hands today?** Take a moment to thank God for what He has given you.
- **If Jesus came today and asked you to give an account of what He has placed in your hands, would you show Him results born of planning and trust, or excuses born of worry and fear?**
- **If you stopped overthinking your plans, how would it free you to accomplish more?**

ACTION STEPS:

1. **Do what is in your hands to do today.** Do your best work, not for men, but for the Lord (Colossians 3:23 NKJV). The servants who invested their master’s money did a good job — they doubled his deposit!
2. **Don’t take on any challenge that hasn’t yet arrived until it’s necessary.** “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:34 NLT) So don’t pile on tomorrow’s challenges ahead of time.
3. **Recognize that the Master is coming back and stay prepared.** We’ve been entrusted with something valuable — the King’s things (Luke 12:42–43 NKJV). If that’s the case, we must be grateful, humble, and ready for His return.

Facilitator Instructions:

1. **Make the call** (invitation).
2. **Ministry time:** Pray and activate what was learned today.
3. **Pray for the offering.**