



# STUDY GUIDE

## COMPARABLE - STORIES JESUS TOLD

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*Stories. They inform. They persuade. They entertain. But stories do much more. They connect us to each other and to our Father. Jesus understood this. He used stories to help connect His followers to important truths. His stories, the parables, help us make the connection between His teachings and our doings. And, if we take a moment to compare our lives to those in His stories, WE find that there's not much different between now and then.*

### THE SERIES AT A GLANCE

#### Week 1

*The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard*  
Matthew 20:1-16  
Theme: Grace & Ministry

#### Week 2

*The Parable of the Talents*  
Matthew 25:14-30  
Theme: Faithfulness & Risk

#### Week 3

*The Parable of the Wandering Sheep*  
Matthew 18:10-14  
Theme: Perseverance & Love

#### Week 4

*The Parable of the Wedding Feast*  
Luke 14:15-24  
Theme: God's Acceptance & Focus

#### Week 5

*The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*  
Matthew 18:21-35  
Theme: Forgiveness

#### Week 6

*The Parable of New Wine in Old Wineskins*  
Luke 5:33-39  
Theme: Transformation Takes Change

# THE PARABLES OF JESUS

## THE PARABLES FROM MATTHEW

April 24

The Parable of New Cloth and New Wineskins  
Matthew 9:16-17

April 25

The Parable of the Lampshade  
Matthew 5:14-16

April 26

The Parable of the Sower  
Matthew 13:3-23

April 27

The Parable of the Weeds  
Matthew 13:24-30

April 28

The Parable of the Mustard Seed  
Matthew 13:31-32

April 29

The Parable of the Leaven  
Matthew 13:33

April 30

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl  
Matthew 13:44-46

May 1

The Parable of the Net  
Matthew 13:47-50

May 2

THe Parable of the Homeowner  
Matthew 13:52

May 3

The Parable of the Wandering Sheep  
Matthew 18:12-14

May 4

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant  
Matthew 18:23-31

May 5

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard  
Matthew 20:1-16

May 6

The Parable of the Two Sons  
Matthew 21:28-32

May 7

The Parable of the Tenants  
Matthew 21:33-44

May 8

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet  
Matthew 22:1-14

May 9

The Parable of the Fig Tree  
Matthew 24:32-35

May 10

The Parable of the Ten Virgins  
May 25:1-13

May 11

The Parable of the Talents  
Matthew 25:14-30

May 12

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats  
Matthew 25:31-46

## THE PARABLES FROM MARK

May 13

The Parable of the Growing Seed  
Mark 4:26-29

May 14

The Parable of the Returning Owner  
Mark 13:34-37

## THE PARABLES FROM LUKE

May 15

The Parable of the Moneylender  
Luke 7:41-43

May 16

The Parable of the Rich Fool  
Luke 12:16-21

May 17

The Parable of the Watchful Servants  
Luke 12:35-40

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- May 18  
The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Servants  
Luke 12:42-48
- May 19  
The Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree  
Luke 13:6-9
- May 20  
The Parable of the Master and the Servant  
Luke 17:7-10
- May 21  
The Parable of the Good Samaritan  
Luke 10:30-37
- May 22  
The Parable of the Friend Seeking Bread  
Luke 11:5-8
- May 23  
The Parable of the Place of Honor  
Luke 14:7-11
- May 24  
The Parable of the Great Banquet  
Luke 14:15-24
- May 25  
Parables About Counting the Cost  
Luke 14:28-33
- May 26  
The Parable of the Lost Sheep  
Luke 15:3-7
- May 27  
The Parable of the Lost Coin  
Luke 15:8-10
- May 28  
The Parable of the Prodigal Son  
Luke 15:28-33
- May 29  
The Parable of the Shrewd Manager  
Luke 16:1-9
- May 30  
The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus  
Luke 16: 19-31
- May 31  
The Parable of the Persistent Widow  
Luke 18:2-8
- June 1  
The Parable of the Pharisee and the  
Tax Collector  
Luke 18:10-14

## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

This parable tells the story of a landowner who hires five sets of laborers throughout the course of the day. When the work day is over, all the workers received the same wages. Those who were hired at the beginning of the day were angered that those who were hired late in the day received a full day's pay. The landowner points out that the early workers were fairly compensated and they're jealous at the generosity the landowner showed the latecomers.

