
MASTERCLASS #1
Planning for a Purposed Life

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 16:1-13

Discussion Questions

1. How does our culture compel us to love material wealth?
2. As the greatest teacher who ever lived, Jesus Christ often used parables to teach life lessons, to help people remember spiritual principles and to reveal something about God. In this parable, Jesus is teaching us that God wants you to plan for a purposed life, one that has eternal values. You may already have made plans to do all kinds of things this new year. Which of your new year plans do you think have eternal value? What motivates you to pursue these plans. Share and discuss.
3. **The Situation (v. 1-4):** One of the parables that Jesus told is the Parable of the Shrewd Servant. Read Luke 16:1-13. This is a story of a rich man who was firing his steward (manager) because this manager was mismanaging the rich man's resources. The manager was asked to close up the accounts he was handling before leaving the company. Why was the manager afraid to lose his job (v. 3)? If you were in his situation, would you consider it a wake up call if you were to lose your job because of mismanagement? Why is having contingency plans important? Is it God's will for you to have one?
4. **The Action Plan (v. 5-7):** The job termination was indeed a wake up call for the manager. While thinking about his situation, he came up with a brilliant idea to put himself in a better position when he leaves the company. What action plan did the manager set up so that his future would be secured? Was giving up a

temporary loss of his commission to gain future favor a good deal? Would you sacrifice your own gain for the sake of the company that you are working with? Why or why not?

5. **The Commendation (v. 8):** Apparently, the rich man was impressed with how the manager willingly took a loss in order to gain future favor. What does Jesus mean when He said, "*For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light*"? Who are the "people of light" that Jesus was referring to? Should Christians allow themselves to be taken advantage of in their dealings with others? What does Matthew 10:16 say about it? Discuss how you should wisely deal with people whom you work with. How does planning for future gain help make having to experience temporal loss worth going through?
6. The Parable of the Shrewd Servant shows us three lessons that Jesus Christ teaches on how to plan a purposed life:
 - a. **Lesson #1: Plan wisely for eternity (v. 9).** Jesus taught that you should use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourself to bring Christ to them. Share examples of how you could use your resources to lead someone to Christ— an act that would lead you to go through temporal loss but gain something for eternity?
 - b. **Lesson #2: Plan to be faithful and trustworthy, even in small things (v. 10-12).** The man in this parable was not trustworthy in the task that was given to him therefore he was fired. Jesus is telling you that when you are planning for life, you should plan to be faithful and trustworthy. Faithfulness doesn't depend on the task or amount of work you were given, but your character measures it. Discuss how you could be faithful and trustworthy in the task given to you. How does faithfulness in the task God gives you today will affect your future?

- c. **Lesson #3: Plan to be loyal to only one Master: the Lord God (v. 13).** At the end of the day, you cannot serve two masters; you can only be loyal to one. You need to choose that master now because you cannot love two equally. Why is it impossible to serve two masters? What are the “masters” in your life that cause conflicts in your priorities? How can you be loyal to only one Master, the Lord God?

Walk

A lasting loyalty to God is not loyalty to the church, pastor, environment, or program you love; it is loyalty to one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only One who will never fail you. Therefore, when you make plans for your life, plan wisely for eternity, plan to be faithful and trustworthy even in small things, and plan to be loyal to only one Master, the Lord God. Think about these things and see if your plans are filtered through your loyalty to God.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my eyes on how I should plan for my life that involves relationships, resources, loyalties, and priorities. I must admit that most of the time, my plans revolve around my personal affairs that compromise my relationships with others and even with You. Help me, Father, to be purposeful in my plans with eternity in mind, that I would be willing to go the extra mile in order to bring someone closer to You. Help me to be faithful and trustworthy in whatever I do so that I would be a good representation of Your name. Help me to be loyal to You because You alone deserves my loyalty. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #2
A Beginner's Guide to Effective Biblical Nagging

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 18:1-8

Discussion Questions

1. Share about a time your nagging of someone paid off. How about a time (or two) when it didn't?
2. THE SITUATION (v. 2-5): Nagging is usually detrimental to marriage and other relationships, but the Bible actually encourages us to "nag." God wants us to "nag" Him in prayer. Read Luke 18:1-8. In this passage, God gives us a guide to effective Biblical nagging. How did Jesus refer to the judge in the story (v. 2)? What did the widow want from him (v. 3). Why did the judge finally yield to her appeal (v. 4-5)?
3. A TRUTH ABOUT GOD (v. 6-8). This parable tells us that unlike the unjust judge who responded only because of the woman's nagging, God responds quickly so that His beloved people would get justice. God never gets tired hearing your prayer request even if it is the same thing over and over again. Persistence in prayer is effective with God. How does it make you feel that God enjoys hearing from you and wouldn't mind you "nagging" Him with the same prayer request? Would God responding to your nagging mean that He would always answer your prayers according to how you wanted it answered? Why does God not give quick answers to every need that you bring up to Him in prayer?
4. The Parable of the Persistent Widow teaches us three lessons to help us understand the importance of perseverance in prayer:
 - a. **Lesson #1: Prayer acknowledges that God is able to do it (v. 1).** Effective Biblical nagging is conditional to the fact that the one you are asking to do something can actually do it. You pray because you believe that God can answer your prayer. What are the kinds of need that you can bring to God in prayer? Share about a need that you prayed for knowing that God alone could help you in that need.

- b. **Lesson #2: Persistence is the key to effective prayer (v. 2).** God is inviting you to nag Him. Unlike most of us who may be annoyed with nagging, God actually enjoys it. Your persistence in asking expresses that what you are asking is really something you need. Persistent prayers draws you closer to God. What is it that you pray for everyday? Discuss why a lot of Christians do not pray often enough for something he or she needs. Why do they stop praying? What does it mean to be steadfast in your prayers?
- c. **Lesson #3: Persistent prayer is maintained when one does not lose heart (v. 3).** Persistent prayer can be discouraging sometimes because it would seem that God is not answering. However, the Bible says, "Do not lose heart!" God not always answer prayers is for your own good. How does faithfulness in prayers give you hope in the midst of disappointments? Share something that you have prayed for in the past that God did not answer right away (or did not grant) which you are now thankful about. What does that experience teach you about God's will and perfect timing?

