

## **Think it Through: #2 The Workplace – Matthew 25:14-30**

### **Matt Cassidy interviewing Mark McClain – 5/1/2011**

In our series, “Think It Through”, we will have a number of people joining us up here on the stage. Next week we will have Dr. Chris Thurman who is an author and one of the counselors here in Austin. We will talk about what emotional health looks like and how he uses his brain and his faith in his practice. It should be extremely helpful for us to determine how we can become healthier in our relationship with other people and in our relationship with God.

Then we will have Dr. Walter Bradley, who was chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Dept. at Texas A & M University. He is now a distinguished professor of Mechanical Engineering at Baylor University. He will be talking to us about using his mind in science.

Our last scholar to join us will be Dr. Rob Koons who is a tenured professor at the University of Texas in the area of Philosophy. I have consulted with him over the years on different philosophical areas. I have found him to be a wonderful individual who uses his brain and his heart in his career as a professor of philosophy. I think you will enjoy our time together then as well.

So, the whole series, “Think it Through”, is about how to connect the heart and the head. This week we are talking to Mark McClain here about Thinking It Through in the marketplace because first and foremost that is where we spend all our time, most of our time; we spend 40 – 60 hours in the marketplace and it seemed that would be a good place to begin our series in the application of using our head and our heart and our faith.

It is great to have Mark here because first of all, he is a friend of mine. We go way back. Our kids went to high school together and we worked through all of that. This is a true story. We tried to have a double date for 18 – 24 months and because of kids in high school we could never get together. Finally, we said – *Look, since we see each other in the football stands on Friday night, that is a date.* So we started sitting next to them and dated quite a bit for two years.

The other reason Mark is up here, most importantly, is that he loves God. I have watched him for years now in his expression of his faith in the marketplace. Many times, I have sat in wonder in his ability to stand strong, not just in ethical areas but also in his ability to negotiate time and balance life. He is extremely talented but he is also wise. He is a very wise individual in how to manage the different parts of the many aspects of life. That is one of the main things we will be talking about today, his perspective and balance and understanding God’s view on those things.

I want you to know that Mark and I met multiple times to prepare for today’s time together with you. We wanted to make sure our time would not be targeted specifically, rifle-barrel kind of thing, at just

people in the marketplace, that maybe even have his job description. We wanted to be general enough so that people – whether it is a junior high student playing soccer, or a stay-at-home mom, or somebody in the school system, or medical practice – whatever it might be, these principles should be applicable in every aspect of that 40 – 60 hours per week. We will be looking at general things but we will try to apply them specifically as I ask him how he does that. This won't be just for a traditional description of what "marketplace" looks like but rather one that each of us can apply.

Mark, why don't you tell us a little about yourself and let us get to know you a little bit.

**Mark:** First of all, I have a wife who is wonderful. Like most of the guys I know, they are pretty happy if they are around 50. I married way over my head and that shows how smart I was at 20+. I have three great kids: Andy who is a graduate of Wheaton College, teaching and coaching Vandegrift High School, married to the lovely Erica. My daughter Rachel is a sophomore at Auburn. My daughter Grace is a sophomore at Westwood High School. One of the things I have learned as Andy is all the way out, Rachel is mostly out, and Grace is getting out, is this concept that the kids are not mine – nor is my wife mine really – but that they are the people I get to walk through life with most closely. So if this all sounds like it does not make sense, you should ask them and they should be able to explain it to you.

Real quickly, since this is a marketplace thing, I thought I would give a really quick background of what I have done in my career to give you context. My first decade in the work force was spent as a cog in the corporation. I worked at IBM for about 7 years in field sales and marketing stuff. Then I switched to HP which was a huge change from an East Coast-based computer company to a West Coast-based computer company – a massive difference. I was starting to run out of gas on that, which was all in California. So I had a chance to join a start up company in Texas called Tivoli that no one had even heard of at the time; this was about 1995. That is what brought us to Austin. It was a young start-up company and right after I got there it went public. A year later IBM bought it and it just exploded in growth. I got to ride that wave of success. It was one of those deals where things happened to me that I might not have been able to predict. Then a group of us left there right at the beginning of 2000 to start a company. Those of you in the business community know that 2000 turned out to be a really, really bad time to start a company. Things blew up in the tech culture and market. So we got to work our way through that for a few years but actually had a good result. We sold that company to Sun Micro Systems. I stayed there as an executive for a couple of years. Then I had so much fun doing that, I started another company five years ago with many of the same people. So I went from being a kind of cog in the organization watching how people attempted to live out their faith in an organization to being a leader in this last decade of two

different companies, trying to figure out what that looks like as a leader. That is some of the context we will come back to a few times.

