

STEWARDSHIP

WEEK 3

TAKING CARE
OF WHAT
YOU HAVE

BECAUSE IT
ALL BELONGS
TO GOD



PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

MATTHEW 25:14-30

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 16:10a

When Jesus wanted to explain something to people, He often did it in the form of a story. One day He told His closest friends about a rich man with three servants. If He told the story today, it might sound something like this . . .

There once was an inventor who built a car that ran on vegetable peels and sunshine. He called it the Tin Carrot. Millions of people bought the inventor's spiffy car, and he was soon quite wealthy. One day he requested to see the top three managers of the Tin Carrot company. We'll call them Red, Huck, and Sunny.

"I'm taking a road trip in my Tin Carrot to travel the whole country!" announced the inventor. "And I'm leaving the three of you in charge of the company. I want each of you to try out a new business venture for Tin Carrot, Inc. while I'm gone."

"A brilliant move, sir," said Red.

"I aim to do the job right!" exclaimed Huck.

"What, you want us to work on this for free?" grumbled Sunny.

"Of course not," exclaimed the inventor as he pulled out three brightly-colored cards. "Red, here's the access code to my platinum business account with 500,000 dollars."

"A sound financial choice," Red noted.

"Huck, I'm giving you the PIN to my gold account with 200,000 dollars," said the inventor.

Huck grinned as he took the card. "I'm just rarin' to go."

The inventor handed the third card over to Sunny. "Here's the password for my silver account with 100,000 dollars."

Sunny frowned at the card. "That's great. Unless the bank fails while you're gone."

"I shall return by the end of this carrot harvest!" exclaimed the inventor. "Or later. Perhaps when the sweet potatoes are planted."

The inventor hopped in his nifty Tin Carrot car and took off.

Red immediately pulled the funds from the platinum account and got to work. "I'll breed a new kind of carrot that's *all* peel for fuel," he announced.

Huck quickly invested his money, too. "I'll design a trailer for the Tin Carrot so folks can drive a small car and still haul their big dogs and livestock and such," he enthused.

Sunny also withdrew the funds from the account he'd been given. He sat at his desk with the money stacked between fast food wrappers and Blu-ray® discs. "If I try to do anything with the money, I'll probably just lose it, and everyone will be mad," he grumbled. "Plus, I won't have time to watch all the newest movie releases at the Blue Box."

So Sunny took the money and hid it at the back of the office supply closet, among all the old file folders and paper clips that no one ever cleaned out.

After a long time—two sweet potato harvests later—the inventor returned.

"Red! Huck! Sunny!" he called out.

"A pleasure to see you, sir," said Red.

"Right good to have you back," grinned Huck.

"Didn't you just leave?" grouched Sunny.

The inventor took a seat behind his massive desk decorated with golden baby carrots. "I wish to know exactly what you've done with what I left for you," he stated.

Red stepped forward and displayed a deeply wrinkled, bright orange carrot on a silver platter. "I took your money and bred a carrot that is entirely peel," he explained. "Half an acre of these specimens can fuel a Tin Carrot car for a lifetime. You trusted me with 500,000, and sales have accumulated 500,000 more."

"Fantastic!" declared the inventor. "You have been faithful with what I gave you. I will put you in charge of even more. Come and be happy with me! Now what about you, Huck?"

"Just cast yer eyes out that there window," Huck said, pointing. "See how many goats I got stacked in the trailer behind my Tin Carrot car?"

The inventor hopped up to take a look. A dozen goats lined up side by side in the trailer behind the car, looking quite pleased with themselves.

"No kidding," murmured the inventor. "Quite impressive."

"Now anyone can drive a Tin Carrot, whether they gotta transport horses or canoes or a dozen kids," added Huck. "You left me with 200,000 dollars, and I've made 200,000 more."

"Well color me orange," chuckled the inventor. "You have been faithful with what I gave you. I will put you in charge of even more. Come and be happy with me!" He turned to the third manager. "And Sunny? What have you done?"

"I wish to know exactly what you've done with what I left for you."

Sunny skulked forward carrying a big recycling bin full of bills. He dropped it at the inventor's feet. "Here you go. One hundred thousand smackeroos."

The inventor raised an eyebrow. "That's what I gave you to start with."

Sunny crossed his arm. "I didn't lose any of it, did I? I knew that you're really smart with money. I figured if I tried something and it didn't work out, you'd get mad. So I just, you know, hid it. And here it is."

The inventor's eyes narrowed and he stood again, towering over Sunny. "You foolish man! You knew I was smart with money? Well, you could have left it in the bank, at least, so it would earn interest."

"There are some paper clips in there," pointed out Sunny. "That's worth something extra, right?"

The inventor turned to Red and Huck and gestured to the bin full of cash. “Take this away from Sunny. Red, I want you to invest the money in your All-Peel Carrot. Those who take care of what they have will be given more. And those who don’t? Even what they already have will be taken away.”

“Little harsh, don’t you think?” protested Sunny.

“Take him away!” ordered the inventor.

“Hey! Does this mean I’m out of a job?” Sunny asked.

Red and Huck escorted Sunny out the door—and he never again set foot inside the offices of Tin Carrot, Inc.

The story that Jesus told certainly didn’t include carrots or cars. But it did make clear to His friends that God expects us to use the things He has given us to do greater and greater things.



Let's
Talk!

God has given us all “stuff.” For some people it’s a lot of possessions, and for others it’s very few.

Chances are, you live in a place where you have a lot of stuff, even if it doesn’t feel like it to you. Together, make a list of things that you, as a family and individually, have. How long is the list? Bottom line, it doesn’t actually matter how much you have—what matters to God is how you choose to use those things, whether it’s your home, the food in your refrigerator, or your collection of LEGO® blocks. Brainstorm some ways that you could use the things on your list wisely. It might be inviting another family over for game night, packing a lunch for that guy on the corner who’s asking for help, or even just sharing your new game with your little sister. Pray for each other, that you will remember throughout each day to use the “stuff” God has given you wisely, to show love to God and others.