

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Matthew 25:24-27
Lesson #36
A Wasted Life
05/31/2020

Life in a broken world involves change and risks, that invite anxiety and fear.

People who can not manage their anxieties and fears

will resist the risks of faith in following man or God.



1

Personal peace, courage, and fruitfulness in kingdom of God rests with:

Our expectations
which are shaped by
Our perceptions
and lead to
Our responses
to self, others, God, and circumstances.

2

Matthew 25

"14 For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18 But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. . . .

. . . 23 His master said to (the first two slaves), "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."

- 1. Clarify your Mission**
- to bear the image of God
 - as a part of the Body of Christ
- 2. Accept your Responsibility**
- with unique abilities and roles
 - coordinated by grace and truth.
- 3. Discover your Joy**
- with personal peace
 - rewarded with greater ministry.

Last Week

3

Matthew 25

"24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, **I knew** you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 And **I was afraid**, . . ."

Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

" . . . and went away and **hid** your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours."

Unrealistic fears lead to unproductive withdrawal.

"26 But his master answered and said to him, 'You **wicked (evil), lazy (careless)** slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.'

Unproductive withdrawal exposes a wasted life.

4

Productive Waiting

- 1. Clarify your Mission**
- to bear the image of God
 - as a part of the Body of Christ
- 2. Accept your Responsibility**
- with unique abilities and roles
 - coordinated by grace and truth.
- 3. Discover your Joy**
- with personal peace
 - rewarded with greater ministry.

4. Manage your Fears

- with a realistic view of God & self
- for courageous faith in service.

5

Matthew 25

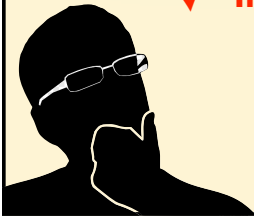
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Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

A robust, healthy faith is:

✓ **Intellectually convincing.**

- ✓ Emotionally motivating.
- ✓ Morally transforming.
- ✓ Socially connecting.
- ✓ Culturally inspiring.



6

"Christianity does not simply make sense to us; it also makes sense of us."

Alister McGrath
Surprised by Meaning



7

"I know the sun exists not because I can see it but rather that by it I see everything else."

C.S. Lewis



8

How do I know the sun exists when I can't view its blinding light?
I know because it's by those rays the whole world comes into sight.

How do I know that God is real and bear His image without doubt?
I know because it's by this view The rest of life I have found out.

9

Matthew 25

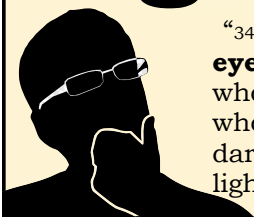
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The perceptions on which fear is based determine which fears are realistic and which are not.

Luke 11

"³⁴ **The lamp of your body is your eye**; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. ³⁵ Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness."

10

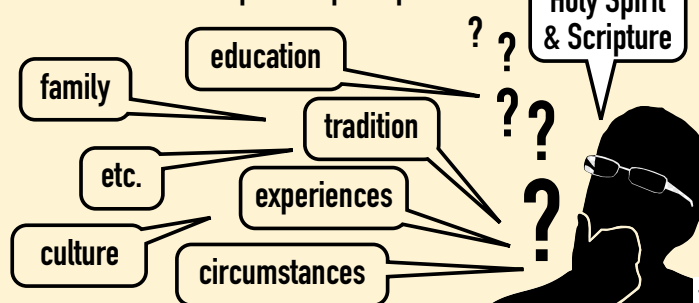


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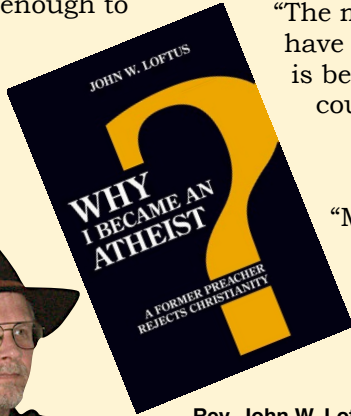
What shapes our perceptions?



11

Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

"I had too much to live with and not enough to live for."



Rev. John W. Loftus

"The major reason why I have become an atheist is because Christianity could not answer the questions I was encountering."

"My expectations of faith, prayer, the church, and God were crushed."

12

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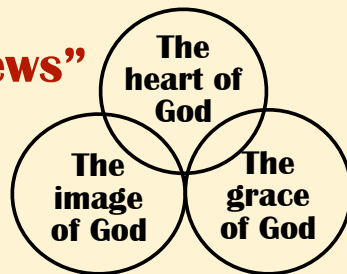
- The key to the One Talent Slave's profile is his "**PERCEPTION**" of the Master.
- He saw the Master as unreasonable, unfair, and hard to please just as many Jews (and Christians) have "perceived" God.
- Our understanding of God and ourselves sets the stage for 1) fears that can impede us or 2) faith that can invigorate us.

13

Profile of an evil sloth

- Fails to respect the "heart of God" in His Word.
- Fails to recognize the "image of God" in himself.
- Fails to receive the "grace of God" through faith.