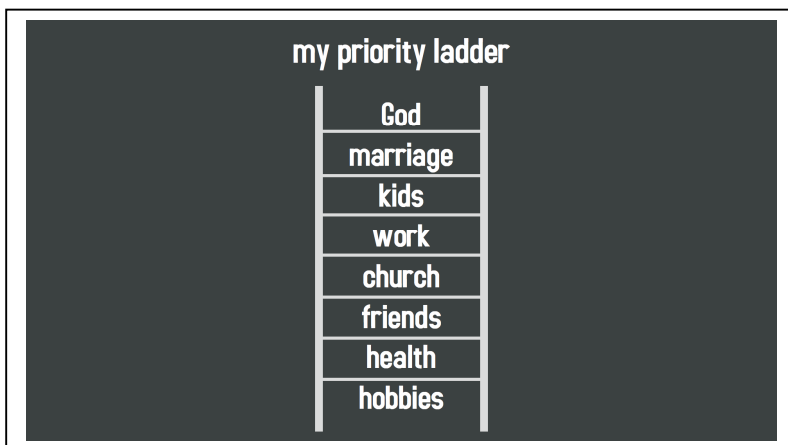
## **Godly Perspective**

**Matt:** What we will do now is look at the bigger picture of how to apply our faith in the everyday parts of life, especially in our perspective of life, God's perspective on the marketplace. Most importantly, the competing demands we have, of the many hats we wear whether it is husband/father/friend. Also, I want to look at how God views your job, especially I think it has something to do with computers. I can't imagine God having anything to do with that. More than just being ethical, what does it look like to have Christ as the center of your job, your market place. Secondly, I want to look at how you manage God's opportunities, the talents He has given you, the circumstances you are in, and even the finances that are given to you for investors. How do you keep Christ as the center? That is our two-point outline.

The first one has to do with godly perspective. The big issues that I feel like are very difficult are the priorities of work and a balanced life. It just seems like most of our calendar world is versions of just losing, in other words, in my experience, when I am at work, I wish I was spending more time with my wife and kids. When I am with my wife and kids, I wish I was spending more time at work because there is so much to get done. There many other aspects of it. It seems like the hierarchy of managing just doesn't seem to work very well. So maybe you could help us with that.

## **Managing Priorities – Traditional Model**

**Mark:** I don't know about a lot of you, but when you get through at least high school, if not college, you start to think a lot about prioritizing, how to manage your time and your priorities. I think there is this traditional way of looking at that as an ordered list or a ladder.



If you are a good Christian, I think you have probably heard of or seen something like this. God is first because this is the correct Christian answer. My wife is second. My kids are third. My work is fourth .... The trouble is that it sounds so, so good in theory and it just isn't real. I don't know anybody who actually is able to hold that list all the time in how they spend their time – maybe not how they think but certainly not how they spend their time. Again, as Matt said, for those of us who have a day job, or if your day job is being a full time mom, a lot of times you feel like *that* is where I am spending all my time. So I can say my kids are first but on any given week when I was a young corporate climber at IBM, I would probably spent less than 10% of my week with my kids – it felt like some weeks. So I thought, this ladder model is not working for me.

### **Managing Priorities – The Wheel Model**

Fortunately, I came across a model from a really great speaker in college. It is according to this concept of a wheel.

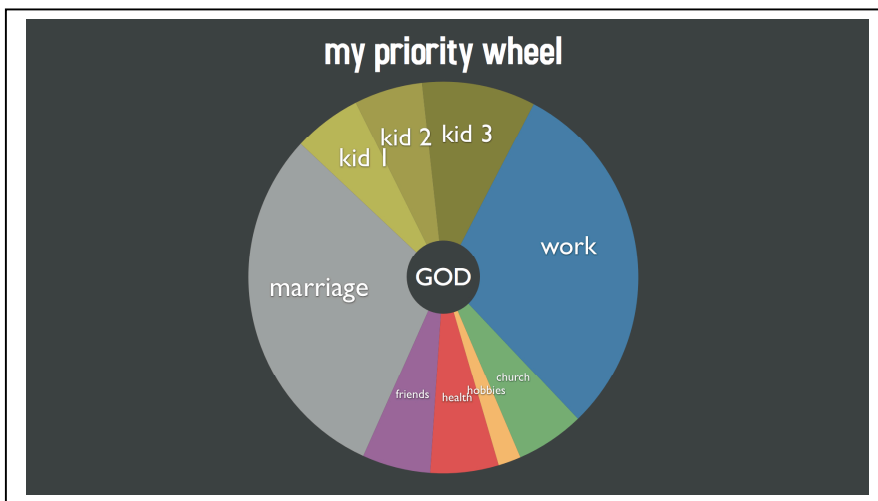


The wheel, I think, is a much better way to think of it. In this model, God/Christ is at the center. This mindset is that God / Christ are central and that everything emanates from there, my values, my choices, my time, my vocabulary, whichever of those wedges I am operating in at a given moment. I have to be thinking that God is central. Christ is central when I am at work. Christ is central when I am working out at the gym. Christ is central when I am talking to my friends. *How do I make that work* is what I have been wrestling with ever since I learned this way of looking at it.

