

# ONWORD

A weekly publication of the Enterprise Church of Christ

## Surviving Financial Stress

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### Join us:

#### Sundays

Bible class, 9 am

Morning worship, 10 am

Evening worship, 5:30 pm

#### Wednesdays

Midweek Bible study, 7 pm

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## Surviving Financial Stress: That's My Job

*By Jay Tidwell*

When financial strain has set in, the first task is to take action by “stopping the bleeding.” Once we have plugged all the cash leaks, we must get busy to accumulate what’s needed.

Forging ahead when times are tight can be overwhelming, and will certainly be filled with obstacles. In a series of parables in Matthew 24 and 25 about the second coming of Christ, Jesus offered the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**) to describe how to spend our time preparing for His return. The passage also helps us unearth some of the hidden challenges when we feel pressure from limited resources. In the parable, the master, just before he leaves the country, entrusts his finances to three stewards: He gives one man five talents, another two talents, and the third one talent. When the master returns, he asks for a report. The one given five talents has doubled them, gaining five more, and is rewarded. Similarly, the one given two talents has generated two more, and the master rewards him. The one-talent man has generated nothing more. The master rebukes him, and punishes him.

## Extra Credit: “Work as Unto God”

“Work is often viewed as a necessary evil for sustaining the leisure that one finds satisfying. Work is seldom looked upon as a satisfying part of one’s life.

The Bible [refers to] many of the vocations of those who lived in Bible times. They may not have had computers and copying machines to speed up their work, but the vocations that most of them pursued are quite similar to the vocations that many of us have. Yet we find little discontentment among them concerning their jobs - as if they sensed God’s purpose for their life while working. [See Gen. 2:15; Eph. 4:28].

Dorothy L. Sayers said, ‘I ask that work should be looked upon not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should find its proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God.’” (*Meredith’s Lists*).

## STEP UP

The one-talent man dug a hole and hid the money. He took swift action that involved some degree of manual labor, but it wasn’t a step up - it was down. Move toward the goal.

## BRIGHTER OUTLOOK

The one-talent man feared the one in charge, seeing him as “a harsh and demanding man....” (verse 24, Amplified Bible). Our Lord desires to help and save, but those in the world aren’t always merciful or tenderhearted. We will encounter many who are coarse and perhaps cruel. Remember that with Christ we can endure (John 16:33; I John 5:4). People also generally live up (or down) to what we expect of them.

## DO YOU

The one-talent man wasn’t expected to double or even triple the resources, but to use them according to his “ability” (v. 15, *dunamis*, strength). Perfection might be the goal, but our best is all that is expected. Take inventory in what you have, not what you don’t.

## GET REAL

The one-talent man also underestimated what he could do. His fear of risk was directly tied to his notion that he would more likely fail than succeed. “Cognitive distortions” refers to inaccurate ways of thinking that filters and reinterprets reality to reinforce negative emotions. For example, “*The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets*” (Prov. 26:13, note: he imagined a lion). We will be as happy - and as effective in coping with financial stress - as we make up our minds to be.