Israel was like the workers hired early in the morning. They had been part of God's plan from the beginning. Jesus was responding to the natural resentment that would come when God's kingdom would be opened to those from every nation.

### **READ & RESPOND:**

- Read Matthew 20:1-16 and then write your response to this week's reading below:



- Is there a passage from today's reading that you would like to commit to memory? Write it in the space below.

### **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?



- What is your prayer for this week?

**DISCUSS****ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.**

1. How do you feel when you see co-workers who are lazy and do not do their work, yet they get a raise or are promoted over people who do work hard? Has this happened to you?

2. Most of us read this parable from the perspective of one who showed up for work at 6:00 AM. How does it change when you read it from the perspective of someone who started working in the afternoon?

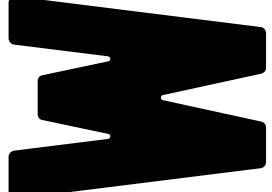
3. When do you think you started working? Why?

4. What are some reasons people don't begin working until mid-morning or mid-afternoon?

5. If you demand that God meet your demands, He might just do that. How would you feel to receive what you want when you could have had so much more? How do trust and faith come into play?

6. What do you say when someone says that God is unfair? Have you ever felt that way? How do we trust Him and accept His provisions even when we may not see them?

7. We are to trust in Christ; our motivation is to serve, not to demand what we think our reward or place should be. Why is this so hard for some people? Is it hard for you?



## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

This parable tells the story of a man going on a journey and entrusting three servants with varying amounts of money. When the master arrives to settle accounts with these servants, the two that he entrusted with the most significant amounts offer the master a return on his investment. The third servant simply hid the money he was given and gives it back to the master. The last servant is scolded and rejected for not turning any profit on the money he was entrusted with.

The immediate context points to this being a warning for Israel, but the application touches everyone who longs to be part of the kingdom. We are all responsible for stewarding the grace and resources we have received. They're not just ours to hoard; they're ours to multiply.

### **READ & RESPOND:**

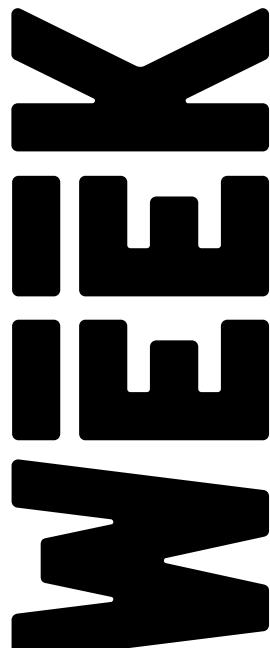
- Read Matthew 25:14-30 and then write your response to this week's reading below:



- Is there a passage from today's reading that you would like to commit to memory? Write it in the space below.

### **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?



- What is your prayer for this week?

**DISCUSS**

**ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.**

1. Have you ever known someone who was extremely talented but never used his or her talent? How did you feel about them for that?

2. Do you think the master was being too harsh with his servant? Why?

3. What does it mean to you that God trusts you with His most valuable goods and people? Have you wasted your opportunities and responsibilities? If so, how?

4. How can fear destroy our opportunities to be productive?

5. What do you believe God has given you? What have you done with it? Where do you invest what He gives you?

6. God measures us based on what we are capable of and not against what others have done. How can this motivate you to make the most of the opportunities He provides?

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## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

While this parable is similar to the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke, Jesus is talking to the disciples and not the Pharisees here. He focuses on caring for the vulnerable. The disciples ask who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven and Jesus singles out children.

Jesus reiterates God's care for the wayward and vulnerable by comparing Himself to a shepherd who would leave 99 sheep in order to track down one who has gone astray.

### **READ & RESPOND:**

- Read Matthew 18:10-14 and then write your response to this week's reading below:
- Is there a passage from today's reading that you would like to commit to memory? Write it in the space below.

### **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?

- What is your prayer for this week?

**DISCUSS****ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.**

1. Have you ever been physically lost before? Maybe you were in a new city or took a wrong turn on a walk through the woods? What feelings did you experience in this moment? Did someone come to your “rescue?” Who was it? If not, how did being alone in that moment make you feel?

2. Jesus gives this parable to demonstrate the importance of “one of these little ones.” Who is the little one He is referring to in the parable? How important to the man is the little one that has strayed?