**Matt:** Mark and I read a similar book about the same time when we were separated by 1000's of miles. Oddly enough, both of us sided with this model. But while that is the way it was described, this [power point slide] is the way it really worked itself out most of the time.

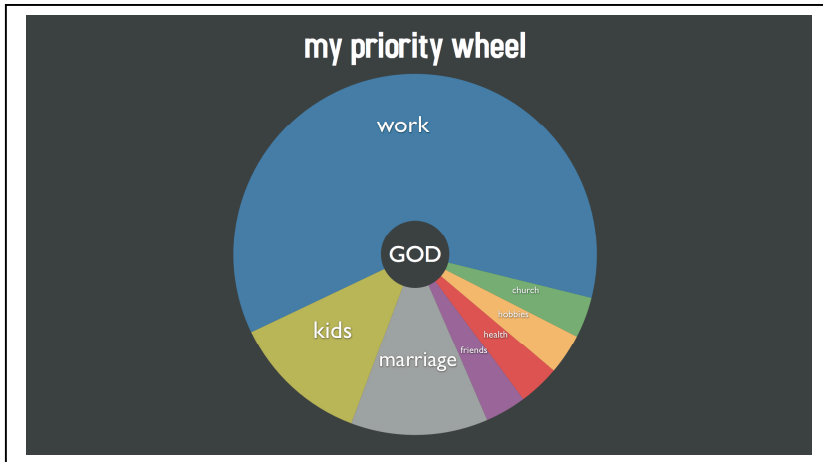


Then a child comes along and things get pushed away. Health is disappearing and so are your hobbies. By the time you have your third child, your child becomes “kids”. And there is no hobby. When our third child was born, I put up my baseball cleats and have not played softball since then. That is how it works itself out.

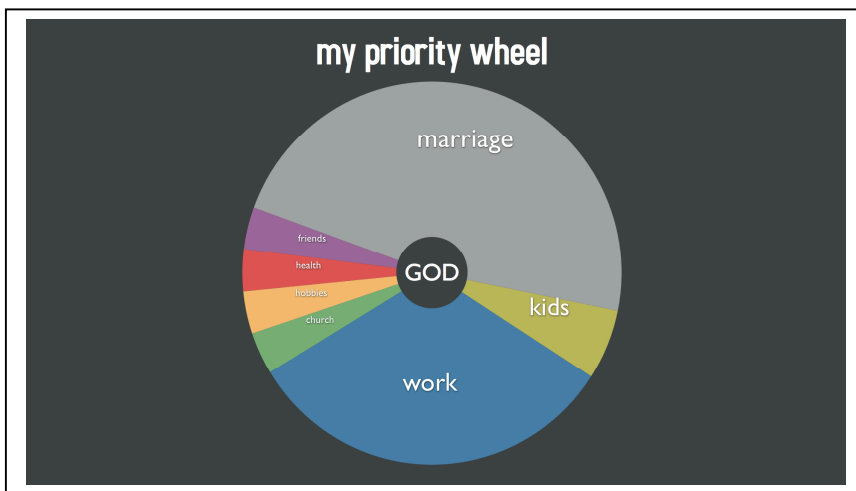


Things get more and more crowded. Work certainly demands a lot of you and many respects management doesn't care how things are at home and you have to just manage.

Here is what life looks like if you are an accountant in April. Everything gets pushed to the side and that is okay. Your mate should have those expectations and you should have those expectations. But notice, Christ is still central there.

