

# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

### “Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

#### **Ingredient #8: ACCOUNTABILITY – Matthew 25:1-46**

Our Heavenly Father, these studies have been refreshing for us times to examine our own relationships, not only with You, but with each other. We pray as we look at this final ingredient—this aspect of relationships that’s most critical—that You’ll help us in the passage to discern the tracings of Your hand, that You would do a good work in our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

We have moved through 7 ingredients of good interpersonal relationships:

1. A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD was the first one. We saw a judge that didn’t fear God or man.
2. Our second one was UNCONDITIONAL LOVE as we looked at the prodigal son.
3. The third is COMPASSION. Compassion is love which is moved from the heart to the hand.
4. In our fourth we talked about FORGIVENESS. Here, the

Lord Jesus tells a parable of a man who is forgiven 20 million dollars and couldn't turn around and forgive 20 dollars from another friend. This indicates that in interpersonal relationships we must be willing to forgive.

5. And then the fifth one was SENSITIVITY.

6. The sixth one—INTEGRITY.

7. And last week we talked together about LOYALTY. God is faithful and loyal and we used that as the basis for our study.

You'll notice that our subject is ACCOUNTABILITY.

First of all, scriptural responsibilities for relationships. We've given you 37 commands from scripture that we should do for each other in interpersonal relationships. Study them over and meditate on them.

We have the illustration as a resource and in the middle we have Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting and Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting. He's living at the top of the page.

The person at the bottom of the gauge is focused on himself/herself or he/she is under depression and belongs down at the bottom of the page.

Looking at the characters in the parable, what are the words that characterize these individuals as we walk our way through the study?

(Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, September 21, 1989, Senator Mark O. Hatfield)

The word “accountability” holds a great many meanings: a Senator is accountable to his constituents, any government is accountable to the people who pay its bills, and businesses are accountable to their customers. But to whomever else we may be accountable, as Christians we are ultimately accountable to God and the witness of His Son.

Like a Senator running for re-election, our record of service to Him here on earth will be open for inspection: we will be held accountable for the lives we have led—from our smallest thoughts to our largest actions. But unlike politics—where there is always time to correct the record just before the election—Christian living demands attention moment by moment.

Christ told His disciples: “Be dressed, ready for service and keep your lamps burning—like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him” (Luke 12:35).

Our lives are nothing more than a path to that door: have we cluttered them with selfishness and greed, or is the path clear of debris? When Christ knocks—are we too busy, too distracted, too encumbered to notice? Or are we dressed for service and ready to answer?

We speak of the seduction and corruption of political power and prestige, but do we realize that even the institutions we have

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created to serve Christ can seduce and corrupt? In raising money for the cause of Christ—have we become too busy, too careless to keep our record of accountability? Are we accountable for our use of the power and prestige we gain through our work for Christ—do we nurture it for His service or do we manipulate it for one’s own gain?

And perhaps most importantly, what about our accountability for our relationships with the people who he puts in our path? Do we treat them as a means—or as an end? Have we treated the least among us as if they are annoying hurdles placed between us and bigger and better things—or have we treated them as the ultimate bigger and better thing, Christ Himself? (source unknown)

Then he ended his words with an illustration:

In Shusaku Endo’s *The Samurai*, the story is told of a 17th century Franciscan missionary named Father Velasco who wants nothing more than to become the Bishop of Japan. Ultimately jailed and sentenced to death by the Japanese shogun, Father Velasco is given the opportunity to offer his last confession [and these are his words]:

“My haughtiness and pride have misled and wounded many people,” he says. “I sought to satisfy my own pride by taking the name of God in vain. I confused my own will with the will of God. There have been times when I hated God, because God’s will was not in accordance with my will. I have even denied God because God ignored my wishes. I was not aware of my own pride and my lust for conquest. I

flattered myself that they were all for the sake of God.”  
(source unknown)

And then he concludes by saying:

Few of us face death the way Father Velasco did, and few of us have the opportunity to offer our final confession, our final testament. But as men and women who have committed ourselves to Jesus Christ—our confession, our testament, ought not to come in a final moment of revelation. Instead, it should be a constant part of our lives—a constant companion for our witness.