3. Why does the man rejoice?

4. Since the Father cares for each little one, how important should helping kids grow in their faith be to us? What are some ways that you can do this? With your own kids? With the kids in the church?

5. Reflect on your own lives in light of the parable of the lost sheep. Has there been a time where God has pulled you out of a season of being lost? How can you use this experience to grow the faith of those around you?

## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

After sharing the Parable of the Place of Honor (Luke 14:7-11), a man responds with a toast to those who are blessed enough to eat at the feast of the kingdom of God. It's almost as if he completely missed the point of Christ's words. So Jesus tells a more challenging parable.

A man was putting on a banquet and invited many guests. When he sent his servant to gather the people who were invited, they offered excuses for why they couldn't come. When the master heard the guests weren't coming to his event, he sent his servant out to invite those on the bottom of society's ladder: the poor, lame, blind, etc. He then sent the servant out to invite travelers to come to the party. They all had a big party together.

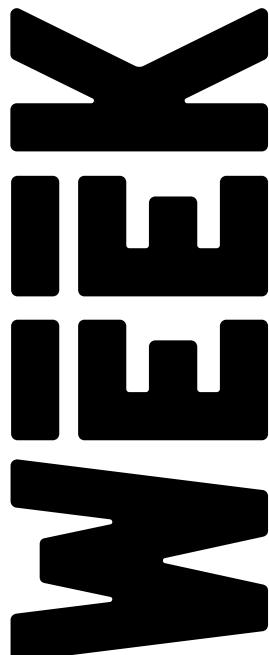
### **READ & RESPOND:**

- Read Luke 14:15-24 and then write your response to this week's reading below:



### **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?



- What is your prayer for this week?

**DISCUSS****ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.**

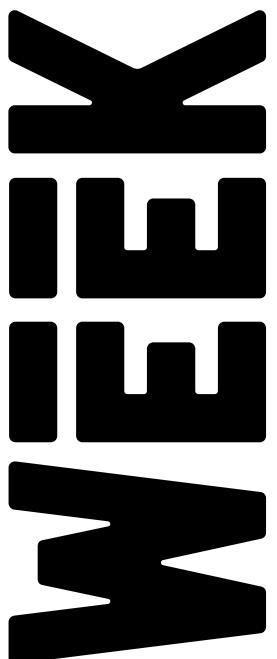
1. What purpose can you think of for giving a big dinner? What kind of dinner would you most likely attend? What would make you less likely to attend a dinner party? Do you think this relates to the parable? Why or why not?

2. What are some of the reasons people might make excuses for not attending a social function like this dinner? What do those reasons tell us about these invited guests? About their relationship with the host? Are there ways you resemble these guests? If so, what are they?

3. Of the three different groups of people invited to the dinner – the original guests, “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame,” and the people in the roads and lanes – who do you feel closest to? Why?

4. Who do you think would feel most blessed at the dinner? Why? Who has the most positive relationship with the host? Why? How do you think this applies to you?

5. Jesus tells this story after someone says “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” What point do you think Jesus is trying to make with this parable and why?



## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

Jesus illustrates the importance of forgiveness by telling the story of a king who forgives a servant of a debt he's utterly incapable of repaying. After receiving this incredible mercy, the servant assaults a fellow servant who owes him a small debt. The king is angered that the servant refused to extend the mercy he so freely received.

Through this parable, Jesus tells Peter (and us) that we should see the sins committed against us in the light of the sins God has forgiven us for. As we have been forgiven, we should also forgive.

## **READ & RESPOND:**

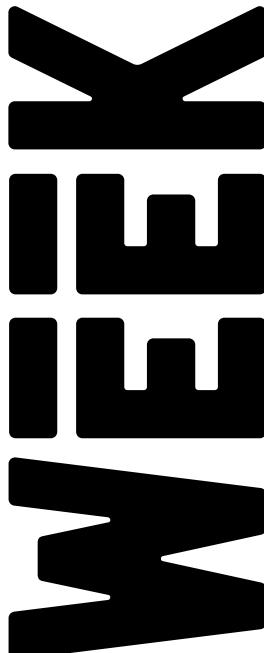
- Read Matthew 18:21-35 and then write your response to this week's reading below:



- Is there a passage from today's reading that you would like to commit to memory? Write it in the space below.

