

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- **Only Two Choices**
- **Realize the Significance**
- **Is it Faith or Science?**
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- **Guess at the Evidence**
- **Inspect the Evidence**
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- **No Compromise**

DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- **Love - GOD and MAN**
- **Increase - GROW**
- **Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure**
- **Eternity – Past, Present, Future**

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- **Personal and Loving**
- **Omnipotent**
- **Wise and All-Knowing**
- **Everywhere and Eternal**
- **Righteous and Reliable**

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- **Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason**
- **Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time**
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

F - Faithfulness

The Bible makes it clear that one of the major purposes of our life is to be faithful. Being faithful in life means that we recognize and embrace our role as stewards. Everything we have has been given to us by God. He is the true owner of everything that I call “mine” (“If He created us, He owns us....”). What I “have” in this world is not mine to do with as I please. I have been given time, talents, and treasure for a season, and during this season I am to use them to bear fruit that will last.

My responsibility is to use the things I have been given in the way and for the purposes that He intends.

The parables of Jesus illustrate this powerfully, especially the parable of the talents:

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:14-30

Here are a few observations from this passage:

- The master did not give each servant the same amount to start with.
- The amounts the master gave were based on each servant's ability
- The talents still belonged to the master.
- Both of the faithful servants received the same praise even though they didn't have the same total gain.
- Their reward was to be put in charge of even more things, which indicates that the additional things still belonged to the master rather than the servant.
- The unfaithful servant used his fear of the master as an excuse for disobedience and laziness rather than as a motivation for obedience.
- The parable implies that the servant with one talent could have received the same reward as the one with ten talents if he had just been faithful with the little that was given him.

Here are four related principles we can derive from these observations (and other passages in Scripture):

1. God owns everything
2. God gives each of us a unique set of resources and circumstances
3. God judges us on our faithfulness with what we have, not in comparison to others
4. If we are faithful with small things, God will reward us and entrust us with even more

To be a good steward requires more wisdom than any of us has, but God promises to give us the wisdom we need if we confidently ask Him for it:

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. James 1:5-6

We'll now look briefly at how we can apply these principles to the Time, Talents, and Treasures that God has given us.

Time

Each day is a gift. None of us knows how many more days and years we have in this life. But God knows. He says that our years are numbered, and each of us will live as long as He determines. That leads to a simple conclusion:

If I'm not dead yet, God still has something for me to do in this life.

So how can I be faithful with the time I have? Let's apply the four stewardship principles above:

1. **I need to recognize that all of "my" time actually belongs to God.** The perspective I have on making decisions about how to spend my days determines whether I'm a steward or a thief:
 - a. Steward question - "What does God want me to do with this time He's given me?"
 - b. Thief question - "What do I want to do with my time?"
2. **My circumstances and available time are different than other people.** I have more legitimate demands on my hours than some people, and less demands than other people. My standard is not based on how other people use their time. To be a faithful steward I need to continually ask God for direction and have confidence that He will give me wisdom to make my days fruitful. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6*
3. **God judges my use of time based on the circumstances He's given me and I need to trust Him with the results.** God has limited me to 24 hours per day, and if I can't get everything done that I think I should then I'm trying to do too much. Sometimes He signs me up for "appointments" that aren't on my "to do" list and these keep me from doing something that I thought needed to be done. But I take comfort from the thought that Jesus knows what it's like to be limited to 24-hour days. When He walked the earth He went to sleep at night even though there were people sick and dying that He could have healed. He said that He trusted His Father – I should also trust Him with my days.

4. **I need to be faithful with my days if I expect my years to count for something.** It is tempting to dream about great things we'll do for the Lord "someday" when the opportunity arises. But typically the greatest things we do are not one-time events. The greatest things we do are the result of faithfully using each day wisely and investing small amounts of time in worthwhile activities over a long period of time. Whether you think of it as goal-setting, daily planning, daily discipline, or something else, we all need to be reminded of why what we're doing today is important in the long run.

The writing of this book is an example of the pitfall of taking my days for granted. I started on this book over 25 years ago. I would never have thought it would take this long to finish a simple worldview outline. But because I didn't work on it a little at a time during my days, the years flew by. I'm looking forward to being able to give this book to my children, but I'm sorry I didn't have it for them sooner.

As long as I'm alive I should be using my days to accomplish what God gives me to do. It's easier to do this if I recognize that the time is really His anyway and that He will direct and enable me to achieve His purpose for my life.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
Psalms 90:12