Matthew 25: 14-30
Jesus told his disciples this parable:
"A man going on a journey
called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.
To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one–
to each according to his ability.
Then he went away.
Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them,
and made another five.
Likewise, the one who received two made another two.
But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground
and buried his master's money.
After a long time
the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them.
The one who had received five talents
came forward bringing the additional five.
He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents.
See, I have made five more.'
His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.
Since you were faithful in small matters,
I will give you great responsibilities.
Come, share your master's joy.'
Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said,
'Master, you gave me two talents.
See, I have made two more.'
His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.
Since you were faithful in small matters,
I will give you great responsibilities.
Come, share your master's joy.'
Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.'

His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'"

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**Our Scripture Reflection**

I once did an extensive study on “stewardship” and was shocked to find that the vast amount of literature on the topic focused exclusively on money-raising! What a disgrace. What is the focus of true, Christian stewardship?

1. Everything we have is a gift from God, Who will NOT be outdone in generosity.
2. The post precious gifts we have received ON LOAN are talent, faith, family, friends, home, food......and time. Money is far down the pecking order.
3. Stewardship begins only when I first take an account of how I have been blessed.
4. Once aware of my blessings, I then offer a portion of what I have, IN THANKSGIVING, to the Lord.

We cheapen the act of stewardship when we focus exclusively on money raising. How haughty of us to think that God NEEDS anything we have, especially our money!

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**Food for your Journey**

Like the men in the story, we can invest our love any way we choose. There are thousands of ways of making money, and thousands of ways of loving. We can love our friends, our neighbors and even our enemies. Mother Teresa invested her love among the dying on the streets of Calcutta. Marie Warner began hospice in Kingston, and then took the risk of getting ordained as an Anglican priest. Some visit jails, and hospitals, and shut-ins at home. Taking time to pray is a costly investment in loving.

But love is risky. A lover is a risk taker. Loving children is risky, marriage is risky, loving people of other nations is risky, and loving people in church is most risky of all. The more we love the more we are likely to get hurt. Jesus took the risk of loving and was crucified. But what is not
acceptable is for us to hide our talent for loving in the ground and refuse to take the risk of loving.
—Robert Brow, “Gold to invest,” November 17, 1996,

A Prayer from the Heart
Dear God, I thank You and praise You for the many, many blessings You shower upon me and my family each day. In my arrogance and lack of humility, help me to be careful with regard to the use of the words, “My”, “Mine”, and even “I”, for nothing truly belongs to me. Everything is on loan from You as a gift. May I never forget to share my blessings with those who are the least in Your Kingdom. Amen