Walk

Isn't it amazing how God wants us to talk to Him even to the extent of nagging Him? We pray because we acknowledge that God is able to answer our prayers, whether it is a yes or no, or whether the answer is immediate or takes a long time coming. God is able, yet He works according to His will and timetable, and so *persistence* is the key to effective prayer. That persistence is maintained when one does not lose heart. Our prayer ceases to be effective when we cease to pray. Think about how this parable teaches you about what your prayer life should be like. How can you safeguard your heart from giving up praying when you do not see quick results?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for teaching me how to pray persistently. Thank You that You don't get tired listening to me, that I can talk to You about anything in my life without fear of being judged or ignored. Help me to trust Your will and timing, that when I don't see an answer to my prayers right away, I won't lose heart. Draw me closer to You, Lord, by helping me keep in touch with You with my needs. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #3
Lights, Camera, Action!*Word***Scripture Reference**

Matthew 21:23-32

Discussion Questions

1. Did anyone ever question your authority over something that you were responsible for? How did you respond?
2. When the director of a movie says, “Lights, camera, action!” the actors should be ready to take action according to the script. The word ‘action’ is a call to move, to do something you’re supposed to do. As a Christian, you are like an actor playing the character of a Christ-follower on a world stage, ready to play your part anytime that the Director of your life calls “Action!” Read Matthew 21:23-32. Jesus explains the importance of your actions through this parable. Jewish leaders during Jesus’ time in Jerusalem opposed His ministry. Jesus authenticated His claims by performing miracles, but He did not do this all the time because He knew that even if He did, the Jewish leaders would not believe anyway. In this passage, how was Jesus’ authority questioned (v. 23-27)? How did Jesus deal with their accusation? How did the chief priests and elders finally respond to Jesus (v. 27)? What answer did Jesus give to them?
3. In the Parable of the Two Sons, both sons were asked by their father to help in the vineyard. Discuss how the two sons responded. Which of the them did the will of his father? Likewise, whom did Jesus say would be in heaven? Why would these leaders not be in heaven (v. 32)? Why can religious knowledge not guarantee a godly life? What should you do in order to have eternal security?

4. This passage shows us the dichotomy (contrast) between words and actions, from which learn three life principles:
 - a. **Words matter, but actions are more important.** What you say is important, but unless it is followed up by tangible action, your words are useless and empty. Discuss how true is it that actions speak louder than words. Share how you feel when someone promises you something but he or she doesn’t deliver. What are the spiritual things you have promised the Lord but have a hard time fulfilling? How can you amend it?
 - b. **Present actions are more important than past actions.** One of the sons described in the parable refused to do what his father asked him to do, but he actually went ahead and did it. His present action doing was more significant than his past action of refusing. Similarly, your past wrongdoings can be corrected by asking God today to forgive you of your sins and then starting to live in righteousness. This is the hope of the Christian life: that we can have new life in Jesus Christ. Do you know someone who thinks his or her life is hopeless because of his/her past failures? Share how God has transformed that person’s life (or discuss how you can let that person know about the life transformation that is possible in Christ). On the same note, the laurels and accomplishments you achieved in past may be important, but what you are doing in the present is even more so. What are you doing right now to contribute to the work of the Lord?
 - c. **Responding to truth in action is of great importance.** Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that unlike the tax collectors and prostitutes who were exposed to the same truth as they were, these sinners believed the truth, which is why they were going to heaven. The religious leaders did not believe, and so Jesus said they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Do you believe that God is sovereign, in control, and omnipotent? Do you act on that truth by trusting Him instead of worrying? How are many Christians similar to the religious leaders in this parable—knowing the truth yet not letting this truth affect their lives or move them to action? How do you respond to Truth?

Walk

*“Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no pow’r of evil can sever,
He gave His life to ransom my soul; Now I belong to Him;
Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.”*

When we belong to Jesus, we should respond to truth in tangible action. The knowledge of truth changes the way we live our life. It should spur us to action. When the Director of your life shouts “Action!” are you ready to respond by actively living for Him? Look at your life; are you similar to the first son or the second son in the parable? How does your life speak of the truth that you indeed belong to Jesus?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my mind that I should not only believe in truth, but the truth should spur me to actions that speak louder than words about your sovereignty and goodness in my life as Your child. Help me not to live in my past accomplishments or failures, but to continue to pursue excellence for your glory. May it be my daily commitment to live my life to give glory to Your Name. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #4
Finding Fairness in Life

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 20:1-16

Discussion Questions

1. Have you been a recipient of someone's generosity? What is the most generous thing someone has ever done for you?
2. What is fairness? People often think of three ideas when they consider what fairness mean: (a) Sameness - that everyone should get or be treated the same; (b) Deservedness - that you get what you deserve; and (c) Social justice - that those who have more should give a greater percentage than others who have less. Discuss how these definitions of fairness are seen or practiced around you. Have you ever questioned God of being unfair? In what way?
3. Unless you come to terms that life is not fair, you will grow bitter and angry. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, Jesus teaches us life lessons that will help us find fairness in life. Read Matthew 20:1-16. The landowner hired workers to work in his vineyard, with those workers agreeing upon a certain wage. At different times of the day, the landowner hired more workers, with the last ones being hired towards the end of the work period. At the end of the day, wages were given to all the laborers. Discuss why the first hired laborers became upset and complained about their earnings. In their own sense of fairness, what did these first workers assume they would receive for working the whole day (v. 10-11)? If you were in those workers' shoes, would you feel and react the same way? Why?

4. The landowner represents God the Father in how He operates. From His response we learn life lessons on how God sees fairness:
 - a. ***Life Lesson #1: God deals fairly with each person individually. Your response: learn to be content (v. 13).*** God doesn't deal with people as a group but as an individual. He deals with each one fairly, but everyone is responsible for his or her action. What did the landowner tell one of the laborers that shows that the landowner is focused on the individual? What does it tell you about how God has created you as a unique human being? Discuss how you could be satisfied with yourself and with what you have until you start comparing yourself with others. How does accepting yourself as how God had made you give you contentment?
 - b. ***Life Lesson #2: God deals with each person graciously. Your response: learn to not compare (v. 14).*** The owner told the laborer that he wished to give to the last laborer, who only worked for one hour, the same amount of wage he had given the others. It was the landowner's prerogative to do so because of his grace. God deals with you graciously, even if you don't deserve it. Do you deserve every good thing in your life? Share how God has dealt with you graciously. How did Christ's death show you His grace? His graciousness to you cannot be compared with others. How can you learn not to compare?
 - c. ***Life Lesson #3: God has the right to give what He desires, and it comes from His good heart for our best. Your response: learn to trust (v. 15).*** God owns everything and so He gets to choose how He distributes His things. You cannot demand something to be given to you when it doesn't belong to you. The very fact that no one can take with him anything when he dies shows that everything in our life is just borrowed. Do you have the right to question how God distributes what belongs to Him? How do you feel when God blesses you? And how do you feel when He blesses others? How can you learn to trust God in the way He blesses not only you but others as well? Learn to trust Him because He knows what is best for you.