(source unknown)

Now when it comes to the whole realm of accountability, one of the things that is clearly stated in these parables is that the Lord is deeply concerned.

We are dealing with an issue that is so critical. Christ is going to be hanging on the cross within a couple of days. These parables were told on Wednesday. He's in the upper room on Thursday and He's hanging on the cross on Friday. This is His last public ministry. These are the last stories that He tells and each one of the stories has the word accountability tucked into it.

He's talking primarily about the day of His coming, but in the day of His coming is the ultimate accountability because we have been given gifts and abilities and talents. He's going to hold us accountable for what He has given to us.

We're going to look at:

- I. The Foolish and the Prudent Virgins—25:1-13
  - A. The Desire—verses 1-4
  - B. The Delay—verses 5-6
  - C. The Dilemma—verses 7-10
  - D. The Door—verses 11-13
- II. The Story of the Talents—25:14-30
  - A. The Responsibility—verses 14-15
  - B. The Response—verses 16-18
  - C. The Return—verses 19-27
  - D. The Reckoning—verses 28-30
- III. The Sheep and the Goats—25:31-46
  - A. The Coming—verses 31-33
  - B. The Compassion—verses 34-40
  - C. The Condemnation—verses 41-45
  - D. The Consignment—verse 46

Let's take the outline and walk through with the subject of accountability in the back of our minds in interpersonal relationships.

Are you willing to be transparent enough with someone in an interpersonal relationship that you would enter into accountability?

Accountability is an ingredient that is neglected. If you really want to achieve something in your life, then enter into an accountability relationship with somebody—men with men, women with women, and men and women as couples, and as friends—to do this kind of thing is to bring real joy and blessing into your life. Recognize that our ultimate accountability is to God as we look at these stories.

I. The Foolish and the Prudent Virgins—25:1-13

A. The DESIRE—verses 1-4

**v. 1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

The “kingdom of heaven” is always the picture of the King being absent. He is in heaven and He's coming again to set up His kingdom.

Here we have a picture of these virgins who are coming out to have the bridegroom come. The wedding invitations have already been sent out a year ago. We're ready for the consummation of the marriage relationship.

They always had a year here. When they had this contract and the invitations were sent out, the time came for the bridegroom to go to the home of the bride to claim her hand. You never really knew how much the bride's father was going to do and what kind of party they were going to put on and how long they were going to be.

When the bridegroom brought his bride back to his house to celebrate and consummate the marriage, and all that's involved in that, you never knew how long it was going to be from the time he went to claim her until he came back to actually consummate the marriage there in his own home.

So these girls are all aware that the bridegroom has gone and he is coming back again with his bride. Jesus Christ left over 2,000 years ago. And those angelic messengers, as Christ disappeared ascending into heaven, said, "Why are you standing here? This same Jesus who is gone into heaven is gonna come in like manner."

He uses the story of these ten girls who are waiting for the coming of the bridegroom.

**v. 2 Now five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.**

"Now five of them were foolish, and five were prudent."

Why would these girls go out there to this place of waiting and be so foolish?

**v. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them.**

“For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them.”

Now what is it that causes them to act like that? Don't they know that cars run on gas and you do have to change the oil once in a while? Don't they know that lamps burn oil? Then what are they expecting in being ready for this without any oil?

**v. 4 But the prudent took oil in containers along with their lamps.**

“But the prudent took oil in containers along with their lamps.”

They're shrewd. They're ready for any eventuality to immediately trim their lamps and to go forth.

What words could you pick out that characterized these 5 girls without any oil? Why would they be out there like that? You've got to put them down at the bottom of the page somewhere because they certainly had Incorrect Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

They're incompetent and self-reliant. Their lamps are going to burn without oil. Immaturity, inept, ignorant. And self-deception certainly fits here. We have them at the bottom of the

page and they're going to suffer for that as we look at what takes place now in verses 5 and 6.

## B. The DELAY—verses 5-6

### **v. 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all became drowsy and were sleeping.**

“Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all became drowsy and were sleeping.”

Isn't it interesting that all the girls are the same? They all went out to see Him. They all got sleepy. They all went to sleep. Everything is the same except for the fact that they just didn't prepare for what's about to take place.

