



Links Players

KINGDOM INVESTMENTS 1: 'WELL DONE!'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! ...Come and share your master's happiness!'" (Matthew 25:21, NIV)

ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS of practice in golf is the ability to recognize the payoff for your investment. In fact, it is sometimes said that a golfer must be willing to become worse in order to become better. You're more likely to feel the regress of your troubles before the progress starts to show itself in better shots under pressure and a nice little collection of lower scores.

Still, the dedicated golfer will put in the work, even when the next big competition is weeks or months away. She will trust that the incremental (often invisible) improvements will add up to the success she wants to accomplish.

Our efforts at faith can take on a similar look. Does showing up to our small group or another 10 minutes in prayer this morning really make a difference? It certainly may not seem so one act at a time. But let these efforts accumulate, and our spiritual health can really improve.

Jesus established this principle in his Parable of the Talents. This parable will be the springboard for our studies in weeks ahead, but before we begin to break down the possible ways we may make faithful deposits in the kingdom of God, we want to lay hold of Jesus' central exhortation: Do well with what you have been given.

In the parable as it is presented in the Gospel of Matthew, three servants are given various amounts of money to put to work while their master goes away to receive his own greater commission. As you might guess of any master, the master in the parable has one expectation of his servants: productivity. The master is looking for a return on his investments, and he is looking for this return to come through the faithful work of his subordinates.

Two of the servants understand just what the master is looking for. They get busy. Perhaps they even make mistakes along the way. A few of their efforts produce a negative return. But they are active in the markets and their overall activity puts them in the black. They have, the master says upon his return, done well.

The parable is meant to direct us all who would serve Christ. We must do so actively, not idly. We engage in good work, whether or not we can see an immediate return. And we trust that the payoff will come from the largesse of the Lord.

Opening questions What kind of golf practice seems least rewarding to you? How do you stick at it, even when it doesn't seem to be paying off (or do you move on to something else)?

READING Matthew 25:14-30; Matthew 6:19-21; Colossians 3:23-24

Engaged investors (Matthew 25)

What was the difference between the servants who were rewarded and the one who was not? When it comes to investing in God's kingdom, what kinds of specific investments come to mind? What kind of lasting payoff would you expect from each of these?

Lasting investments (Matthew 6)

What is the emphasis of Jesus' words here? How would people read your heart at this stage in your life by looking at your material investments? What priorities would they see?

God-honoring work (Colossians 3)

What general approach should we always have toward our work? How does this apply to the work God has given you specifically right now?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/bitMicPatZa8>