

## LESSON 3

# GOOD AND FAITHFUL -OR- WICKED AND LAZY

By Brian S. Holmes

Copyright © 2021. Brian S. Holmes. MPowered Christian Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://MPoweredChristian.org>

Excerpted from: Holmes, Brian. "*Driveway Discipleship*" [The Empowered Christian Series] Clearwater, FL: MPowered Christian Publishing, 2021.

First used in the sermon entitled, "Are YOU Good & Faithful... or Wicked & Lazy?" Published 2019.

Permission for reuse by ABNSat, Trinity Channel, and their affiliates for use when provided free of charge.

Made available through a partnership with Missionary Church, Inc. <https://MCUSA.org>

Scripture quotations taken from Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



**M**atthew 25:14-30 is Jesus's *Parable of the Talents*. In it Jesus compares three servants each responsible for managing what their master left them in charge of when he went away. The two who received the greater responsibility did a good job but the one who received the least did a bad job. The first two servants each invested their master's money and doubled the amount he gave to them. After returning the master says to each of them, "*Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.*" However, the last servant just hid his master's money and then later returned it to him. But lest you think he just did *less* good than the first two it says that he acted this way *because* he thought badly about the master. That he was a hard man, reaping where he hadn't sown, gathering where he hadn't scattered seed. His own heart wasn't right with the master and it affected his behavior. The master's response is shocking: "*You wicked and slothful servant! Take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Those are references to Heaven and Hell—eternal paradise with God (where we have an abundance) and eternal separation from God!

This parable is about the consequences of what each of us do in this life. God and/or Jesus is the Master here. Humanity, especially those who claim to know and follow Jesus, are the servants. We've each been given talents that belong to God. A "talent" in this parable refers to a measure of money in the Roman world at this time, but this isn't only talking about what we do with our money. It's talking about what we do with our *everything*. All of our life and existence and breath and money and possessions and natural talents and relationships and blessings and spiritual gifts and opportunities to serve God and others—everything that has been given to you in this life. Everything exists for God's glory. And everything given to you was given so that you would steward it well *for* His glory. If we love our

Master, want to please Him, and use what He has given us to the best of our ability, even more will be given to us in the life to come. If we hate our Master, neglect the responsibilities He's entrusted to us, and are more concerned with our own interests above His, even what we have now will be taken away later. I like the acronym shape (S.H.A.P.E.) which stands for Spiritual Gifts, Heart Desires, Natural Abilities, Personality Strengths, and Life Experiences He's given you. These are your "talents." How well are you using each of yours for His glory? Decide today to dedicate time to continue to improve at this. Here's a few questions to help you determine which servant you're acting like.

**1. Do you feel Entrusted—or Fearful?** The things you have are not yours - they're God's. The first two servants felt *entrusted*. They were proud to have the trust of their master, to watch over His things. They were eager to please him, to run to the bankers and accomplish good for His pleasure. They joyfully accepted their responsibility. It wasn't a burden or hassle. They loved their master, and they felt loved back. They doubled the master's return as a result. By contrast, it says the last servant felt *fearful*. He didn't want and actually rejected and neglected his responsibility. He didn't manage it, he buried it. He wasn't proud. He wasn't eager to please. He didn't love. No, he was thinking of himself. He had an EXCUSE. Rather than accepting responsibility for what he had been given, he blamed and insulted his master. Are you grateful for what what He's given you? And are you eager to steward it for His glory?

**2. Are you Good—or Wicked?** Remember Jesus said the last servant was *wicked!* Who we ARE reflects what we DO. Matthew 7 teaches that if you truly belong to Jesus then you will be a good tree, and if you're a good tree you'll bear good fruit with your life. Are you bearing good fruit?

**3. Are you Faithful—or Lazy?** Our faithfulness, to God, is our proper response to the undeserved grace of God we've received. We demonstrate our faithfulness to Christ now, who first demonstrated His love for us. We can be faithful, reliable, trustworthy, and loyal because His Spirit sanctifies, preserves, and empowers us to do so. The laziness described in this parable is not the occasional lack of energy or enthusiasm. We all have those days. It is the natural persistent response of the unsaved person. The natural response of the persistently wicked who sees God as "hard" and has no relationship with Him. This person will be lazy (i.e. unwilling) to use the talents entrusted to them—*for God's* glory. Hebrews 11:6 says, "*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*" Your faithfulness, stewarding your life for God's glory, out of gratitude for the salvation that Jesus has purchased for you, is evidence of your trust in Jesus. In John 15:8 Jesus said, "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*" Ask yourself today: How can I use my "talents" and SHAPE for His glory?

Pray with me. Heavenly Father, thank You for everything You've given me. Help me feel proud to be entrusted with such responsibility. Help me to act every day with a single goal in mind: Hearing one day: "Well done! Good and Faithful servant! Enter into the JOY of your master!" In Jesus' name. Amen.