They've not accepted the fact that they're going to be held accountable for a lamp that is burning and the need for oil. And so, here they are.

### **v. 6 But at midnight there arose a shout: “Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!”**

“But at midnight there arose a shout: ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’”

## C. The DILEMMA—verses 7-10

### **v. 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.**

“Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.”

The five girls that don't have any oil in their lamps are lighting up along with the other girls who have oil in their lamps.

**v. 8 And the foolish said to the prudent: “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.”**

“And the foolish said to the prudent: ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’”

They just figured out that lamps burn oil. So their lights are going out.

**v. 9 But the prudent answered, saying, “No, there may not be enough for us and you. Rather be going to those who are selling and buy for yourselves.”**

“But the prudent answered, saying, ‘No, there may not be enough for us and you. Rather be going to those who are selling and buy for yourselves.’”

What does that tell you? This tells you that half of the people are going to be unprepared when Christ comes. You have half of them that are prudent and ready. The whole business of accountability is seen in the story. These girls did not think that it was going to be necessary for them to have oil. They rationalized it away. As a result of rationalizing it away, they're totally unprepared for the bridegroom when He comes to set up his kingdom.

Look at the tragedy for them.

**v. 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was closed.**

“And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was closed.”

Key phrase:

“those who were prepared.”

Can we assume that all of us recognize our accountability to God?

Hebrews 9:27

It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the examination, or the judgment.

Romans 14:12

So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Can we see that? God didn't just give you the gift of life for you to selfishly enjoy it and settle down and live without any accountability. The ultimate accountability comes when He returns and we have to stand before Him, stripped of everything but His grace, for what He has provided for us in the gift of His Son.

Oil in the scripture is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. To have the absence of the Spirit of God in your life is an indication that you've never entered into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For to know Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God instantaneously comes in to dwell and He is the Oil that lights our lamps.

Jesus says in:

### Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Here are some very foolish girls that did not listen to Amos 4:12: "Prepare to meet your God."

This is exactly what it is going to be like when the rapture of the church occurs. The rapture of the church is the taking of all Christians into glory. Prophetically, that could happen at any time.

We could be taken into His presence. Everyone who knows the

Person of Christ would instantaneously disappear and go into His presence. Those who have not prepared are not going to go.

D. The DOOR—verses 11-13

**v. 11 And later the rest of the virgins are coming and saying: “Lord! Lord! Open up for us!”**

“And later the rest of the virgins are coming and saying: ‘Lord! Lord! Open up for us!’”

Now does that sound familiar? We read in:

Genesis 7:16

And those entered male and female into the ark and then God shut the door.

God is not in the business of opening doors after they’ve been shut. It’s too late.

Jesus says in:

Matthew 7:22-23

“Many will say unto Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord. Did we not prophecy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons and in Your name perform many miracles?’ and then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

In other words, it's too late. You've lived on the wrong basis and now you're going to die on that basis. It's too late.

The interesting thing about it is that right now the Lord is knocking in grace on your door. He wants fellowship and a relationship.

### Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears My voice and opens the door . . .”

Isn't that gracious of Him? Here in judgment He shuts the door of the ark. Here in judgment in the parable He shuts the door. But He graciously stands at our heart's door and He knocks, waiting for an invitation to come in.

If you don't respond, guess what? You'll be knocking later. It'll just be a reversal of roles.

They are knocking. They're saying, "Lord! Lord! Open up to us!"

But what does the Lord say?

**v. 12 But he answered and said, 'Truly I am saying to you, I am not knowing you.'**

"But he answered and said, 'Truly I am saying to you, I am not knowing you.'"

It's too late.

**v. 13 Be ever on the watch therefore, because you are not knowing the day nor the hour.**

“Be ever on the watch therefore, because you are not knowing the day nor the hour.”

Let’s add—of your accountability.

We’ll have to reckon with what we’ve done with the gift of His Son. Did you respond? Or did you not respond to Him?

So the first parable is a parable of 5 wise girls and 5 foolish girls in their preparation.

Now we come to the second parable. This particular parable focuses on accountability and it is predetermined accountability that is graded according to potential. Watch how it works.