Walk

When the day to give an account of our life comes, some prominent people may find themselves last or in low position in heaven. Some who are humble and poor now may find their standing quite high (v. 16) simply because of how they responded to the fairness and grace of God. Fairness is not in the result; it is found in the Person when you draw yourself to God. How does comparing down instead of comparing up help you appreciate your life better? Do you understand that God withholds certain things from you for your best? Do you accept that God gives you just enough so that you will continue to trust Him?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are the source of good things. Thank You for how You have created and blessed me. Help me not to define myself based on what I have, but as recipient of Your amazing grace. May I learn to trust You even when You withhold things that I wish for or even work hard for because You are sovereign and all-knowing and You know me even better than I know myself. You know what is best for me. Help me Lord God to always remember that You have given Your own Son to save me and give me eternal life, how much more other things that You think are good for me. Help me to be content, not to compare especially for the wrong reasons and to trust You because You have a good heart that knows what is best for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #5
Prepare to Prepare

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 25:1-13

Discussion Questions

1. What do you do when you are warned about something that will happen, e.g. storms, etc.?
2. Warning signs are given so that you will have ample time to prepare, like when the traffic light changes to yellow, letting you know that the light is about to turn red. Warnings are important at the time it was given, and has no correlation to when it will actually happen. The Bible is full of warnings about the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. How then should we respond and prepare for this eventuality? Matthew 24-25 is known as the Olivet Discourse, a sermon given by Jesus at the Mount of Olives in response to His disciples' question of when He will come back to establish His Kingdom on earth. In this sermon Jesus proceeded to describe the events that precede His coming and the Great Tribulation, and the events that surround His second coming. As He does so, Jesus describes how people are to live in view of His Second Coming. It is in this context that Jesus gave the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins to describe the heart condition of those anticipating His coming.

Read Matthew 25:1-13. In this passage, the kingdom of heaven is likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. The bridegroom with his bride would take a procession to the wedding banquet and would be met with these 10 virgins. In greater context, Jesus is the groom that is coming back with His bride (the Church) to establish His millennial kingdom. There is going to be a big banquet for those who are

waiting for His coming. Why were five virgins in the parable described as foolish and five described as wise (v. 1-4)? Why would the five wise virgins bring extra oil with them? Discuss how having faith and planning for the future is not mutually exclusive, but works hand-in-hand with the will of God.

3. The bridegroom took a long time in coming, and the 10 virgins became drowsy and fell asleep (v. 5-7). Now, we need to understand that because the bridegroom is throwing the party, it is his prerogative to come when he wanted to come. At midnight, the 10 virgins woke up to the commotion of the bridegroom arriving. The five foolish virgins had run out of oil for their lamps, and they did not bring any extra (v. 8), unlike the five wise ones. Are the five who brought extra oil under any obligation to share their stash with those who did not? Are those who prepared responsible for those who do not prepare? Discuss.
4. In this parable, we can draw out three life principles on how a follower of Christ shows faith in Jesus by planning wisely for the future:
 - a. **Prepare in advance for times of need, as others are not obligated to help you, even if you ask nicely (v. 8).** What are some of the skills you need to personally learn to survive in this life? Why is spiritual preparation, especially preparing for your eternal destiny, important and wise? Would God be under any obligation, even if you ask nicely, to give you eternal life after you have died? Why?
 - b. **Preparedness is an individual responsibility; you have to do it yourself (v. 9).** The wise virgins couldn't share because if they do, their extra oil would not last during the wedding party. Discuss why individual preparedness is a wise and essential thing to do. What is the limit of how parents could prepare for their children's future and even for their spiritual walk with God? How can parents prepare their children to live out their faith? In what areas of your life should you make a stand for God while waiting for the Lord's return?

- c. **Preparedness brings reward to the ready (v. 10-12).** While the foolish virgins were on their way to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, then the door was shut! When you are prepared, you get rewarded. Spiritually, only those who are ready will enter the Kingdom of God. What does it mean that the door will be closed in God's kingdom? Would those who are not ready get another chance? What would God tell them if they ask God to open the door for them?

Walk

Be watchful and ready because no one knows when the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back. Are you wise or are you foolish? What are the likely consequences of delaying thinking about Christ and spiritual matters until later? What necessary spiritual readiness do you have to make today in order to "keep watch"?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that my life here on earth will not last forever. The time will come that my Lord Jesus will return, and I need to be ready for it. Thank you for Your grace that allows me to be prepared and ready for His coming even now. I acknowledge that preparation for eternity is my own individual choice and decision. I can't blame anyone if I am found not ready. Thank you for the gift of eternal life as a reward to those who believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Thank you for the assurance that I will be eternally secured in you because I believe that Christ has paid for the penalty of my sin and I am Yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #6
Responses to Truth

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 8:4-15

Discussion Questions

1. How do you personally respond to a life-changing truth, especially when that truth is from the Word of God?
2. Knowing how to respond to truth is an important life lesson, especially to a follower of Jesus. Read Luke 8:4-15. This passage tells us of the Parable of the Sower, where we see a sower dropping seeds on the ground. These seeds fell on four types of soil and brought in different results (v. 4-8). Discuss these types of soil and the different results produced based on where the seeds fell on.
3. This parable on using farming as an example may not have resonated clearly to a community of fishermen. Even the disciples asked Jesus what's the parable meant (v. 9). Jesus responded that those who really wanted to understand the truth would take time to comprehend and learn, while others who did not were just there for the show (v. 10). Do you enjoy coming to church? Share how you understand and are being helped by the things being shared or taught in the church. Discuss the reasons that could cause a regular church attender not to grow spiritually. How does attitude and mindset make a difference in someone's ability to understand and learn?
4. Jesus explained that the parable illustrates the various reactions of people when they receive the truth. Jesus started by saying that the seed is the Word of God (v. 11). The Sower in the parable is Jesus. It could also represent the disciples, or even you when

you sow the seed of the gospel and the truth of the Word of God to others. The different types of ground represent the four different types of reception to the truth of God's Word.

- a. **Response #1: Rejection of Truth (v. 12).** What happened to those seeds by the wayside? God's truth has the power to save, but what causes people to reject the truth about God? How does Satan use the world's system to draw as many people with him down to the Lake of Fire? Should blame be placed on Satan if someone rejects God? How does personal choice make a person responsible for his action to either reject or accept God's truth?
- b. **Response #2: Acceptance of truth until challenges arise (v. 13).** The seeds that fell on the rocky ground did not grow very well; they withered and died. This represents people who accept the truth of God with joy, but because they did not dig deeper and did not have the water of nourishment and maturity to nurture the truth to grow, they are not able to establish a deep root. Hence, when challenges arise, they fall away. How does being deeply rooted in the Word of God strengthen your faith and equip you to be ready for life's challenges? Discuss the importance of knowing how to explain your faith and stand up for what you believe. What are some basic questions about your faith that even children and young people should be able to answer?
- c. **Response #3: Acceptance of truth until worldly distractions take our hearts (v. 14).** The seeds that fell among the thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasure hence, they do not mature. Discuss the pursuits of life that pull away a parent, a working professional, or a student from maturing in the Lord and bearing fruits. How do you keep yourself from making excuses (e.g. pursuing "fun things," being too busy, etc.) that might get in the way of your spiritual growth? What are the right priorities you should value?

- d. **Response #4: Acceptance of truth and then faithfully living it out (v. 15).** The seeds that fell among the good soil represent those with a noble and good heart who hear the Word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. Having a noble heart means you have good character. Maturing in the Word of God is not an overnight thing, but it is a process of learning. How does a person with a noble heart take the truth? How do you live out your faith?

