

1

Use It or Lose It!

Studies in Stewardship

Introduction

The muscles of your body illustrate the 'Use it or Lose it' principle. The more they are used, the stronger they become, but if they are not used at all, they waste away. Can you think of some other examples of the 'Use it or Lose it' principle?

To some extent, this idea applies to the Christian Life as well. God has given us many good gifts and he calls us to use them for his purposes. The aim of this series of Bible Studies is to equip us to make good and wise decisions about how we use the gifts God has given us.

Read Luke 19:11-27

Jesus tells this parable to equip his disciples for the time when he will be away from them. It is instruction about what to do while we wait for Jesus return.

1. What do you think is the main idea of Jesus' parable?
2. Where do you see the 'Use it or Lose it' principle in the parable?
3. In verse 25 the crowd seems to object to the apparent injustice of the 'Use it or Lose it' principle. The King's response in verses 26-27 is somewhat startling to the modern reader. Why do you think Jesus concluded the parable in this way?
4. In Jesus' day a 'mina' was an amount of money equivalent to about three months wages. As God's servants, what are the 'minas' that God has given us?

We are troubled by some of the actions of the king in Jesus' parable. As with most parables, Jesus is making one main point—this is a parable about stewardship. Jesus is not saying that he IS this king, or that he is exactly like him. We might say that if we are to be good stewards for a king like this, how much more so for a king as wonderful as Jesus.

Someone has summarised these God given 'minas' as our time, our talents and our treasure.

Are there any on your list that do not fit one of these categories?

More reasons to “Use it”

One of the reasons we might find it hard to use all of our time, talents and treasure for God's purposes is that we don't really believe they all belong to God. Instead, we insist that we have worked hard to develop our talents and earn our money and so we can use these (at least partially!) for our own pleasure or comfort or security. Is this fair?

Here is a brief look at some more reasons to 'Use it'

1. What do you think is the main idea of Jesus' parable in **Luke 12:13-21**?

2. In the parable, specifically, what is it that belongs to God and for which the man is accountable?

3. Being a follower of Jesus requires sacrifice (e.g., see Lk 9:57-62). According to Jesus' words in **Luke 9:23-27**, how much sacrifice is required?

4. According to Luke 9:23-27, there is also reward in following Jesus. Reward works as motivation when it places our focus on the present situation, rather than leading us to wistfully dream of the future. Remember the wise servants back in Luke 19:16-19. What was their reward for using their master's resources well? What do you think the equivalent be for the Christian? How might this focus your attention on the present?

What for? (optional: you may do this as follow up afterwards)

God has given us time, talents and treasure to be used for his purposes. But what are his purposes? Broadly speaking, the Bible shows God's purpose in these days to be the growth of his Kingdom through the preaching of the gospel and the making of disciples. The New Testament also shows that this activity is always accompanied by compassionate concern for the poor and weak.

Take a few moments now, individually, to consider how your time, talents and treasure could be used for each of the following

1. Kingdom growth through discipleship
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

2. Kingdom growth through gospel proclamation
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

3. Compassionate Concerns
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

For further thought: Mt 22:36-40, 28:16-20; James 1:27