**II. The Story of the Talents—25:14-30**

**A. The RESPONSIBILITY—verses 14-15**

**v. 14 For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them.**

“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them.”

They’re going be held accountable. He calls his slaves and he

entrusts everything he has to them.

**v. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.**

“And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one,”—and look at that next phrase—“each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.”

Maybe you’re saying, “Boy I sure can’t teach Bible classes like he/she can” and “I can’t do this and I can’t do that.” But you can do something. God knows there are some 5 talents, some 2 talents, and some 1 talent folks. The same law applies to each of them.

None of us are going to be Billy Grahams and reach millions of people, but we each got a stewardship for something we’ve been given. Each according to his own ability. And the Lord knows that.

When it comes to accountability, you have a guy with 5, one with 2, and another with 1. A talent probably was about 58 to 80 pounds. If it were silver, they were worth about \$2,000 each. If gold, \$30,000 each. So this is a pretty good chunk of money that’s measured out to each of them.

Now that’s the responsibility. That’s what they’re supposed to work with.

**B. The RESPONSE—verses 16-18**

**v. 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents, proceeded and worked with them and gained five others.**

“Immediately the one who had received the five talents, proceeded and worked with them and gained five others.”

**v. 17 In the same manner the one who had the two gained two others.**

“In the same manner the one who had the two gained two others.”

**v. 18 But he who received the one went away and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.**

“But”—now here comes the third one—“he who received the one went away and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.”

Go to our illustration page and let’s talk about these three individuals. The first two are going to be identical because “immediately” they do what they’re supposed to do.

And where would you put them? What are some of the words that would characterize these first two—the one who gained 5 and other who gained 2?

Stewards, talented, competent, examples, independent, gifted. The word servant fits there, too.

They're comfortable with the authority of the one over them and they know that this is what they're supposed to do. Humility would also fit there. They have Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. They belong at the top. They're going to be the happiest ones in the bunch here in just a minute.

What does the third guy do? He buries his in the ground. Where do you think he fits? Inferiority maybe. Fear, inadequate. Go back to that page after we see his response to the master and then see what other words you can put there.

### C. The RETURN—verses 19-27

**v. 19 Now after a long time, the master of those slaves is coming and is settling up accounts with them.**

“Now after a long time, the master of those slaves is coming and is settling up accounts with them.”

Accountability is now here. We are each going to be held accountable for what we did with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the first parable and now this one has to do with the things that have been given to us.

**v. 20 And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five other talents, saying, “Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five other talents.”**

“And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five other talents.’”

**v. 21 His master said to him: “Well done! Good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”**

“His master said to him: ‘Well done! Good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

**v. 22 And he who had received two talents came up and said: “Master, you entrusted to me two talents; See! I have gained two other talents.”**

“And he who had received two talents came up and said: ‘Master, you entrusted to me two talents; See! I have gained two other talents.’”

**v. 23 His master said to him, “Well done! Good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”**

“His master said to him, ‘Well done! Good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

The whole basis of that is faithfulness in the face of

accountability. They are faithful to do what they needed to do with what they had and the Lord blesses them.

Each of us should be faithful in using the opportunities that are given to us—whether it's life, talents, abilities—to glorify God.

Now here comes the whole story.

**v. 24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said: “Master, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering from where you scattered no seed.**

“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said: ‘[Master, you’re to blame] Master, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering from where you scattered no seed.’”

**v. 25 And being afraid and having gone off, I hid your talent in the ground: See! You are having what is yours.”**

“And being afraid and having gone off, I hid your talent in the ground: See! You are having what is yours.””

Where are we going to put him on our illustration? What are some of the words on that? Judgmental, selfish—blames everybody else for your own problems. Arrogance, pride, haughtiness, self-indulgent, self-centered, know-it-all, over-talkative, over-bearing, over-critical.

We have him in the lower left-hand corner. In every one of these studies when we've had a character in the parables in the lower left-hand corner, they end up in total misery. And yet, many of us have found ourselves on occasion in the lower left-hand corner.