Walk

There are different responses to the truth. There are those who hear and reject it. Others take the truth until challenges come along. There are also those who receive the truth but don't prioritize it. Finally, there are those who accept the truth and faithfully live it out. What kind of soil do you most look like right now? Would you name a person with whom you can share the truth about Jesus, that your faith may bear fruit?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that the seed of Your Word was planted in my heart. I understand that receiving it with joy doesn't guarantee that I would be faithful. There are many distractions in life that the enemy could use to pull me down so that I will not grow and mature in my faith. But thank You, that with Your help, my heart could be a good soil, and that with patience, I can grow and mature by living out my faith. Help me to know my priorities and to be productive by having the desire to scatter the seeds of Your Word to people around me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #7
Looking for the Lost

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-10

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever lost something that is important to you? How did you look for it, and what did you feel after finding it? Share with the group.
2. Every day, God deals with lost and wandering people like you and me who need to find direction in life but are rudely demanding answers from God. How does God view and help the lost and the wayward people? It is important that we understand God's perspective in how He deals with these types of people, because God has given a mandate to all believers to reach out to the lost (the Great Commission). Jesus uses the Parable of the Lost Sheep, told in two different contexts in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, to give us a picture of how He views and deals with those who are lost:
 - a. **God's Perspective: Every person is individually important (Matthew 18:10-12).** In Matthew 18, Jesus is teaching His disciples about having a childlike faith and warning about causing children to sin. In verse 10, Jesus tells the disciples that they should not look down on the little children because they are important to God. It is in this context that Jesus shared this parable to illustrate God's loving care for people, especially for those who are viewed as insignificant, like children. How did Jesus say the owner of the 100 sheep would respond if one of his sheep wandered off? What does it tell you about how the Shepherd cares for his sheep? The sheep in the story represent people. How do

people stray from God? Share how God has protected you in your low moments when you wandered off from His care. Do you believe that you as an individual are important to God?

- b. **God's attitude: Rejoices with great joy when the lost is found (Matthew 18:13-14).** The shepherd finding the lost sheep is overcome with joy. His excitement over finding the lost sheep is even more than his excitement over the sheep that did not go astray. His joy in finding the lost in no way means He does not love the other 99 sheep as much. Do you know of anyone who has returned to God after turning his/her back from Him? Share how that made you feel. Discuss how God accepts a person who returns to Him regardless of that person's offence.
- c. **God's effort: "All-In" as He pursues us, never giving up (Luke 15:1-4).** In the context of Luke 15, we see the effort God puts in to find His lost sheep. The Pharisees (religious leaders) complained why Jesus would dine and fellowship with sinful people like the tax collectors. Jesus responded by telling the same parable, but notice how Jesus added, "until he finds it" in verse 4. God spares no effort in trying to reach out to the lost and wandering child. Discuss the possible ways God would pursue you if you wander off. How valuable are you to God? Knowing how God values you, how does that change the way you should live for Him?
- d. **God's mindset: Celebrating when the lost is willing to be found (Luke 15: 5-7).** The shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulder (v. 5) is a picture of the sheep's surrender to the shepherd. What happened after the shepherd returned home with his lost sheep? In the same way, how does heaven react when a sinner turns to God? What does it tell you of the value of a lost soul who is willing to be found? Discuss why you should not feel that it is unfair when God forgives and accepts back a repenting person.

- e. **God's timing: Immediate searching for the lost (Luke 15:8-10).** Jesus also gave the parable of a lost coin to express how He views the lost. Focus on the action of the woman who lost the coin. There was immediate action. What does the story tell you about her immediate reaction when she lost her coin? What have you learned about God from this parable? Discuss why God cares so much about remorseful sinners.

Walk

Are you far away from God? Remember that He is looking for you. Regardless of what you've done, He is willing to accept you back. Surrender and be willing to be found. Would you thank Him for His patience and His resolve in bringing you back to Him? Is there anyone with whom could you share God's steadfast love and encourage them to come back to the Lord?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cannot thank you enough for your persistent love. You not only sent Your Son Jesus Christ to die for my sin, but You look for me when I wander off from You. Give me the desire in my heart to go out into the world to reach out to those who do not have a personal relationship with You yet, or to people I know who have wandered off in their faith. May you give me Your perspective, Your attitude, Your effort, Your mindset, and Your timing in my effort to find the lost with Your help. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #8 Forgive But Don't Forget

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 18:21-35

Discussion Questions

1. What makes it quite difficult to forgive someone?
2. When someone hurts us deeply, we tend to wait until the last moment or need to be compelled to ask for or give forgiveness. Do you think that the reason we do not want to forgive is because we do not want to forget the offense made to us? Hebrews 8:12 says that God forgives and remembers our sins no more, but He is also omniscient, which means He does not really forget. However, though we may suffer the consequences of our sins, in His graciousness in forgiving us our offenses against Him, God will no longer use our offenses to condemn us to hell. The Bible does not teach "forgive and forget;" it teaches us to "forgive but don't forget." Read Matthew 18:21-35. The background of this parable is when Peter asked Jesus how often shall he forgive his brother who repeatedly wrongs him. Peter asked, "Up to seven times?" Jesus responded that it should be up to seventy times seven. Jesus was not advocating frequency of forgiveness, but forgiveness as a way of life. How possible are people to forgive beyond two or more times? Are you able to do it? Why or why not? What is the danger of an unforgiving spirit?
3. Jesus understands that forgiveness is something difficult for us to do, and so He gave the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant to teach us what forgiveness is all about, and that with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is something that we can learn as a way of life. In this parable, a king wants to settle the accounts of every one of his subjects who owed him money. How did the king deal with the servant who owed him 10,000 talents (which is equivalent now to 7 billion pesos)? Discuss how God has demonstrated mercy in forgiving your sins. Does God's mercy mean that you should not take the responsibility and obligation to pay off your

debt? What do Matthew 22:17- 21, Proverbs 22:7, and Ecclesiastes 5:5 teach about borrowed money? When you take your obligation to pay off your debt seriously, what does it show to others? If you are not paying back what you owed others then you are stealing. How would that affect your integrity as a Christian?

4. The servant who had just been completely forgiven of his unpayable debt must be so elated and overjoyed with the grace and mercy showed to him by the king, yet he did not extend the same grace and mercy to his fellow servant who owed him money. There are three principles that we can learn from this parable:
 - a. **Forgive because you have been forgiven (v. 28-30).** After the king forgave his 7 billion pesos worth of debt, this servant found a fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii (which is about 55,000 pesos today). The first servant grabbed the second servant's throat and yelled at the man to pay him what he owed. How did the second servant respond? Describe how you feel about that first servant who treated the second servant without grace and mercy. In what ways are you similar to that first servant in how you treat others, in light of the fact that your unpayable debt of sin was wiped clean through the blood of Jesus? Forgiveness does not mean that you should give up your right to collect what is owed you, nor allow others to pick on you. Neither would it mean that you not use the legal system to protect your rights. But forgiveness as a lifestyle means that you remember you have been forgiven an unpayable debt, and therefore should also forgive. Share tangible ways in which you could show forgiveness to those who have offended you.
 - b. **Forgive to show the world that you are living for eternity (v. 31-33).** This incident between the two servants was witnessed by others, and was passed on to the king. The king expected the first servant to show compassion and pity on others, as he had been a recipient of compassion and forgiveness himself. He may not be technically obligated to forgive the second servant, but to live for eternity means you give up your rights and forgive. Discuss how, as a Christian, you can give up your rights and forgive instead of fighting hard for everything. What are the things you would be willing to take as a loss in view of eternity?

