

1. Lessons from the Merchant (1-2)

- a. The merchant has the choice to keep his bread in the warehouse, or to take some of his bread and send it across the oceans to sell in foreign markets.
 - i. If he chooses to invest, he is promised a return on his investment.
 - ii. If he chooses to hold it back, he jeopardizes his financial position.
- b. Don't let your fear of the future keep you from investing your resources (1).
 - i. Parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-29)
 1. Those who take steps of faith to invest gain innumerable blessings (25:21, 23).
 2. Those who take steps of fear lose innumerable blessings (25:25).
 - ii. God expects you to invest the immensely valuable resources that He has given you.
 1. If you don't learn to invest when the amounts are small, you'll never learn to invest when the amounts are large.
 2. If you don't learn to be generous when you're poor; you'll never learn to be generous when you're prosperous.
- c. Don't let your fear of failure keep you from investing your resources (2).
 - i. Diversification anticipates failure and incorporates it into the business plan.
 - ii. If you're not failing, you're not trying.
 - iii. Successful Christians have failed more times than most would even dare to attempt.
 - iv. Michael Jordan famously said, "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

2. Lessons from the Farmer (3-6)

- a. Don't wait for optimal conditions to invest what God has given you (3-4).
 - i. Storms are an inevitable part of life (3).
 - ii. The sower who waits for the wind to die down will never sow (4).
 - iii. The reaper who waits for the skies to clear will never reap (4).
 - iv. The best way to deal with the things you cannot control is by focusing on what you can control.
 - v. Micah 3:10 "Prove me now...saith the Lord...if I will not open you the windows of heaven..."
- b. Don't try to figure everything out before you act (5-6).
 - i. God's ways are higher than our ways (5).
 1. Job 38:12, 19-20, 35 "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place...Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof, That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?"
 2. Believers are happy to take comfort in knowing that we do not know, but we know the One Who knows all.
 3. Trying to know it all or pretending to know it all is foolishness, not wisdom.
 - ii. The best way to deal with the things you cannot understand is by focusing what you can understand and act upon (6).
 1. Many fall victim to analysis paralysis and never act upon what they know.
 2. Instead, we should take every opportunity to act upon what we do know to invest for eternity.
 3. 2 Corinthians 9:6 "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

4. Ephesians 5:15-16 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Conclusion:

1. In what ways are you allowing fear of the future to keep you from investing your resources?
2. In what areas are you allowing fear of failure to keep you from investing your resources?
3. What circumstances are you allowing to hinder you from sowing and reaping?
4. In what areas are you allowing what you don't know to keep you from acting on what you do know?