We're going to be held accountable before God at the day of reckoning for the way we've lived our lives and what we've done

There is a blessing for those who really discipline themselves and do what they need to do rather than constantly doing what they want to do. When you do that, you're paying the price and you're going to be blessed because God is holding you accountable for the way you treat your temple, the way you treat others, and the things you're doing to accomplish and bring glory and honor to Him.

Now the easy thing to do is when you get to the day of accountability is to blame the guy who gave you the gift. And that's what he does.

“You're a hard man. You reap where you didn't sow and you are gathering from where you scattered no seed.”

But the buck stops with the master, right? That's going to fall on deaf ears.

**v. 26 But his master answering, said to him: “You wicked and lazy slave, you know that I am harvesting where I did not sow, and gathering where I scattered no seed?”**

“But his master answering, said to him: ‘You wicked and lazy slave, you know that I am harvesting where I did not sow, and gathering where I scattered no seed?’”

**v. 27 Then you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and I having come, would receive back my money with interest.**

“Then you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and I having come, would receive back my money with interest.”

That is, unless you were putting your money in a bank today. I mean, the bank could have folded and changed names six times while the king was gone and he wouldn't have had anything when he came back.

He says, “At least you could have gotten some interest on it and that would have been at least some effort in that direction.”

What's he saying? You're going to be held accountable so at least do something. Don't just sit there and blame God for the fact that He passed you over and He didn't give you any abilities. Don't have a little pity-party and cry over all the things that you've not been able to do and that everybody else has been able to do. Get busy doing something under His direction.

D. The RECKONING—verses 28-30

**v. 28 Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who is having ten talents.”**

“Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who is having ten talents.”

**v. 29 For to the one who is having more shall be given and he will have a great abundance; and he who is not having, even what he is having shall be taken from him.**

“For to the one who is having more shall be given and he will have a great abundance; and he who is not having, even what he is having shall be taken from him.”

**v. 30 And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

“And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Now that’s a sad story, but it’s an ultimate story of accountability.

The first 5 girls are prudent, 5 that are foolish.

In this parable, we have 2 who are prudent and know they’re accountable and they’re faithful to their accountability. The sad thing is in the one who refused to be accountable and what a tragic day when he faces that final moment and recognizes that he had not prepared.

Let's look at the last parable.

### III. The Sheep and the Goats—25:31-46

When Christ comes, ultimately the accountability is going to be revealed.

#### A. The COMING—verses 31-33

**v. 31** Now when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon His throne of glory.

“Now when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon His throne of glory.”

This is at the beginning of His kingdom.

**v. 32** And all the nations will be gathered before him; and He shall separate them from one another, even as the shepherd is separating the sheep from the goats.

“And all the nations will be gathered before him; and He shall separate them from one another, even as the shepherd is separating the sheep from the goats.”

We've had the wise and the foolish, we've had the good and the wicked, and now we've got the sheep and the goats.

It's time for separation and accountability.

**v. 33 And He will stand the sheep on His right and goats on the left.**

“And He will stand the sheep on His right and goats on the left.”

B. The COMPASSION—verses 34-40

**v. 34 Then the king will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

“Then the king will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

Then He tells them why.

**v. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in;**

“For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in;”

**v. 36 naked and you clothed me; I was sick, and you looked after me; I was in prison, and you came to me.**

“naked and you clothed me; I was sick, and you looked after me; I was in prison, and you came to me.”

**v. 37 Then the righteous ones will answer Him saying:**

**“Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsting and give You drink?”**

“Then the righteous ones will answer Him saying: ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsting and give You drink?’”

**v. 38 And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?**

“And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?”

**v. 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?”**

“And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?”

**v. 40 And answering, the king will say to them: “Truly I am saying to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these my brethren, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”**

“And answering, the king will say to them: ‘Truly I am saying to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these my brethren, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

That is Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. Those people have exercised compassion. Compassion is flowing out of our heart into our hand.

You can tell someone, “I love you,” but you demonstrate compassion to them by alleviating their suffering by doing something for them.

Faith without works is dead.

You can say “I believe in God,” but unless that faith flows out of your life and into others and you do something for someone, you do not demonstrate compassion.