- c. ***Forgive so that God's grace and mercy will be more abundant in your life (v. 34-35).*** The first servant was sent to the torturer until he can pay what he owed, because the master was rightfully angry. In this context, Jesus was not talking about the loss of salvation, but the similarity of how God deals with us based on how we deal with others. God the Father will treat us based on how we treat others. If you treat others with mercy and grace, the more grace and mercy will be abundant in your life. Discuss what you should do if you do not feel like forgiving someone who has hurt you. Share about a time you extended forgiveness to someone who has offended you, and that decision released you from bitterness and pain.

Walk

It is important that you forgive; however, do not forget that you forgive because God has forgiven you. Doing so will show others that you live for eternity, and God's grace and mercy will be more abundant in your life. Is there someone in your life whom you should release from his or her debt to you? It may not be financial, but something that you hold against another for what that person did to you. Could you think of a way to show mercy to someone who has hurt you?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the lesson of forgiveness. I must admit that among your commands, bestowing forgiveness to someone who has hurt me deeply is one of the most difficult to obey. But thank You because You have shown me how to forgive when You sent Your Son Jesus Christ to wipe away my sins with His blood. Thank You that You forgive the daily wrongs I make against You. Thank You that when I acknowledge my sin, You bestow Your grace and mercy and forgive me from all my sins. Hard as it is to forgive the people who had offended and hurt me deeply, please help me to forgive—to show grace and mercy as how you have shown it to me. Thank you for the victory I can have with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MASTERCLASS #9 Preparing for the Party

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:12-24

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever turned down an invitation to a banquet for a very special occasion? What made you do so?

Imagine that millions of invitations to an extravagant party were sent out, but no one showed up. This is exactly what happened to God. Read Matthew 22:1-14. The Parable of the Wedding Banquet teaches us about God's invitation to His kingdom. The invitation for the party was sent out to the Jews first (represented by their leaders), but they rejected it, and so God condemned them. But this parable also provides hope to those who willingly and properly prepare themselves for the celebration that God has planned. We learn four steps in how to prepare for this celebration:

2. **Step #1: Receive the invitation (v. 1-4).** You cannot go to a party unless you are invited. Summarize the preparations that were made in this parable. How did the invitees respond to the king's invitation? What did the king do when they rejected his invitation? God's invitation to His kingdom came in the form of Jesus Christ. By believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are accepting God's party in His kingdom. How do people reject God's invitation? Who were the first recipients of this invitation? When the first invitees rejected the king's invitation, to whom did he extend the invite? Discuss the benefits of God's kingdom that many people tend to reject. What do you look forward to in His kingdom?
3. **Step #2: Check your schedule (v. 5-7).** Once you receive the invitation, you immediately check your schedule to see if you are able to attend the wedding banquet or not. But if this were such a spectacular event prepared by a king, you would most probably try to go around your schedule to accommodate this event. But how did the invited guests react to the king's invitation (v. 5)? Based on this parable, how would

you describe these people who turned down an invitation from the king? What kind of people do you think they were?

4. Read Luke 14:12-24 for a similar parable. Look at the three reasons why people rejected the king's invitation and how similar these reasons are to how Christians today refuse to have fellowship with God, and how the unbelievers give these reasons to reject the kingdom of God.
 - a. *Professional Life (v. 18).* How did this person respond to the invitation? What wrong with this excuse? How does your profession affect your walk with God?
 - b. *Possessional Life (v. 19).* What was the excuse of this invited guest for not accepting the invitation? How do your possessions get in the way in your fellowship with God?
 - c. *Family Life (v. 20).* What was the excuse of the third invitee? How does your family time, events, and responsibilities hold back your time with God?

Discuss how you should deal with these excuses so that you can respect the time you are supposed to spend with God. What is the scary danger of not accepting God's invitation for salvation? Would there be a next opportunity if you miss this one once you are no longer in this world?

5. **Step #3: Know the host's heart (Matthew 22: 8-10; Luke 14:21-24).** The wedding banquet is ready, but the king felt that those he invited did not deserve to come. What instruction did the king give to his servants? How is this invitation the same when God chose to offer salvation even to Gentiles (non-Jews) and to everyone else in the world? Does God discriminate the rejected people of society? How does He compel and welcome everyone to His kingdom regardless of who that person is?
6. **Step #4: Prepare to attend (v. 11-13).** You have received your invitation, cleared your schedule to be there, knew that the host was sincere, and now you prepare to attend the banquet. You want to look nice because it is such an important occasion. What did the king command his servants to do with the man who was not properly attired? How does this scenario give a picture of what will happen to anyone who rejects Christ or attempt to enter His kingdom on his own terms? What should you do in order to prepare yourself to be accepted by God to His kingdom?

Walk

Matthew 22 ended with “For many are invited, but few are chosen” in verse 14. Invitations were given out, but many rejected it. The invitation was first given to the Jews, but they rejected it to the point of killing Jesus. God postponed the kingdom until the second coming and opened the invitation to you now, to all the Gentiles and Jews to believe and yet many are still rejecting His invitation. As you commemorate the Holy Week, think of an area in your life that you have been delaying a response to what God has invited you to do. Is there someone whom you could extend Jesus’ offer of forgiveness and eternal life? What is keeping you from doing so?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cannot thank You enough for inviting me to be in Your kingdom. Thank You that I have accepted your invitation and I can be assured that I will be in Your extravagant banquet because I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. As I think of Your Son’s death on the cross to save me from my sin, may I also think of others in my life that haven’t accepted Your invitation yet. May You give me the courage to extend Your offer of forgiveness and eternal life to them so that they, too, would have the opportunity to fellowship with You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

MasterClass #10

Endgame: When the Big One Hits*Word***Scripture Reference**

Luke 16:19-31

Discussion Questions

1. What makes death scary to you?
2. People are usually worried about and scared of “the big one”—death. The uncertainty of how you will die is a cause of endless worry to many. However, the more important questions that need to be settled in your hearts are, “What will happen to me after I die?” and “How will I pass the judgment of God to enter in heaven?” You will never get over your fear of death until you have settled in your heart what will happen after you die. This is such an important lesson that Jesus wants you to understand, and He taught it through a parable. Read Luke 16:19-31. From this passage we learn three specific things about eternity—specifically about hell, which hopefully will prepare you for the questions you need to ask in your life. What does the story tell you about the Rich Man and Lazarus (v. 19-22)? How did the Rich Man treat poor Lazarus? Where did the angels take Lazarus? Where was the Rich Man taken?
3. This parable is not teaching us that all poor people go to heaven and rich men go to hell. The eternal destiny of each individual is already set during his life on earth based on his trust in God and His Word. This story shifted from their life on earth to afterlife. There are three truths about hell that should prepare you for the big one (death) coming your way:
 - a. **Hell is a place where mercy is not extended (v. 23-25).** Jesus used parables to let us understand one main point of the story. Jesus was not teaching that people in hell can see

what’s going on in heaven, or that people in heaven can see what’s in hell. The point Jesus was making is that in hell, you are getting what you deserve. Describe what the Rich Man saw from where he was in hell. What did he appeal towards Abraham to ask Lazarus to do? What was Abraham’s response? Have you ever wondered if God would show grace and mercy to those who are in hell who regret what they did during their life on earth? Discuss what it means that “there is no mercy extended to people in hell because they are getting what they deserve.” Why can good works not erase bad works? On what basis can your sins be forgiven and spare you from hell?

