

Grace Inspires Contentment

SESSION GOALS

The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of what we want to walk away from the discussion with—knowing, feeling and doing.

Main Idea: God's commission of stewardship to His people is an expression of His grace towards them.

Head Change: To understand that we are not ‘deserving’ owners of anything on earth. Everything we possess has been entrusted to us through God’s grace alone.

Heart Change: To accept ourselves for who we are based on our understanding that our talents and abilities are ordained by God.

Life Change: To spend more time understanding and living out God's purpose for us instead of striving to make ourselves into something we are not.

OPEN

Open with a round of introductions if the group is new. Have members jot down a few things that they are thankful for in their lives. This could include personality traits that have served them well, relationships, talents and skills, resources available to them and so on.

In a world that constantly equates success with 'more of' and 'better than' being thankful for what we do have can be extremely difficult. We will always encounter people who are more talented, more popular or have far more resources than us. Clearly, we will never have enough, if we do not cultivate a spirit of contentment.

In this study, Anand Mahadevan reminds us that there is a far greater purpose to our lives on earth than our own personal well-being. Through one of Jesus' most-studied parables—the parable of the talents—he explains how God equips each one of us with the skills and resources we need to bless others, glorify His name and accomplish His purpose for our lives.

As you watch, write down how Anand Mahadevan answers these questions.

What are the four Principles of Grace?

How is Biblical stewardship an expression of God's grace to us?

What is biblical entrepreneurship?

How does self-awareness and acceptance impact our walk with God?

Why does grace demand accountability?

WATCH

SESSION 1: *Grace Inspires Contentment* (12 minutes)

REVIEW

In considering the parable of the talents, Anand Mahadevan makes an important point—stewardship is not ownership. What are some of the areas of life in which you are likely to forget this important principle? How would internalizing this principle change the way you behave?

Anand points out that the servants were not qualified to steward such large amounts of money, and the stewardship to which they were called, was an expression of grace. What are some areas that God has called you to steward? How do you see His grace in entrusting you with these responsibilities?

Anand says that good stewardship inspires us to be entrepreneurial—faithful, smart, innovative, diligent and passionate in using our skills, talents and resources to serve God and people. How would this approach change the way you are currently carrying out your responsibilities?

Anand notes that fear leads to a static and unproductive life. Examine your heart and note down the fears that are holding you back from achieving God's purposes for your life. What practical steps will you take to move past these fears and live out God's plan in your family, school, community and workplace?

Anand states that the worker with two talents did not resent the fact that the other worker had been given five talents, but the worker with the one talent did. His underlying resentment changed the course of his life. How can bitterness, envy and jealousy come in the way of your relationship with God?

Anand calls out the fact that the three workers were in fact not created equally nor with the same levels of ability. What is your response to this truth? How would you deal with the temptation to be resentful or jealous of people who are more talented, skilled, accomplished or blessed?

What is the antidote to jealousy? How will you find grace and contentment with what God has given you?

Despite God's seemingly preferential treatment, in what way would you think that each servant actually enjoyed

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BIBLE EXPLORATION

Skim through Matthew: 25:14–30. What does the term ‘entrusted’ mean to you? How is it an expression of God’s grace?

What terms reveal the true attitude of the worker with five talents?

What reason does the worker with one talent attribute towards his poor performance? Do you think this was an excuse or a reasonable fear? How can you tell the difference?

Read 1 Samuel 18:6–7, Genesis 4:3–16. How did jealousy towards David cost Saul his entire kingdom?

How could an alternate response from Cain have changed the outcome of the events mentioned in Genesis 4? What is your response to God when He seems to favor someone over you?

How does unchecked jealousy cause us to lose sight of God’s work in our own lives? Can you share about a time when embracing your abilities and limitations helped you or your family/ team/department achieve something?

Read Philippians 4:11–13 and 1 Timothy 6:6–12. What is Paul’s secret to contentment?

What are we asked to pursue and what are we asked to avoid?

Read Luke 12:42–48. Here, Jesus lays an important foundation. From those who have much, much will be expected. What are some of the common elements that we find in this parable and the parable of the talents?

How do you see God’s justice through these verses? How are you responding to the much or little that God has entrusted you with?

Understanding that we can never be anything more or less than what God intends us to be frees us from the responsibility of having to prove ourselves to the world. It fills us with a sense of contentment that is based on a true understanding of who we are in Christ. No longer will we