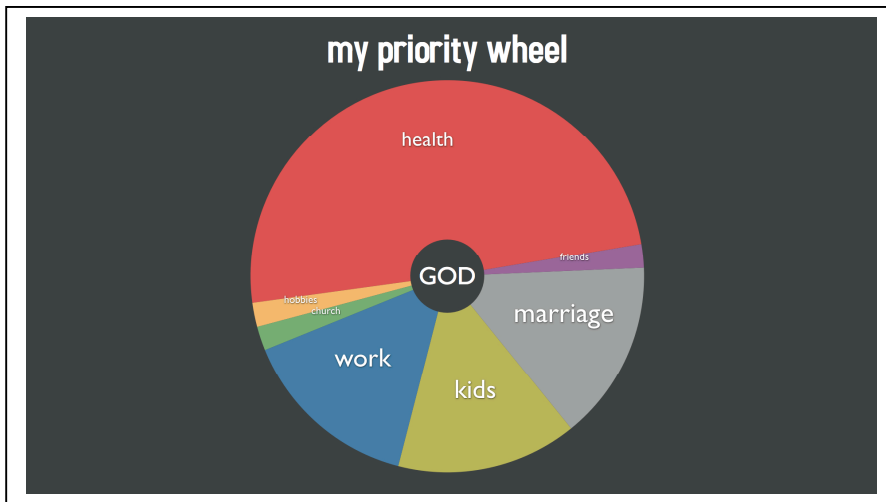


Then here is what it looks like when your mate has mono and you have three children. It is not like it is a life altering illness but it is something that requires a lot of work for you. So you just hunker down and the kids don't get much time at all. But you are basically a nurse to your mate and you are an employee to your employer. Those are still the dominating things. Again, when was the last time you did anything that was good for your health.

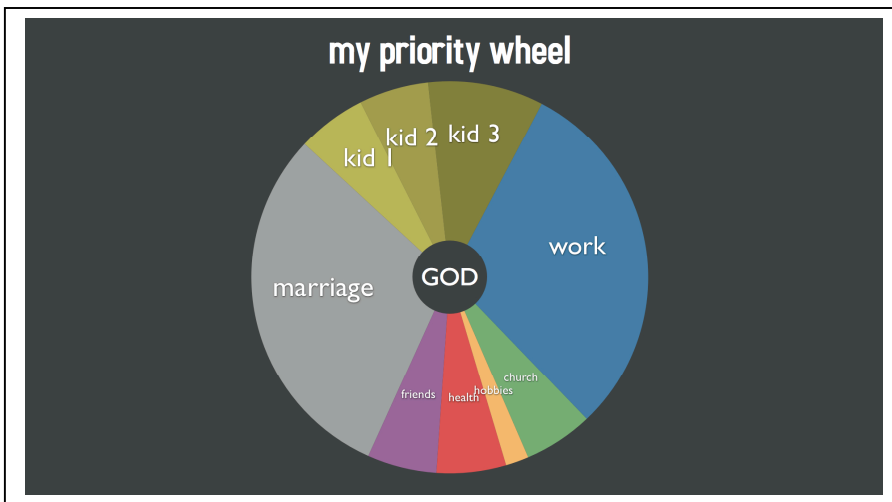


One of the things that changed in our house is that we didn't go elsewhere to work out any more. We bought a gym kind of thing and weights and brought it to our house. If we were ever going to be healthy, we would have to do it in our garage. So you modify things to do that.

Then if you or your mate gets seriously ill, then everything changes there too.



The idea here is this is probably a more typical expression of what happens. There are your three kids and work and marriage and hobbies and health.



How does God in the center of that circle of your values play out in your workplace?

**Mark:** I think for me it is a measurement over time. As I said before, I think what I have had to wrestle with is on any given hour but even given day or week, maybe even a month [like the accountant in April]. The thought is that you have to step back and Marg is my key partner in this. We step back and try to manage that balance over time. If there is a particularly bad week, I try really hard to make sure the next week isn't like that. Or if there is a particularly bad month, I try to make sure the next month isn't like that. It is not always perfect but it is probably a pretty healthy status but you recognize it gets out of balance all the time. When you are wrestling with that balance, how do you make sure that you are

valuing people, particularly your family, even when you are not spending as much time with them. But be careful as that can be a cop out.

Marg and I had a lot of conversations about Quality vs Quantity. What I learned as a young professional who was gone too much [we lived in LA and I spent 3 hours a day commuting] and I had to learn that I was missing quality time just because of the quantity gap at that stage of our lives. There are times you just have to be around. If you are not around, you are going to miss those things.

Part of what I think you hear in the business community that often gets repeated here is “work smarter, not harder”. There is this gerbil or hamster on the wheel, spinning, spinning, and you get a little older and think – *I’m not sure that is the smartest way for me to look at this*. You start to get a little more ruthless about prioritizing your time and learning that you are going to have to draw the limit. Matt and I did that this week because we talked about what we wanted to include today and you have to be ruthless, draw the line, and know that is not going to make the cut. As you get more mature in your career or working at home, you have to get tough about drawing the line and saying – *If I am going to make sure those other segments get the balance they need, I am going to have to define how much I give to work sometimes*. I don’t know about most of you but my work could consume all day, every day. So I have to choose not to let it and that is part of this “working smarter, not harder.”

### **View of Work**

**Matt:** We will look at how to apply that in a few minutes in the next section.

How is your view of work? Again, I made that comment about just working with computers or making cogs. How has your view changed from *working* to *actually feeling like* you have a vocation and you are called to that? How has that changed over the years?

