



A Contextual Application of Matthew 25:14-30 as a Framework for Business Ethics in the Nigerian Society

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Abstract. The paper considers the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30, as a source of business ethics, its applicability in the modern business world. The core themes of the parable, stewardship, accountability and risk-taking are examined exegetically, theologically and sociologically, considering the original 1st-century Palestinian setting. The study uses textual, historical, theological (themes of grace and judgment) and comparative (with contemporary ethical perspectives including utilitarianism and stewardship ethics) analyses in its methodology. The research explores the lessons of the parable for business and explores the compatibility of profit motives and ethical stewardship, the spirit of responsible investment vs complacency and the need for corporate responsibility. Examples from the firms Enron, Volkswagen, Patagonia and TOMS Shoes are discussed. The article also explores Kantian duty, its relation to Islamic and Jewish ethics on financial matters. It also explores criticisms and difficulties of the parable's application to business, and potential cultural biases. The analysis shows the parable's ability to provide tremendous ethical lessons for today's business challenges. Finally, this paper emphasises the eternal virtues of stewardship, accountability and risk-taking that help to guide business practices. The research, therefore, suggests policymakers and business leaders can work together to develop rules and guidelines that promote ethical stewardship and accountability and a business climate that emphasises sustainability and social responsibility.

Keywords: Contextual, Application, Matthew 25:14-30, Framework, Business and Ethics

1. Introduction

The blending of biblical and business ethics provides a comprehensive approach to grasp the ethical implications of individuals and organisations in the modern business environment. The Parable of the Talents is a compelling example of stewardship,

accountability and taking risks, offering lessons that are relevant to today's ethical dilemmas. This research attempts to situate this parable as an expression of business ethics, and its implications and application in today's business world. The Parable with its vivid storytelling and theological considerations, affords an opportunity to consider business ethics. The themes of stewardship, responsibility and resource management resonate with modern business ethics. This research aims to link biblical narratives with business ethics to fill the gap between ancient biblical wisdom and contemporary business practices, offering a comprehensive view that takes into account the moral challenges of business.

The parable's tone and structure emphasise the responsibility for the stewardship of resources and accountability for the risk involved in economic activities. Jesus' distribution of talents to the servants based on their capacities creates a context for considering stewardship in relation to opportunity and risk. The servants must manage their resources responsibly - active risk-taking and trustworthiness. The text's details, such as the immediate action of the first two servants and the anxious inaction of the third, represent the narrative's themes of the consequences of effective or ineffective engagement in stewardship. The parable's context in 1st-century Palestine gives us insights into its meaning. The parable's allocation of talents shows the economic practices of the time, where distribution of wealth is linked with social standing and the skills required in a hierarchical society (Davis, 2018). The word "talent" refers to a large amount of money - an amount equivalent to many years' wages (Van-Eck, 2018) - which would resonate with an audience conversant with the farming and commercial economy. The parable is placed in economic context, given that the allocation of resources and economic risk were prominent issues in an area with crucial socioeconomic differences (Van-Eck, 2018).

The study will use the following methodological approach, which involves a multifaceted analysis of the Parable of the Talents from an exegetical, theological and socioeconomic perspective. The exegesis of Matthew 25:14-30 will be done with a close reading of the text with particular attention to the themes of stewardship, responsibility and risk. The 1st-century Palestinian socioeconomic context will be explored in order to understand the passage's historical context. Theological concepts, like grace, accountability and judgment will be investigated to determine its moral relevance. Further, the research will use comparative analysis of overviews of current business ethics, such as utilitarianism and stewardship ethics, to evaluate the application of the parable in today's business environment. Examples of unethical and ethical decision - making in modern - day businesses will also be provided to showcase how the parable's teachings can be applied. The use of these methods therefore seeks to give a comprehensive insight into the Parable of the Talents as a foundation for business ethics, offering both theoretically and practically relevant insights.

The content and form of the parable highlight the responsibility expected of stewards, and accountability inherent in economic risk-taking. The distribution of talents by Jesus based on the servants' capabilities creates a context of stewardship that is also related to opportunity and risk. The servants must invest well, demonstrating both responsibility and trust in risky endeavours (Nwanguma, 2020). The details, like the immediate action of the first two servants and the paralysing fear of the third, exemplify the priority of the narrative in terms of the outcomes of constructive participation or negligence in stewardship (Ukpong, 2012). These aspects collectively convey the need for active stewardship, and present a model of risk-sensitive accountability.

The theological aspects of Matthew 25:14-30 are discussed in terms of God's grace, human accountability and God's judgment. The parable provocatively raises the question whether God may be too harsh in his expectations, challenging us to think about the tension between God's grace and accountability (Paul & Paul, 2020). The parable highlights the serious consequences for not using one's gifts, but also celebrates the grace of God in bestowing different talents (Myers, 2025). The challenge to take risks in the parable is fortified by the need to use one's gifts for the good of others, or one might lose the favour of God (Works, 2011). These views suggest that the parable invites people to a dynamic discipleship that integrates grace and responsibility and makes divine judgment on the basis of one's commitment to utilise God-given gifts (TOW Project,

2023). This approach calls for active stewardship, yet also provides an assurance of grace and renewal.

