



Week 4 (August 23-29): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question - Ask, "What gifts/skills/talents has God given you to serve Him with?"

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Matthew 25:1-13 (the parable of the 10 virgins).

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

The setting for this week's story is the same as last week. The disciples of Jesus had asked Him, "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus proceeded to teach them about the end times, and He used several analogies to help the disciples understand. Today's story is another one of those analogies. This analogy follows right after the story we told last week, so use the story of the 10 virgins as part of the background in your mind as you build a framework for this story.

There are a few things you should know about today's particular analogy. First, in Jesus' day, a "talent" was a unit of measure used in weighing gold or silver. In other words, talents were coins used as a means of exchange. When we say "talent", we are thinking about skills or abilities, but when Jesus said "talent", He was referring to a coin. Though the "talent" in this story is a coin, it can represent using the things God has given us for His purposes. As you hear this story, remember that God has gifted you for His purpose – and His purpose for your life is for you to make disciples of Jesus. Finally, in this story, the Master who leaves and then returns represents Jesus.

With this background information, you are ready to hear and discuss this week's story...

Tell the story from Matthew 25:14-30

Rebuild the story – (Group members tell the story based on what they remember)

Read Matthew 25:14-30 – (Ask the group to read these scriptures)

Discuss these questions:

- What do you like about this story?
- What do you dislike about this story?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God? (remember, Jesus is God)
- Who do you relate to in this story? Why?
- How do you need to change based on this story?

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time.

Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)



Week 4: Leadership Coaching Guide

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- Last week, we discussed the power of the Holy Spirit to teach His church through His Word.
- Do you believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to teach His church through the members of His body? If so, how do you demonstrate this belief in your group?
- This week, we will discuss the ground rules of “the pause” and “listening”.
- To clarify, “the pause” is the moment of silence the group affords after each person shares, and “listening” is the act of silencing your own mind while others are sharing and really paying attention to what they are saying. When practiced with the right heart, both of these ground rules demonstrate a value in God’s power to teach His church through the members of His body.
- Why listen and pause? When a group member is sharing, there can be a tendency to lose focus on what they are saying as you begin to prepare in your mind what you want to say next. This is not a healthy practice for the church, because it demonstrates a lack of faith in receiving a word from the Holy Spirit through the members of His church. Therefore, we commit ourselves to value the words of our group members and really listen to what they are sharing. Once they have finished, the group commits to pause for a moment to allow everyone to soak in everything the Holy Spirit is trying to share. This pause contributes to a safe place because it removes the pressure of building up your case and interjecting your own idea quickly before someone else takes the spotlight.

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- In one-to-one discipleship meetings, the applications of listening and the pause may look different, but the principle is no less powerful...
 - Did you know that the Holy Spirit wants to teach you through those you are discipling?
 - This thought was revolutionary for me! For a long time, I felt that I met with people who were less spiritually mature so that I could help them, and I met with people who were more spiritually mature so they could help me. What an arrogant way to view discipleship!
 - The Lord is faithful to use whomever He will to speak truth into our lives. He wants to use His body to build itself up through love, edification, exhortations, speaking truth, etc. Are those you are discipling not capable of building up the body? Do they not have the same Spirit that dwells in you?
 - Next time you go to spend some quality time with someone you are discipling, go in with a heart to listen to what the Lord has to say to you through that person. If needed, take time to pause and really take in what they are saying.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

- You cannot offer someone something you don’t have. This is a foundational principle in discipleship.
- Do you have a value for what the Lord wants to teach you through other members in His body? Or is the Lord trying to convict you that you need to value His input through His church in a deeper way?
- Evidence that you value the Word of the Lord through His church:
 - Attending group is a vital part of your spiritual life because you expect to hear the Lord through the things your group shares.
 - Discipleship is a vital part of your spiritual growth because the Lord is going to teach you not only as you share with your disciple, but as they share with you.
 - The preaching of the Word is a priority to you because you know that God speaks through His body, and especially those whom He has gifted to lead His church through teaching and preaching the Word.
 - Your personal time with the Lord is irreplaceable because you know He often gives you a Word that He wants you to share to build up His body.
- Will you stop right now, examine your heart, and repent of any ways you have undervalued the power of God to build up His church through the words of the members of His body?