**Mark:** I think if you are raised in the church, and I was, a lot of times, whether it is explicitly stated or not, you have this sacred / secular divide that you can fall into if you are not careful. I think as you are growing up, you start to think – If I am going to be a really good Christian, I should go to seminary. As a matter of fact, if I am going to be really good, I should go on the mission field. – That is not to demean the people who make that choice. But clearly God does not call all of us to do that. We need a whole lot of people out in the market place. Sometimes when you go into that, early on I felt a sense of guilt that you went into that money-grubbing professional world. As a result, you think, I’ll just write bigger checks to the church and that will make me feel better about making money. That was something I struggled with early on. Then I started to get a lot wiser to Matt’s point, hopefully with wise people and wise counsel

around me who said – *Look, God calls us to different parts of society. He does not want everybody who ever comes to faith in Him to give up their day job and go to seminary and become a priest, pastor or nun.*

I read a book a few years ago that really brought this to light for me. Most of the famous people we think of in the Bible were normal people: shepherds, business people, accountant [Matthew] tax collector, politicians. I think that thought really resonated with me. I am called to be in the business community. I have to figure out what it looks like to live out my Christian faith in the business community and it is not that I have messed up and missed my chance to go be a full time missionary.

**Matt:** Right, every believer is a minister. So, how do you do that at work?

**Mark:** First, at work sometimes, and unfortunately you see this in school settings and work settings and a lot of places in our culture today, the Christian response sometimes is – *Oh, it is so bad. Let's huddle up and be safe.* At work you get the Christians off in the corner doing a Bible study and they glare at people who interrupt them. That isn't exactly salt and light, is it? So, my early view was to live a very ethical, safe Christian life. But then we have to deal with that whole salt and light passage. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. – Many of you remember the first grade version of that. *This little light of mine. I'm going to let it shine. Hide it under a bushel.* Remember that? That whole thought that I am called to be a light in the community around me and I can't do that if I am huddled up with my Christian buddies in the corner. So I have to figure out how to engage. I am struck more and more, the older I get with how Jesus did this stuff. He did not hang out with the religious people. He hung out with the questionable people. He didn't go do what they did. He didn't go hang out at the bar and drink with them. He hung out with them until they walked in the bar. Or maybe He went into the bar and didn't have a drink. I don't know; I wasn't there.

**Matt:** Well, how do you actually do it?

**Mark:** Sometimes I go to the bar and don't have a drink.

**Matt:** I don't mean that specifically. It is not the confessional time. How do you keep Christ as center, how do you show yourself to be a Christ-follower – not necessarily a Christian but a follower of Jesus

Christ. That is one of the things you have learned over the years. How do you do that besides just working hard and producing a good product?

**Mark:** Well, one of the things that helped was your sermon series a few years ago about doing the easy stuff. But this – what does it mean to be courageous when you are a business guy in Austin, Texas, or a school teacher in Austin, Texas? I think that means that you are responsive to what you think God is calling you to do in that setting. So I feel at times God has been pretty clear to me. I don't hear the audible voice thing but either through friends and my wife and through reading Scripture that there is something I need to take a stand on or be stronger in. But I am often reminded, and we forget this a lot, that He is with me to do that. His Spirit is in me and He is going to empower me to do these things that feel uncomfortable.

In your sermon on courage, you said courage is doing what you would rather not do because you would rather stay comfortable. But you do it because it is the right thing to do or something that is needed or it is what Jesus would do.

**Matt:** You said you do the easy stuff, which means that you cannot make someone desire forgiveness. You can't be the person who actually changes a soul. So the way you express that inability is by praying for people. But you are going to be that witness and talk the words of Jesus in life situations.

**Mark:** In particular, I love the quote of St. Francis of Assisi, this idea of *preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words*. It is a great quote. That is, I should be living as a witness.

We turned *witness* into a verb a few years ago. I am going to go witness to that person, which usually meant smack them in the face with a Christian tract and then run away. I wasn't a big fan of that approach. Sorry if that is something you are into. But I felt like, no, I am going to live my life in a way that is consistent with Christ's teaching. Especially in our Bible belt part of the country a lot of times you have to differentiate between Christian to Christ follower. It is very socially acceptable to be Christian in the Bible belt. That does not necessarily mean someone is trying to follow Christ when they say that. So you have to challenge them as to what it means to follow Christ and what does it mean to live your life as a Christian, day in and day out.

**Matt:** In your head, when you are thinking about being a witness, how do you think it through? How do you actually do it?

