**Series: I Need a Vocation
Scripture and Background Information for June 19-25.**

To prepare for your group discussion each week**,** group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD’S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week we continue our series called “I Need a Vocation.” Whether your work is full-time, part-time, paid, or unpaid, we’ll spend a couple of weeks talking about God’s plan for work that does more than just “occupy” us during the week.

**Background for Matthew 25:24-30:**

Matthew 24-25 comes toward the end of Jesus’ ministry on Earth and is a section within Matthew that is heavily focused on Christ’s future return and judgment. In these two chapters, Jesus teaches the importance of being ready for Christ’s return and how vital it is to act in obedience to Him as Christians while waiting. To supplement His teaching, Jesus uses multiple parables to explain what “the kingdom of heaven”, which will be instituted at Christ’s return, is like (25:1, “it” in 25:14).

Chapter 25 begins with two of these parables. The first parable is titled the Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13) and the second is the Parable of the Talents (25:14-30). The Parable of the Ten Virgins describes the kingdom of heaven as being like brides waiting for their grooms before their wedding. In it, 5 of the brides were prepared for their wedding and met their grooms while the others weren’t prepared and did not get to. Jesus uses this story as a warning to, “be on the alert,” since his audience, “[doesn’t] know the day nor the hour,” when he will come back to rule His kingdom (25:13).

The Parable of the Talents is also about the kingdom of heaven. However, the focus in this parable is about the responsibility of servants to their master as they wait for his return. These servants were each given different amounts of money to manage and are expected to be faithful with it while the master is gone. The first two servants were given larger amounts and were faithful with what they were given by making more money for their master. This pleased their master and they were able to, “enter into the joy of [their] master,” (25:21, 23). However, this was not the case for the third servant in our passage for today. He hid the money he was responsible for and this displeased the master greatly.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. In verses 24-25, what excuses did the last servant give for how he handled his master’s money? Do you feel like these are easy excuses to make in moments where we fail to be responsible with what the Lord has given us? What are some other excuses we might come up with?
2. Knowing that the master in this parable represents God, what does his response in verses 26-28 tell us about how important our responsibility is to use what he has given us well?
3. While we know we cannot lose our salvation, verse 30 uses strong language when referring to those who act like the “worthless servant.” What do you think is at stake for being unfaithful to God with what He has entrusted us? How can we enter into the joy of the Lord like the other servants?

*Note: As Christians, we eagerly wait on the return of Jesus when he will finally establish His kingdom on Earth. However, as we wait, we are called to work diligently in obedience to Him. We must remember that God has placed us in specific roles and has created each of us uniquely so that we would use our vocations and gifts to glorify Him. No matter how big or small they may seem, each role is equally vital to God’s mission in the world and we should remember to be faithful with whatever we’ve been given.*

If you would like to spend some more time personally learning about and reflecting on finding purpose within whatever vocation you are a part of, a good resource is *Every Good Endeavor* by Tim Keller.