- b. **Hell is a place without a second chance (v. 26).** You cannot enter heaven once you enter hell; and once you are in heaven, you cannot enter hell. What was the reason Abraham gave on why you cannot change your eternal destiny once you get there (v. 26)? There is no one to blame for the decision you make but yourself. How does the fact that there are no second chances once you’re dead affect the decision you make today regarding your eternal future? Why does success keep people from accepting Christ as their Savior? If Christians accept the certainty of hell as true, what do you think is keeping them from sharing their faith with others?
- c. **Hell is a place where people willfully reject God’s gift of salvation (v. 27-31).** The Rich Man further appealed to Abraham to send Lazarus to his father’s house because he still has five brothers to warn so that they will not also go to hell. What was Abraham’s response? Would people with hardened hearts to the gospel listen to someone who rose from the dead? Why or why not? Hell is not a place for bad people, but a place for those who willfully reject God’s gift of salvation. Does it mean that there are good people in hell? Discuss.

Walk

[SPOILER ALERT!] The “endgame” of this life is that everyone dies! Death is something we cannot avoid no matter what. It doesn’t really matter how your life will end, whether by accident, sickness, in your sleep, etc.; what is important is the decision you make regarding the life after this because it is the only way to dispel your fear regarding death and the afterlife. If you are not sure where you are going after you die (whether in heaven or hell), would you believe in the Lord Jesus as your Savior who saved you from the eternal consequence of your sin and gave you eternal life? If you have done this already, how has this story changed your attitude toward sharing the gospel to unbelievers?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I understand that there are only two places a person can go after his life on earth has ended, and that is in heaven or hell. Thank You that You love us so much that You desire everyone of us not to suffer and be tormented in hell, but to enjoy the great eternal life with You through Jesus Christ. May the reality of heaven and hell compel me to be bold to share about Your free gift of salvation with others. Thank You that I don't have a reason to be afraid of death because having You in my life gives me an assurance of secured eternity. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MasterClass #11
Don't Believe the Hype

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 18:9-14

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of things or situations are usually hyped in your circle of friends?
2. A hype is an extravagant publicity of a product (or person), exaggerating importance or benefits. Many people sadly fall into this hype trap. Even Christians are drawn to hypes: adoring a certain pastor, preacher, teacher, even to the point of thinking that these people could do or say no wrong; believing miracle products could work because “it works for others.” But hype and reality is as different as day and night. In Jesus’ time, hype was also a problem, and so He used a parable to teach us not to fall into into this trap. Read Luke 18:9-14. This passage is intended for those who believe that they are righteous and often judgmental/critical of others without looking at themselves if they are guilty of the same thing. Discuss how people demonstrate self-righteousness. How do you respond to people who act as if they could never do wrong? Are you guilty of looking down on others? In what way?
3. In this Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector, Jesus described two people who went up to the temple to pray (v. 10). One was a pharisee, a religious leader and expert of the Jewish law; the other one was a tax collector who worked for an oppressive Roman government and was considered by his fellow Jews as a traitor for being corrupt. By looking at both men’s “careers,” everyone is quick to consider the pharisee as more righteous than the tax collector and would assume that God would listen to

the pharisee’s prayer and not the tax collector’s. This proves that people often make assumptions about a person based on a person’s occupation, outward looks, or singular action. Discuss how it is so true even in the Christian circle. Do you believe that there are religious people (such as pastors) who could be dishonest, and that there are government employees (such as of BIR) that are honest and love the Lord? What does it tell you about the assumptions that you make about other people?

4. The common notion is to assume that the pharisee was the spiritual one and the tax collector was a crook. However, their contrasting prayers show us otherwise. We draw out from the passage three principles that give us the criteria for correctly assessing your own or someone else’s spirituality (v. 11-13).
 - a. **How does one view God?** How you see God is demonstrated in prayer and worship life, which should be pointing to God and not to yourself. Read again the prayer of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. How did their prayers and attitude spoke of how they view God? Who do you think would God love to listen to? Examine yourself honestly. Do you identify with the pharisee or the tax collector? Why?
 - b. **How does one view grace?** God’s grace is an indication of spirituality. The pharisee really believed that he was better than others and thought that he was entitled to the good things he had. How was the tax collector’s prayer so different from the Pharisee’s prayer? What did he ask God for (v. 13)? How did they view grace differently? How do you view all the blessings that God has been bestowing on you? Are they something you deserve, or are they God’s grace granted to you? Why?
 - c. **How does one see themselves?** True spirituality is the acknowledgement of your standing as a sinner unable to reach God through good works. It is recognizing that God enables you to approach Him by faith. Read again how the prayers of these two men spoke of their inward spiritual condition. How did they view themselves? How do you see yourself? Do you believe that you are a sinner saved by grace? Why?

Walk

“I tell you, this man (tax collector) went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14).

Jesus declared the tax collector as righteous, which must have shocked His listeners. Spirituality is based on humbling oneself before God instead of exalting oneself. Assess yourself in your spirituality or others who claim to be spiritual by asking these questions:

- How do they or I view God?
- How do they or I view grace?
- How do they or I view themselves in order to cut through the hype and get to the truth yourself.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that through Your Word You taught me what is the real basis for spirituality. Help me Lord that my actions will come from how I view You and my prayers will point others only to You. I acknowledge that it's Your grace that has saved me from my sins through Jesus Christ. Thank you that as a sinner saved by grace, I can approach you anytime through worship and prayer. Lord God, may You help me to live in real humbleness before You and acknowledge You in all aspects of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MasterClass #12
A Well-Lived Life

Word

Scripture Reference

Matthew 25:14-30

Discussion Questions

1. What are the top two qualities you have that you can use to minister to others as your service to God?
2. How do you know at the end of your life if you have lived a good life? What marks a life that is well-lived? Read Matthew 25:14-30. What is this parable about (v. 14-18)? Who does the master represent? How about the servants? Why were the three servants not given equal talents (v. 15)?

Note: One talent is a measure of money or weight, which is equivalent to about P3.5M today. But for the purpose of understanding this story, talents may refer as abilities or resources.