**Mark:** It is that three-part thing we have talked about here a lot. It is the Prayer – Care – Share. So I have to identify who are the people that God has put in my life, whether that is people I work with all day, or the parents on the team, or the neighbor. Pray for them.

Care for them. How do I show the love of God to them in some tangible way? When the opportunity presents – and I emphasize that – I am very big on waiting for those opportunities to present because they do. Somebody gets sick or going through a divorce or worried about losing their job or their spouse losing their job – there is a crisis that presents itself regularly in the workplace. It is an opportunity at that point to question people's values and their views.

My easy example, after I was challenged by that sermon a few years ago, was that we started a book club at work.

**Matt:** Did you have quiche with that?

**Mark:** Yeah, it sounds kind of girly, I know. We don't talk about Oprah.

We read a set of very thought provoking Christian books. A couple of the books have not even been Christian but spiritual, to push the edges for those of us who are Christian to wrestle with some other view points. We just read those books and sit and talk about them. We do it before work on a Friday morning for an hour. It is up to 10 or 12 people who come pretty regularly out of 60 – 70 people in the company. It is a way to be challenging people to get outside their day to day life and think more deeply about things of God.

**Matt:** That is the easy stuff.

So, godly perspective is keeping Christ in the center of all your life, your values, your perspective and that sort of thing.

### ***Godly Management***

The other part is an attitude of management, realizing that you are a manager of God's talents that He has given you. That is a major part of your value system in being a Christian in the marketplace. Right?

**Mark:** Yeah and there is this concept in the Bible called stewardship. It is not a term we use very much. I think the term management or managing assets for someone who owns them is a thought we can relate to in our culture.

**Matt:** We are just renters.

### ***It is ALL From God - Generosity***

**Mark:** I just rent the stuff. God has given us all a set of stuff. It is interesting, Matt and I dug into this. We talk about the Parable of the Talents [Matthew 25]. The way we use the word *talent* today goes back to that parable. When we talk about people with talent, their gifts, their abilities, their capabilities, it goes back to that Parable of the Talents. It really reminds us that all of our gifts and talents come from God ultimately.

**Matt:** Let me explain that parable. When Jesus was talking about final judgment, end times, the Kingdom of God coming, He said – It is going to be something like this. It is like an owner of an estate has his servants come before him. For one servant, he gives him five talents. [Back then it was a weight or measure of gold or silver and then it became coinage. Eventually, it became the word that meant our abilities and gifts, the opportunities that we have.] So the owner gives one servant five talents and gives one servant two talents and the last servant gets one talent. Then the owner goes off. It says in the passage of Scripture, Matthew 25:14-30, and the first person immediately went out and put the money to work and was able to reproduce it. So he had five talents and ended up with ten talents. The second servant did likewise (with his two talents). So he immediately went out and put that money to work and was able to double it. The third servant went out and buried that one talent in the ground.

After a long period of time, when the owner returned, he checked up and had their performance reviews. The first person said – *You gave me five talents and I made five; here is a total of ten talents.* The owner said – *Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been trusted with a little and now I will trust you with much. Come and share in my happiness.*

The owner gives a performance review of the second servant who says – *You gave me two talents and I was able to go out and work hard and double it; here are your four talents.* The owner said to that servant the same sentence – *Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things and now I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness.*

Then finally the third servant said to the owner – *I feel like you are a ruthless person. You harvest where you don't even plant and I didn't know how you were going to respond. So I just buried it in the ground.* The owner said to this person. – *You are lazy and foolish and now you are using excuses to be lazy and foolish. Because of that, I will take that one talent that you had and give it to the guy who now has ten talents. If you had just brought it to the bank, I would have interest on that. But since you squandered the only life I gave you and the talent that I lent you, you will be judged accordingly.*

So that is a pretty good parable on marketplace values and marketplace ministry. Don't you think?

**Mark:** Oh yeah. It hits on a couple of key points. First off, it is clear that the talents come from God. Everything we get is from God. It has so much to do with pride and humility. We don't have time to totally develop that thought this morning but it is the opposite of the guy dancing in the end zone. You are dancing in the end zone, buddy, because God made you faster and stronger than 99.99% of the people on the planet – not because you earned that. It is this idea that I do what I do because God gifted me with what I have.

You have a great story on this.

**Matt:** Cindy Crawford is a super model. What is interesting is that she was in a movie. They interviewed her on television for a movie. She was the valedictorian of her high school class and is extremely intelligent. Then she is a beautiful individual. They asked – How do you attribute all these assets that you have in the success you have had in life? She said – Well, I chose my parents very carefully.

What I liked about Cindy Crawford's attitude was though she worked hard at what she did, she studied. But even that value of studying hard was probably inherited with her family. She understood those things were gifts from God. It wasn't something she chose, those colored eyes or her height or weight or whatever she might be.