The "good news"



14

Matthew 25

"24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, **I knew** you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed.'"

Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

We learn who we are and who God is through the words and deeds of Jesus.

John 1:9

"There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."

Jesus' shows us God's heart and God's image in us.

15

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Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

Faith plays an indispensable role in our perceptions (no matter what they may be).

- ✓ Jn.20:29 "Blessed are they who **did not see, and yet believed.**"
- ✓ 1 Pet.1:8 "and **though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him**, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

16

Matthew 25

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Distorted perceptions create unrealistic fears.

Ephesians 1

"18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, 19 and what is the **surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.**"



17

"The disciple of Jesus needs more than light. He also needs sight. The blind man is not aided by light without sight."

A.W. Tozer



18

"Fundamentalism has fallen into the error of textualism, which is simply orthodoxy without the Holy Spirit - 'Bible taught' but not 'Spirit taught.'"

A.W. Tozer



19

Matthew 25

"25 And **I was afraid**, and went away and **hid** your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours."

Unrealistic fears can lead to unproductive withdrawal.

Thanatophobia

The fear of death

The sense that we will miss out on life's gusto



20

Death is lifelessness.

Sensual

Separation from body

Social

Separation from others

Spiritual

Separation from God

Hell
is isolation from life (eternal death).

21

Matthew 25

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Unrealistic fears can lead to unproductive withdrawal.

Hebrews 2

"14 since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through **fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.**"

1 John 4:18

"There is no fear in love, but perfect **love casts out fear,**"

Death is what we fear and love is what we seek.

22

Fear is a Perception / Faith / Love issue.

- As we age, **fear often increases** when it should subside.
- Our fear of death (**missing out on life**) is at the root of all other fears.
- We fear that we will fail, that God will judge, and we will die alone, unloved **so we squander our resources and opportunities.**
- We fear that we will fail, that God will judge, and we will die **so we don't try to do anything.**

23

A Pattern

Eve

Perception
God can't
be trusted

Posture
isolate & hide

Product
social conflict

Evil Slave

Perception
Master can't
be trusted

Posture
shut down

Product
unproductive



24

Comfort food for the soul

John 3

"17 For **God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world**, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 12

"46 I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for **I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.**"

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**"

25

John 1

"17 For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ**. 18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

Romans 8

"1 There is therefore **now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Romans 5:17

"For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, **much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**"

26

The 23rd Psalm is the profile of a fear free life.



27

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me
beside quiet waters.

3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of
righteousness for His name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death, I fear no evil,

for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days
of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

28

Psalm 23 A response to fear

- ✓ **Don't look out** - seeking a change in our circumstances.
- ✓ **Don't look in** - wondering what we have done wrong or what we should learn.
- ✓ **Don't look at** - our fruit, progress, or status with respect to others.
- ✓ **Don't look down** - giving up in despair.
- ✓ **Look up** - confessing our faith, hope, and love in the Good Shepherd.

29

Matthew 25

"26 But his master answered and said to him, "You **wicked, lazy** slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 "Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest."

Unproductive withdrawal exposes a wasted life.

- "Wicked" - The motives of our heart
- "Lazy" - The behavior of our life is "withdrawal".

Matthew 7

"17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, **you will know them by their fruits.**"

30

The profile of a wasted life.

**Unproductive
withdrawal**

Fear

fed by
a distorted

perspective
of God

31

Satan's sneaky pack of lies

- ✓ **Focus on the Law** - Who can't I trust - me (shame), you (blame), or God (lame)?
- ✓ **Unrealistic expectations** of faith, hope, and love in and for anything but Christ.
- ✓ **Broken systems** - family, culture, economy, etc.
- ✓ **A toxic church culture** that is narcissistic, punitive, and unrealistic.



He knows that if we don't manage fear we will struggle to follow Jesus.

32

"If you think of this world as a place intended simply for our happiness, you find it quite intolerable: **think of it as a place of training and correction and it's not so bad.**"

C.S. Lewis



33

Matthew 25

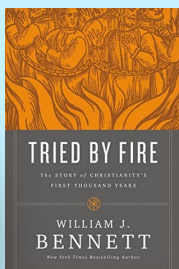
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Unproductive withdrawal exposes a wasted heart.

"Gold is tried by fire, brave men by adversity."

"Life is not tried it is merely survived when you're standing outside the fire."

34



Lessons for us

Know

What God expects,
what you are created for,
how God provides.

Believe

God has made it safe
in Christ through faith
to please Him.

Do

Step up in faith
with confidence that you can do all things
through Christ who indwells and enlightens you.

35

A young Christian scholar was invited to join the faculty of a prestigious university and when he showed little interest, he was reminded,
“This would be a sure path to recognition and success in the world.”

To which he responded,
“In which world?”

36

Personal peace, courage, and
fruitfulness in kingdom of God
rests with:

Our expectations
which are shaped by
Our perceptions
and lead to
Our responses
to self, others, God, and circumstances.

37