You are responsible only for the ability and resources that God has given you. If that were the case, would God ask you to be accountable to the abilities that He didn't give you? Discuss the conflicts that could be avoided if you accept your abilities and resources as your God-given responsibilities.

3. The servants were expected to do something to earn money for the master while he is away. In this life, you are expected to be good stewards of what God has given you so that He will benefit from it. You may think it is unfair to work hard for somebody else, but in actuality no one among us own anything in this world. Everything given to us really belongs to God. It is foolish to think that you work hard just for yourself because when you

leave this world you don't bring anything with you. You can learn four principles from this parable:

- a. **Principle #1: The reward of a well-lived life comes after this life is over.** In this generation, people want instant gratification. But reality is that if you don't work hard and persevere, you can't expect to be rewarded. What happened when the master came back (v. 19)? How did the master commend the two servants for doing what they were supposed to do? What did the servants get in return? Everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior will be in heaven, but would everyone receive the same rewards in heaven? Why or why not?
- b. **Principle #2: The criteria for a life well lived is faithfulness.** When God judges your life at the end of this life, He does not care about your resume; instead He cares about your faithfulness to Him. How are you investing your talent? Are you faithful to live a life of character and loyalty? Do you prefer to lose fairly or to win through dishonesty? Discuss how you can pursue excellence and remain faithful to the Lord.
- c. **Principle #3: The criticism of a life poorly lived is unfaithfulness (v. 24-27).** God gives us the privilege of serving Him so that He can bless us more, just like the first two servants. What was the excuse of the third servant who received one talent? What are the usual excuses of those who don't want to serve the Lord with their talents? If God doesn't need your money, time and resources, why does He ask you to use what you have for Him?
- d. **Principle #4: The consequences of a life of unfaithfulness is severe (v. 28:30).** Even if you have done your best to achieve something, but is unfaithful to God, your life will not matter much. If you don't trust the Lord as your Savior, the consequence is eternal damnation. If you, as a Christian, are not faithful to God, the consequence is the loss of eternal rewards. What sentence was handed down to the wicked and lazy servant? Share how you would rate yourself in your Christian stewardship.

Walk

The faithful servants got in return the privilege of doing the responsibilities entrusted to them and entering the joy of the Lord. They both got to enjoy all the good things that the master prepared for them. On the other hand, the unfaithful servant got nothing, but severe consequences because of his attitude and action toward his master and the talent given to him. The world measures your worth based on your usefulness to the society or on your busyness, adventure and popularity. But God measures it on faithfulness. What is the measure of your life? How do you strive to be faithful to the Lord?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the lesson of how I could be a faithful steward of every talent and resources that You have entrusted to my care. I must admit that a lot of times, I tend to base my worth on how the world measures it. Please forgive me and help me to gauge it based on faithfulness that you expect from me. I pray that at the end of the day, You will find me good and faithful. Thank you that the rewards to your faithful servants are eternal that nothing in this world can ever match. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MasterClass #13
From Ruin to Redemption

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 15:11-32

Discussion Questions

1. “If you work hard enough, if you persevere, then from ruin you will find riches, restoration, and redemption.” Do you know of any ruin-to-redemption story? Tell the group about it.
2. Most ruin-to-redemption stories are based on human philosophy and are self-centered, but Scripture teaches us that the reason restoration and redemption is possible is because God is involved, whether or not the person who has been redeemed and restored acknowledges His hand or not. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a ruin-to-redemption story and is one of the most familiar and loved of Jesus’ parables. It tells us of a son who asked his father to give him his future inheritance, then proceeds to waste it in reckless living until he had nothing left. Read Luke 15:11-32. From a biblical perspective, would you say either the father or the son was wrong in their actions—the son asking, the father giving (v. 11-13)? Why or why not? How are the father and younger son’s actions similar to how you interact with God? Are you being a responsible steward of what God has given you? If you are called to account for it today, how would you answer?
3. When the younger son had reached such a state of rock-bottom that even those around him did not want to give him animal food, he finally realized that he is not entitled to his father’s kindness, goodness, and estate(v. 14-19). Have you ever reached that rock bottom point that made you admit that God does not owe you anything? Or had you ever allowed someone (your child, friend, or family member) to experience the full-force of

the consequences of their actions so that they can realize the truth for themselves and come to their senses? Share and discuss.

4. Sometimes God allows people to hit rock bottom, and we have to let Him allow it so that people that we love (including ourselves) wakes up and realize that we are nothing apart from His grace. This parable gives us three reasons why God allows ruined lives to be redeemed:
 - a. **God’s compassion is evidenced in forgiveness (v. 20).** The passage does not say that the father looked for his son every day, but it describes to us that the father was overjoyed with his son’s return and has already forgiven his son even without yet knowing what his son did. God brings us from ruin to redemption not because of anything we did, but because He had compassion to forgive us of our sin (of wanting to live independently of Him) even before we asked, as demonstrated when Jesus Christ died in your place. Are you a recipient of God’s compassionate forgiveness? Share and discuss. Talk about what it means to be saved by Jesus Christ and how nothing you do will ever cause God to stop loving you (Romans ch. 8).
 - b. **You are God’s child (v. 21-24).** As the wayward son delivers his “I’m sorry” speech, the father responded by ordering his servants to prepare a big feast of the best meat to welcome his son who has returned. Similarly, the Heavenly Father wants what is best for us even if we do not deserve it, but simply because we are His children. If God’s discipline is for our own good, how does the fact that you are God’s child make you feel about the “unfairness” of being disciplined while others are not?
 - c. **God’s joy is in the lost returning (v. 25-32).** When the older brother, the good son who has been faithful, found out that his father is throwing a big welcome party for his wayward younger brother, the older brother was upset. He is angry that his father has never rewarded him for being a good son, while his father throws a party for a son who has wronged him. Note that the passage does not condemn the reaction of the older brother, but focuses instead on the father’s heart,

which is joy for a returning son who was lost, and assurance of rewards* for the son who has always been good and faithful. Have you ever felt like the older brother, as if your years of quietly and faithfully serving does not merit recognition? How did you find encouragement to continue being faithful? How would you encourage a brother or sister in the faith who has a similar struggle?

**Listen to the sermon “Masterclass: A Well-Lived Life” for full context on heavenly rewards.*

Walk

God's joy is in lost children returning, but also found in faithful lives lived. You don't have to live a wayward life to be able to share a compelling testimony to others. Your testimony of a life faithfully lived for Jesus is one of the greatest testimonies ever. So, Christian, what's your story?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder that You are the God who forgives, for forgiving me without asking what I had done. Thank You that through Your Son Jesus Christ I can be called Your child forever. Thank You for the assurance that nothing I do will ever change how You see me: as Your precious child. Forgive me for the times I wandered away. I don't deserve the joy You show at my return, but ask that You enable me to live a life that is true and faithful from this day forward. I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

MasterClass #14

Help! I've Fallen, and I can't Get Up!