We resist acts of love and compassion and that’s what the Lord is looking for from us. He wants to see those things flow out of our lives as we touch others. That’s why He told the parable of the Good Samaritan. He’s the only one who had compassion. Everybody else went around.

Now when was it that these righteous at the beginning of the kingdom did it “unto the least of these My brethren”? Well, during the tribulation period, which is a 7 year period of judgment that just precedes the kingdom.

The world leader is not going to let anybody buy anything unless they have his mark. To have his mark is not to be a Christian. So they can’t buy anything, they can’t get any clothes, they can’t get any food.

Here are some people who are Christians on the earth that have food. They have clothes and they have water to drink. They go and visit some of those who are in prison and they’re doing all of these things out of love for these Christian brothers and sisters

during this horrible period of judgment. Because they did that, the Lord says, “Because you did it to them, you did it unto Me.” You went and ministered to their needs and by dealing with them and ministering to their needs and that situation, “You did it unto Me.”

Now notice the other kind of people. They are in the latter part.

### C. The CONDEMNATION—verses 41-45

**v. 41 Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from me, you who have been doomed into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.**

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you who have been doomed into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

**v. 42 For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink.**

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink.”

**v. 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison and you did not look after Me.”**

“I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison and you did not look after

Me.”

He uses the very same things that He did with the others.

**v. 44 Then they themselves also will answer, saying,  
“Lord, when did we see you hungering or thirsting or  
a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not  
serve (help) you?”**

“Then they themselves also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungering or thirsting or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not serve (help) you?’”

**v. 45 Then He will answer them saying: “Truly I am  
saying to you, to the extent that you did not do it to  
one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”**

“Then He will answer them saying: ‘Truly I am saying to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

We’re going to be held accountable for our acts of compassion. They’re going to demonstrate whose side we’re really on.

D. The CONSIGNMENT—verse 46

**v. 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but  
the righteous ones into life eternal.**

“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous ones into life eternal.”

Now as we walked through these three parables, just briefly verse by verse, we have seen the reason that people are not recognizing their accountability is because of Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

To get our lives right with God, we must move out of Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting up to Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting so we get over to Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

That has been the pattern that we've used in every one of these 8 studies. We must take a trip through Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting to be humble, to be broken, to be repentant, to come before God and recognize your need. Then, and only then are you ready for God to do a good work in your life.

Richard Halverson, former chaplain of the Senate, once spoke on the subject of accountability. He basically said this: Accountability ought to pervade all of our lives. It's where we become unaccountable that we get into trouble.

Here are six areas where we're accountable and we don't have a choice about it:

1. You are accountable to God.

You just don't have any choice about that. Ultimately, the buck stops with Him whether you're a Christian or not a Christian. You are accountable to God because you've got the gift of life and

you have lived today. That is Romans 14:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10.

2. You are accountable to your employer, or to your profession, whatever that is.

That's the parable of the wasteful manager. He wasted his master's things that he had been given and he lost his job. We are accountable to our employer.

3. We are accountable to our mates.

We are accountable to our mates for our thoughts, feelings and actions.

4. We are accountable to our family—to our children.

5. We are accountable to our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ—fellow believers.

We hurt each other when we don't.

6. We are accountable to the lost—people who have not come to know Christ.

We are to set apart Christ (1 Peter 3:15) as Lord in our lives so that we can be ready to “give an answer to every man that asks us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.”

These are the three areas of personal accountability that you have directly to God. It involves nobody else. This is between

you and God.

1. You have an accountability to God for your personal purity.
2. You have areas of accountability in the realm of projects in your life.

Maybe it's weight loss, maybe it's exercise, maybe it's habits, but those projects will be accomplished and done well if you'll only open up to somebody and be accountable to them in those areas.

3. You have areas of accountability in your private disciplines—the reading of the Bible, the memorization of scripture, your prayer life, your giving and your sharing of your gifts and abilities and talents with others.

Those are all areas of accountability.

Men, find some other man that you can be accountable to and with and have him be accountable to you.

Women, find some other woman that you can be accountable to and with and have her be accountable to you.