## **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?



- What is your prayer for this week?

## DISCUSS

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.

1. Peter asks Jesus how many times he needs to forgive – as many as seven times? Why do you think he asks this? Does seven seem like a lot? Do you have a guideline number of our own (e.g., “three strikes & you’re out,” “fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me”), and is it greater than or less than seven? Why or why not?

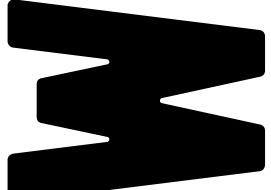
2. Do you see “sins” or “offenses” as being similar to debts? Why or why not? Are some sins or offenses more like debts than others? If so, which ones? What difference might your answer make for how you understand this parable?

3. What are your feelings about the different people in this parable? (e.g., do you feel compassion or “pity,” anger, fear, joy, etc for them?) Why? Which person do you feel closest or most similar to? Why? Which character do you feel most distant or different from? Why?

4. Does the “power” of the people in the parable make a difference in how they act? What difference does it make and why?

5. Have you ever been in the position of the “fellow servants” in v31? What happened, and what did you do? What did you learn from that experience? How does that learning affect the way you understand what today’s parable means?

6. How can you use this story to change the way you look at forgiveness? Is there anything you feel you can do differently based on Jesus’ teaching in this parable? Explain.



## **ABOUT THIS WEEK'S PARABLE:**

The first-century religious establishment had expectations for the Messiah. In their understanding, He would come and build upon the traditions and practices of Judaism. Even John the Baptist's disciples didn't know how to understand why Jesus wasn't adhering to common Jewish observances.

Jesus tells them that any attempt to patch up what was lacking in Judaism's traditional expressions of righteousness would only make everything worse. Like a piece of unshrunk cloth sewn into an old garment or a new wine in an old wineskin, Jesus was bringing something that wouldn't fit into the religious traditions of the time.

### **READ & RESPOND:**

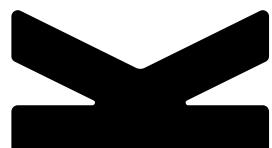
- Read Luke 5:33-39 and then write your response to this week's reading below:

- Is there a passage from today's reading that you would like to commit to memory? Write it in the space below.

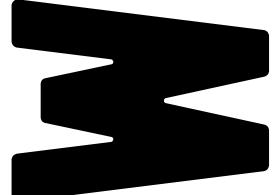


### **GRATITUDE & PRAYER**

- What are three things you are grateful for?



- What is your prayer for this week?



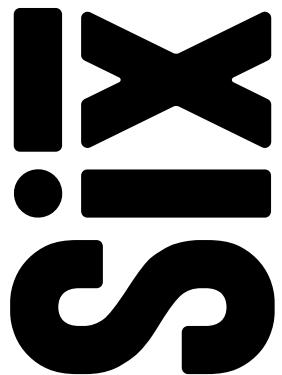
**DISCUSS****ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ON YOUR OWN, AS A FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS OR WITH YOUR HOUSE CHURCH.**

1. When you were a kid, what did your parents do when you wore out your clothes prematurely? How does it feel to wear new clothes versus old ones?

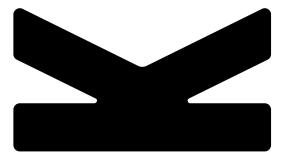
2. All we could ever do is hope for a patch for our frayed lives. So, what kind of patches have you tried to fix: yours or someone else's? Did it work? What happened?

3. Jesus gives us the wine of His blood, renews our skins, and clothes us in His righteousness. What does this mean to you? How have you experienced renewal?

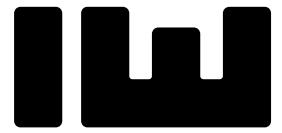
4. Jesus went to the people, continually ministering to them, and gave us an example of what we are to do. How so?



5. Jesus is more concerned with our attitudes and motivations, not what we do on the outside. Does this mean what you do is not important? Why, or why not?



6. Fasting is a way for you to draw closer to God. Have you ever done this? Do you think it would help you grow in your faith development? If so, what are the reasons that prevent you from doing a fast?



7. What is the new wine in your life? What are the old wineskins in your life?



8. How can letting go of the old habits/traditions pulling you from God help make you a "vessel" for "new wine"?

