



## “Living Courageously”

Matthew 25

### Small Group Plan

Jane Burka and Lenora M. Yuen are San Francisco psychologists and co-authors of the book, *Procrastination: Why You Do It, What To Do About It*.

They identify four indecisive personalities. These are people who find it difficult to make changes in their lives. They are:

“**Perfectionists**” who would rather avoid the decision than risk a mistake.  
They lack the courage to change.

“**Dependents**” who trust others more than they trust themselves.  
They feel unable to change.

“**Freedom-Lovers**” who want everything and can’t commit to just one thing.  
They avoid change.

“**Non-Compromisers**” who have learned all they plan to learn.  
They simply have no plans to change.

All four personalities types, according to Burka and Yuen, are likely to procrastinate. This is not a great quality to have at any time of the year, but it is particularly difficult as a new year begins.

#### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Of the four indecisive personalities, which do you think is most common? Explain.
- Why is it often difficult to change?

#### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### — ABILITY —

Matthew 25:14-15

<sup>14</sup> “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> 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.

- Notice how the story begins with “again.” What themes or messages are being carried into this story from prior stories?
- This man “entrusted” his property to his servants. What was their relationship like? How would you describe it? How did he feel about his servants? What did he expect from them?
- If you had been the third servant, would you have felt slighted or grateful for the smaller responsibility? Explain.

### — RELIABILITY —

#### Matthew 25:16-18

<sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

- Explain the basic difference between how the three servants approached their mission? They did not all see it in the same way. How and why?
- Why did the third servant hide what his master had entrusted to him?
- What does this say about his view of his master?
- What does this say about his view of himself?

### — ACCOUNTABILITY —

#### Matthew 25:19-30

<sup>19</sup> “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> 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.’ <sup>21</sup> “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!’ <sup>22</sup> “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ <sup>23</sup> “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!’ <sup>24</sup> “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. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ <sup>26</sup> “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? <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> ““Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

- Why was the third servant afraid to risk, while the other servants were not?
- Do you think the master was too harsh or was he justified in his response? Explain.
- Was the master happiest with what happened in the lives of the servants or with what happened to the value of his investments? Explain.
- Speculate: What would the master have thought if one of the servants had taken the risk and made an investment, but then lost the money?

### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- As a group, list the resources that God has made available to everyone. What would be the least risky way to handle each resource? How would God feel about such an approach?
- What does this parable teach about the value of taking risks?
- As an individual, what is risky about living faithfully for God?
- As a congregation, how could we take risks for God?
- When you consider how you are “investing” your life ...
  - ... do you feel satisfied?
  - ... do you need to make some changes?
  - ... do you feel that your life is on hold?
  - ... or are you unsure about how to proceed?
- As a group pray for how everyone uses the resources God has entrusted to us.