Word

Scripture Reference

Luke 10:25-37

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever received help from someone that created a deep impression in you?
2. God has set a system for you to avail yourself of help when you need it and that system is the church. The Lord has called the church to help the world, and so when someone shouts, "Help! I've fallen, and I can't get up!" the church should jump into action. This is such an important life lesson which Jesus taught through a parable recorded in Luke 10:25-37. Discuss the conversation that transpired between the lawyer and Jesus. To justify himself, what was the man's next question that led Jesus to teach the parable of the Good Samaritan (v. 25-29)?
3. When the man asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" he meant who should he be compelled to love and to be kind to or who should he be obliged to help. We can draw four principles about what it means for the Church to be a good neighbor:
 - a. **Principle #1: When a person is in need, that person just needs someone...anyone (v. 30).** Describe what happened to the man who was travelling? If you were in his shoes, what would be your desire at that moment? If you are desperately in need, would you care about who would help you? The Church—Christians—should understand that when someone is in need, that person doesn't care where help is coming from, but he/she will certainly remember who gave help. Discuss why it seems that Christians are not very well known for helping others. How can a follower of Christ do more?
 - b. **Principle #2: The deepest impressions are made through actions (v. 31-32).** Describe the first two people who saw the beaten man on the road. What would you have expected from them being a priest

and a Levite (both are called to help others as part of their job description)? How do you think the beaten man felt when these two men didn't extend help to him? Think of someone who might have needed your help, but you just ignored him/her. What impression do you think that person has on you as a Christian? What happens when your action do not reflect what you claim?

- c. **Principle #3: True compassionate help knows no bias or prejudice (v. 33).** Samaritans are not pure-blooded Jews. They were of a mixed race whom the pure Jews hated and resented, and so these two groups naturally have racial prejudice against each other. What did the Samaritan in the parable feel when he saw the beaten man on the road? How practical was the Samaritan's response to the man's need? Discuss the prejudices that Christians are guilty of. How do these biases affect the Christian testimony?
- d. **Principle #4: Sacrificial care is what will be remembered and responded to (v. 34-35).** The Samaritan helped the beaten man beyond what was expected of him. What extended help did he give to the beaten man? Had anyone sacrificially helped you in the past that you would drop everything off just to help that person back if he's in deep need? Why is it possible for you to respond with sacrificial care to someone?

Walk

So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves? And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:36-37)

Remember that as a Christian, you are recipient of Jesus' compassionate and sacrificial help. He died in your place without bias and without condition. So examine your life: are you selective of the recipient of your compassion and help? How do your biases affect your compassion for others? For the gospel's sake, would you be willing to give sacrificial care for someone in need?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You so much for the example of my Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificially cared for me when I was in deep need and couldn't get up on my own. I am truly a recipient of His compassion without prejudice. In response, please help me to be sensitive to the urging of the Holy Spirit to reach out and meet others' needs, and that I would do it for Your glory and for the sake of my Christian testimony. Thank you that it is possible because of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MasterClass #15
Playing the Long Game*Word***Scripture Reference**

Matthew 25:31-46

Discussion Questions

1. Share some examples of when you separate clean from dirty, fresh from spoiled, or good from bad.
2. People often play the long and short games as a way of living. The short game seems easy and fun and have immediate benefits. The long game, however, means paying the price today to make tomorrow easier. It seems boring and more difficult to play the long game, but this eventually produce better results. Share examples of long and short games that people play in life. Discuss how people play them. What are the consequences if you play the short game? How about the long game?
3. The principle of the long game is actually biblical. Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” There will come a day of reckoning when God will assess how you lived your life. The day of judgment will be both for those who put their trust in Jesus for salvation and for those who rejected Him as their Savior. Read Matthew 25:31-46. This parable teaches about the separation of the “sheep” from the “goats” when the Lord comes back the second time (v. 31). This will happen after the Great Tribulation and is preceded by the Millennial Kingdom. The believers who survived the tribulation period and came to know the Lord during that time (“sheep”) will be moved to the right. Those who remained unbelievers (“goats”) will be moved to the left. This parable describes a few aspects of how the day of reckoning will look like so that you can prepare yourself to play the spiritual long game:

- a. **Reminder #1: In every judgment of God, there is separation/dividing (v. 31-33).** At the end, not everyone will get the same thing. All believers will go to heaven, but will not get the same rewards. Every unbeliever will go to hell, but will get different degrees of suffering. Christians will be separated according to their faithfulness to what God called them to do. On the other hand, the Great White Throne judgment which takes place after the 1000-years reign of Jesus Christ, is for unbelievers of all ages—an eternal separation from God because they are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15). God sees your heart and knows very well how to separate the sheep from the goats. What does it tell you about the fairness of God? Can God be manipulated to allow you to live a hypocritical life as a Christian? How should His judgment determine how you live your life now?
- b. **Reminder #2: A criteria in the assessment of inward faith is the outward expressions of Christian hospitality in action (v. 34-36).** Although even an iota of your good works will not save you from your sins—your faith in Christ alone will do that, Christians will be judged in the Judgment Seat of Christ for their rewards based on the outward expression of their inward faith. What kind of outward action did the parable specifically mention in this passage? Why would the sheep be blessed? Discuss how people determine if they would be nice to someone or not. How would your attitude be different if you treat someone in need as if that person were Jesus?
- c. **Reminder #3: Caring for others is the means by which we serve God and thank Him. (v. 37-40).** When you show care and concern for others, you do it for the Lord. He doesn't really need you to do things for Him; caring for others is a way to thank and honor Him for everything He does. What basis will Christ use to judge people (v. 40)? Name some of those who are needy around you. What act of kindness and mercy toward them can you do in Jesus' name?
- d. **Reminder #4: What is at stake in the final judgment is eternity, and is eternal (v. 41-46).** The “goats” on Jesus' left are heading to hell because they refused to believe in the

Lord. As unbelievers, they also did not care for those who needed their help. Take note of the word *eternal fire* in verse 41 and *eternal punishment* in verse 46. The decisions you make in this life will determine your eternity. Discuss the Think about the choices and decisions you make. Have you already given thought to their eternal consequences? Discuss. As a Christian, what rewards do you think you would have in heaven? Have you considered working for those rewards now?

Walk

In the game of life, are you playing the short game or the long game? One of these days, there will be celebration and separation. Remember that the long game is for eternity, and eternal validation lasts forever. When the separation happens on the day of reckoning, on which side will you be placed? Would you be in Jesus' right side where the sheep will be, or in His left side where the goats will be?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, it is indeed a sobering thought that the decisions I make in this life will determine my life in eternity. I must admit that there are times that I am prone to play the short game in the way I live my life because of its immediate results. Thank you for helping me realize that it is not a safe game because of the eternal consequences that I may suffer in eternity. Please help me to live a life that is true to a Christian, life that lives out the inner faith through outward expressions. Help me to be useful and faithful in the work of the Lord for the rewards that You graciously promised to those who are faithful. Help me to treat others with real kindness. Help me to have real compassion for the spiritually lost because without You, they'll forever be lost. In Jesus' name. Amen.