I have noticed that in your own life. How does that apply that you understand for the most part that all that you have is from God?

**Mark:** Well, if you have this view (which Marg and I have been blessed to come to an agreement on over the years quite easily) that it is not your stuff, then you think differently about it. We are blessed with a lake house. We spend less time at our lake house than a lot of people around this church. We are always saying – Do you guys need that for a retreat? Or people want to get away for a weekend, like a couple

who have issues. We feel like it is God's stuff. He is just loaning it to us. Let's use it as best we can to serve people and others around them.

I like to help younger people in business. I didn't expect to have some of the success I have had. How can I help pour into some of these young guys.

It is a mind set and you see it. This is nothing unique to me. You see it around a lot of people at this church. God has gifted me with this stuff. How do I pour that into other people? It is a mindset.

**Matt:** You didn't know I was going to say this. But we were at a football banquet at Westwood High School. Your son had already graduated so you were not there. They played the highlight reel of the whole season. When the lights came back on, somebody said – I would like to thank the McClain family for providing the finances to be able to put this video together. I just thought - You are not just giving to the church, but you are giving to the place out there. There was nothing in it for you. Still you were being generous because it is not your stuff. So, I appreciate that in you.

What is the next thing you see in that parable?

### ***It is Not Equal***

**Mark:** This is a hard one. The distribution of gifts is not equal. God, for some reason that is not clear in the passage at all, gives one guy five talents, one guy two talents, and one guy one talent. When we look around us, we see people who seem to be five-talent people, and two-talent people, and one-talent people. It doesn't feel fair.

At one level, the fact that we have any talent says it is a generous God who gives us that. That unequal distribution is a tough one.

**Matt:** How do you feel like you apply that?

**Mark:** One of the things I have learned is to try to stay within your areas of gifting. I joked about not being an accountant. But I did have this moment when I found out I might want his [Matt] job. I thought, maybe I should be a pastor.

**Matt:** I said – absolutely not, Mark. You don't want to go to seminary. You want to stay where you do well. I feel like there are so few people in the marketplace that understand the way you understand *and* are gifted in business. We don't necessarily need another pastor as badly as we need another guy in the

business community who is walking with Christ. If every believer is a minister, you would have more influence in the marketplace than you would ever doing what I am doing. It has to do with the way God made you and you should stay in that sweet spot.

The television show “The Office,” the one from Britain and now it is very popular here, most of the humor in that is based upon a very successful sales person moving into management where he is a bumbling fool because he did not understand that he should stay in his area of giftedness. Maybe he is a two-talent guy and they put him into a five-talent job description.

**Mark:** Which is kind of the second thought of understanding your limits. If you have been in corporate America or wherever you worked in a school district or whatever setting you are in, there is this thought of saying – *I have to be realistic about my limits*. People who aren’t, do a couple of bad things. Sometimes they just throw it all into work, thinking *if I just work a lot harder, I will get where I want to be*. They sacrifice their family on that altar. I know we all know people at this stage of our lives, if you are over 40, who are very sadly totally disenfranchised from their family. They may have arrived at a pretty interesting place in their career but they left their family in shambles. Sometimes that is because they did not get comfortable with – *I am meant to be a director* – if you understand that corporate hierarchy. *I am not a VP. I am not a Senior VP. I am a Director. I should be the best director I can be and stay balanced with my life*. We talked about this and this applies in any kind of corporate setting, a school setting, or I am in the entrepreneurial venture world. There are times when someone needs to look you in the eye and say – *For this thing to succeed*, and this is what venture capitalists will tell entrepreneurs sometimes, *we are going to need to hire your boss. We need to bring in a guy over you who has experience and knowledge that you don’t have. You should love that because it is going to make this company successful*. But a lot of folks’ egos can’t deal with that. They can’t deal with the fact that somebody has more capacity, more gifts than they do.

**Matt:** I would imagine you could probably work at a bigger company and a more successful company. But it would cost you too much.

**Mark:** Marg knows this. After we got acquired by Son, I spent about a year spending about 95% of my time in California and it was a very hard year for our family. It was a limited time thing. I knew it was going to end but I realized – Man, that is a sacrifice. Some people can manage that.

**Matt:** Right. You are a two-talent guy. A five-talent guy could live that life, have a great marriage, have a great family, have a great business. You didn't get that talent.

**Mark:** Right, that was not my calling to be a corporate guy who could fly all over the world and keep my family together.

**Matt:** What is another one?

***Work is What We Give Back to God***

**Mark:** I think the third thought, and you hit it as you talked about the parable, is that work is what we give back to God in response to Him giving us talents. What did those guys do? They got the 5, the 2 and they went to work. They did the best they could with what God gave them. They knew they would be judged on how they did that. I don't know where the 1-talent guy's head was. But the other guys seemed to understand – I am going to be accountable for what God gave me. He is going to come back and ask me what I did with it.