Father, we are so quick to hear Your word and fail to do it. We pray that You would help us to be doers of the word and not just hearers only, deceiving our own selves. May we not be those who, in Ezekiel's day, came and sat to hear the word of God but having no intention of doing anything about it. May these ingredients that provide the foundation for good interpersonal relationships begin to become a vital part of our lives. We thank

You for the privilege of studying and sharing together. May we be more effective in our horizontal relationships because we've got a right relationship with You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

### “Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

#### Ingredient #8: ACCOUNTABILITY – Matthew 25:1-46

#### NOTES

##### I. The Foolish and the Prudent Virgins – Matt. 25:1-13

###### A. The Desire – verses 1-4

v. 1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.

v. 2 Now five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.

v. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them.

v. 4 But the prudent took oil in containers along with their lamps.

###### B. The Delay – verses 5-6

v. 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all became drowsy and were sleeping.

v. 6 But at midnight there arose a shout: ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

###### C. The Dilemma – verses 7-10

v. 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

v. 8 And the foolish said to the prudent: ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

v. 9 But the prudent answered, saying, ‘No, there may not be enough for us and you. Rather be going to those who are selling and buy for yourselves.’

v. 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was closed.

## D. The Door – verses 11-13

v. 11 And later the rest of the virgins are coming and saying: 'Lord! Lord! Open up for us!'

v. 12 But he answered and said, 'Truly I am saying to you, I am not knowing you.'

v. 13 Be ever on the watch therefore, because you are not knowing the day nor the hour.

## II. The Story of the Talents – Matt. 25:14-30

### A. The Responsibility – verses 14-15

v. 14 For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them.

v. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

### B. The Response – verses 16-18

v. 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents, proceeded and worked with them and gained five others.

v. 17 In the same manner the one who had the two gained two others.

v. 18 But he who received the one went away and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

### C. The Return – verses 19-27

v. 19 Now after a long time, the master of those slaves is coming and is settling up accounts with them.

v. 20 And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five other talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five other talents.'

v. 21 His master said to him: 'Well done! good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

v. 22 And he who had received two talents came up and said: 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see! I have gained two other talents.'

v. 23 His master said to him, 'Well done! good and faithful slave, you were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

v. 24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said: 'Master, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering from where you scattered no seed.'

v. 25 And being afraid and having gone off, I hid your talent in the ground; see! you are having what is yours.'

v. 26 But his master answering, said to him: 'You wicked and lazy slave, you know that I am harvesting where I did not sow, and gathering where I scattered no seed?'

v. 27 Then you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and I having come, would receive back my money with interest.'

### D. The Reckoning – verses 28-30

v. 28 Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who is having ten talents.'

v. 29 For to the one who is having more shall be given, and he will have a great abundance; and he who is not having, even what he is having shall be taken from him.'

v. 30 And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

### III. The Sheep and the Goats – Matt. 25:31-46

#### A. The Coming – verses 31-33

v. 31 Now when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with him, then He will sit upon His throne of glory.'

v. 32 And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He shall separate them from one another, even as the shepherd is separating the sheep from the goats.'

v. 33 And He will stand the sheep on His right and goats on the left.'

### B. The Compassion – verses 34-40

v. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

v. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; v. 36 naked and you clothed me; I was sick, and you looked after me; I was in prison, and you came to me.’

v. 37 Then the righteous ones will answer Him, saying: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungering and feed you, or thirsting and give you drink?’

v. 38 And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe you?

v. 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?’

v. 40 And answering, the King will say to them: ‘Truly I am saying to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these my brethren, even the least of them, you did it to me.’

### C. The Condemnation – verses 41-45

v. 41 Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you who have been doomed, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

v. 42 For I was a hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink.

v. 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

v. 44 Then they themselves also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungering or thirsting or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not serve (help) you?’

v. 45 Then He will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I am saying to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

### D. The Consignment – verse 46

v. 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous ones into life eternal.”

## LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: Prepare to meet your God by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Lesson #2: When He comes it will be too late to prepare.

Lesson #3: In view of his imminent return, we are to be watching and working.

Lesson #4: Our stewardship is based on our abilities.

Lesson #5: The Lord is glorified by much fruit.

Lesson #6: There are only two alternatives: (1) eternal punishment or (2) eternal life.