

The Parable of the Depreciating Talent

I know you've read in **Matthew 25:14-30** about the man, ready to depart on a long journey, who called his servants together and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one. We know their story. But did you know about the fourth servant?

When the master returned to settle accounts, the fourth servant came up and said:

"Master, I had to go to college to be able to get a job. Your talents were not enough to pay for it, so I had to get a student loan for the difference. But I knew when I got my job I could pay it off quickly.

"When I got out of school, I had to have a car, but I got low monthly payments. By the way, did you know how much this government taxes us? I was stunned when I started working.

"I got married. Of course, we needed a second car and a house. On top of that we had to have furniture, not to mention an entertainment system and computer. I am so glad we got that credit card with the introductory 2.9% offer. Cable and high-speed internet were a stretch, but it is really a must in our modern world. Don't worry, we were able to get it all with nothing down and low monthly payments. We even started funding our IRA's and 401(k)'s a little.

"Then we had kids. Do you know how much diapers and formula cost? Outrageous. I tried to set aside a little each month for college funds. We wanted to be good parents and make sure our kids got to enjoy all the things we never got. They always had plenty of toys to play with. Further, with movies, scouts, soccer, baseball, piano lessons, ballet, gymnastics, tae kwon do and all the other stuff we did, we produced well rounded kids. You just can't imagine how much it takes to raise kids.

"But my wife and I are good with money. When we did our budget, we were a little overextended. We didn't complain. We just worked longer hours to get overtime and raises. We were so industrious we started making more money. That enabled us to get a bigger house and newer cars.

"That was when we realized we needed to have some time off to ourselves once or twice a year and so we bought the timeshare and the boat.

"Master, with all that work to just be able to live and raise our family, you can understand why we haven't had much time to correspond with you or read the instructions you sent us. I know we needed to work with some of the other servants, teaching, visiting, encouraging and recruiting. We did as much as we could, but to be honest, we barely had time to make the weekly servant meetings. But we did our best when we weren't too busy or too tired.

"I knew we would do more for you in a few years when we had more raises and the kids left home. But you know, now we are on a fixed income and we're not spring chickens. We've worked hard and we're tired. I think it's time for the younger stewards to chip in.

"Oh, by the way, I know it's not quite what you gave me when you left, but here is \$10. Don't worry though, I have life insurance and you are in my will."

His master answered and said...

--Edwin L. Crozier