**Matt:** Your first application is to work hard and that is how you apply that first thing. You are going to work hard for God. I am sure you have had some bosses who could be trolls and you didn't work for that boss, you worked for Jesus.

**Mark:** Absolutely right. There is this thought of doing excellent work, no matter who your boss is. Work hard and do excellent work. But you have to leave that margin.

**Matt:** Margin is space ...

**Mark:** Time space, money space to where you can do things that God sets in your path. Kind of like the Good Samaritan account [Luke 10:25-37]. The guy is there [the wounded person on the ground]. They [passersby] had attitude problems in that story but they also had margin problems. They were rushing somewhere and they saw this beaten up guy on the side of the road but said – I don't have time to deal with that. They had an attitude problem and Christ condemned them for that. But maybe they just thought they were too busy. They did not have margin to deal with that.

I think there is clear application of – how do I manage these resources He has given me, maximize what I do with what He has given me, recognizing that I cannot maximize it at the expense of the other pie slices: my family, my health. But how do I do the most I can with what is given me and keep those things in balance.

**Matt:** In conclusion, the perspective is keeping Christ at the center and negotiating life and even how the pie forces itself out. I would suggest that you spend time with older men or women in your field or in your life stage that have been through where you have been. Asking, how do I split up the pie? How long is this season going to last because my mate needs to know that, my kids need to know that. Is this something coming or going?

The other one is in the context of managing – you are a renter, not an owner. The stuff you have is for you to use to double, so that you can live with that great performance analysis where God says ... can you imagine hearing that from Jesus himself .... Well done, my good and faithful servant. You were entrusted with little and now you will be trusted with much. Come and enjoy your master's happiness.

That is how you live, isn't it?

**Mark:** I try. I screwed up a lot. The discomfort I had with today's talk was I am going to come across like I have got this all together. Follow me around and it will be perfect, trust me. My wife will be quick to tell you how imperfect it actually is in real life.

We talked about this one last story and you used the word *season*. There are times when there is a season. We both have a very good friend who is a coach. He is a great example of being outside the business world – to put it in a different context. His perspective is in his case baseball as a calling, not a job but a calling to reach players and to reach the other coaches.

**Matt:** It is the way God made him.

**Mark:** God made him a great baseball player. It is the Chariots of Fire statement; God made me to run. This guy, God made him to play baseball and to coach baseball. He uses that talent and manages that talent to change lives around him. He doesn't do it to get rich. He is courageous. He has taken that thing over to Africa. Some of you know who I am talking about but I am not going to name him. He is a great guy. He knows God gifted him for that purpose.

**Matt:** But he had enough talents and understanding of the amount of talents to know that he still managed his marriage very well and his two children very effectively. So he was a dad for the guys. He was a husband for his wife. It is a very demanding job description in number of hours and emotion but he negotiated that quite well. He realized he had maybe not two talents but three and then took it internationally. If you interviewed this individual, he would say he is living for a performance review and that it would sound something like this – Well done, my good and faithful servant. I trusted you with little stuff and you were quite good. So now I will trust you with a lot of stuff. I would love for you to come and share in your Master’s happiness. – that is how he lives.

That is the way Mark lives. That is the way we should all live.

What I would like for you to think about today is how you could apply what we have talked about. Think on these things about how to apply a perspective of putting Christ at the center of all that we do, our vocabulary and thoughts and values. Also, the idea that we are managers – just managers of what God is lending us until we have that final job review.

It is our prayer at Grace Covenant Church that we would all enter into that performance review with those words. Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been trusted with little stuff and you made great things out of it. Why don’t you come in and share in your Master’s happiness.

That is how we think it through when it comes to workplace ministry. I hope that in coming to Grace Covenant Church that you should hear this often that – every believer is a minister and the place to do ministry is the place where God has put you most of the time, in that marketplace.

Let me pray to that end and then we will have fun time to worship and get to know each other

Dear heavenly Father,

We are tremendously grateful for the evolution of theology over the years – that we get to live here and now in a time when we don’t need to feel guilty that we are in the marketplace, that we are priests in our neighborhoods and on our soccer team and in our schools and in hospitals and in the business world. Lord, I ask that You would give us a sense of destiny about that. That we don’t have these talents because of luck but that they were hand delivered to us when we were being woven in our mothers’ wombs by You. Lord, give us a sense of vision for this in our lives. That we would be more than ethical or even good but that we would be life transforming and even vocational transforming.

We lift up these ministry opportunities to You that we might see them and step through to them courageously. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.