2. The Call to Stewardship in Christian Ethics

The interpretation of Matthew 25:14-30 highlights that the parable invites us to consider ourselves as stewards of wealth as well as stewards of the gospel. The story reframes stewardship for us by putting us in charge as stewards of God's investment for the sake of the kingdom (Kompelien, 2023). The reward of "Well done, good and faithful servant" is a call to action for Christians to practice faithful and transformative stewardship (Wiebe, 2022). Gospel stewardship involves the faithful use of one's gifts and talent for God and calls on believers to go beyond merely preserving her/his resources and multiply them (Joseph, 2019). These insights speak to the fact that stewardship is a moral indispensable tool that is grounded in biblical ethics and reflective of embracing faithful stewardship in investing one's gifts.

The command, to "invest" as opposed to "bury" one's talent is critical for the allocation of resources. The multiplication is regarded as an important part of stewardship; rather than burying resources, Christians are encouraged to participate in ventures which allow the multiplication of resources for God's kingdom (Grudem, 2003). The moral implications of resource allocation include the adverse consequence of burying talent, versus the productive, value enhancing effects of multiplication. The master's stern treatment of the talent-burying servant is a warning against passivity, and the need to ensure that all the resources entrusted to Christians are invested with a view to a productive outcome (Enicha, 2019).

This parable condemns risk aversion in the contrast between the fate of the servants who took the risk against the fate of the servant who, afraid of losing his talent, buried it. The risk-averse servant is a representative of the reluctance to take risks in the ambiguities inherent to faithful entrepreneurship, which result in the loss of opportunity and God's favour (Hessd, 2017). Risk-taking is important for both spiritual and economic development; this risk is not irresponsible, but rather is based in a strong faith in God's faithfulness and providence (Lowe, 2013). Enterprise and risk-taking is promoted against passive non-performance as the entrepreneurial servant was praised. These sources indicate that while risk is coupled with uncertainty, faithful entrepreneurship which involves boldness and courage, innovative use of one's resources, is crucial to stewardship.

2.1 How it relates to Contemporary Business Ethics

Businesses must profit and invest in sustainable socially good business practices. Kim (2022) demonstrates how profit motive may create ethical management by investing the profits to increase the growth and do good to society. Likewise, Setiawan et al. (2021) demonstrate how companies that do both (profit making and ethical resource investments) create value beyond profits, and how companies invest all their revenue for social good.

Resource investments are important; when not done, it is called the "buried talent" syndrome. Failure to invest resources in resources cripples opportunities and development. The servant who buried his talent faced significant losses as a result of failing to make resource investments to generate value (Adewale, 2022).

Managers need to set up clear mechanisms of accountability, as outlined in the Bible. The Theology of Work project suggests that every steward must render an account of the resources they have been entrusted with, something the stakeholder theory supports by emphasising the need for ethical governance and transparency in business (TOW Project, 2023). The emphasis on corporate social responsibility by Tamvada (2020), also endorses this by offering a new approach to regulate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He suggests effective accountability is needed to ensure a fit between corporate practices and stakeholder expectations.

The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) may be old, but it is a great and enduring way to evaluate ethical practices in today's corporate environment. This research examines the importance of the parable's stewardship, risk and accountability in the context of ethical failure and success in the modern business world. By comparing the stories of corporate "villains" such as Enron and Volkswagen with "heroes" such as Patagonia and TOMS Shoes, the parable's lessons are demonstrated as being equally applicable in today's business world as more than 2,000 years ago. Enron's demise is an example of the lack of stewardship. Driven by selfishness and blind greed, and focused solely on short-term profits, the company's executives engaged in fraudulent behaviour at the expense of stakeholders' trust (Cruver, 2002; Rahman Bukhari, 2019). This focus on self-interest at the expense of fiduciary responsibility for the entrusted resources, is similar to the "wicked, lazy servant", who failed to act, fearing the anger of his master. Similarly, the Volkswagen emissions fiasco, marked by fear and the need to achieve high aspirations, is an example of the ill effects of prioritising short-term goals over ethical innovation and responsibility (Dura, 2017; Forsgren,

2019). The corporation's deceitful actions (secret development and use of the "defeat device") represent a failure of the wise management of technological resources akin to the lazy servant unwilling to lose the favour of his master.

On the other hand, Patagonia and TOMS Shoes are examples of the positive effects of embracing the virtues of the parable (Patagonia, 2025.). Patagonia's emphasis on being a good steward of the environment in its emphasis on sustainable practices and its commitment to donate all of its profits to fight climate change (Stanley, 2023; Trelstad et al., 2023; Wieners, 2025) shows an appreciation of the potential of business for social good. This is consistent with the emphasis on the need to be active in using the resources that are entrusted for more than just making profit. Klein (2014), and Knowles (2015) demonstrate a concern for blending philanthropy into its business practices and show leadership and willingness to learn. Both these firms show the need for an active risk-taking attitude in pursuing ethical objectives and for openness and accountability.

The message of the parable about accountability is very important in today's corporate world. The collapses of Enron and Volkswagen demonstrate the need for control, and transparency and ethical principles (Forsgren, 2019; Rahman Bukhari, 2019). Also, Patagonia and TOMS Shoes demonstrate that they are transparent with their reporting of their business practices and they engage with stakeholders - this is a wise use of their resources. Further, the importance of faith and personal beliefs in guiding ethical business practices also cannot be overlooked. While this is more apparent in the case of founder of Patagonia, Yvon Chouinard, for whom nature is the guiding influence for Patagonia's environmental activism (Chouinard & Stanley, 2012). The concept of "Business as a Ministry" is another illustration as to how spiritual beliefs can guide business leaders towards more principled practices. Thus the Parable of the Talents provides a timeless and still very relevant model for evaluating the ethics of business practices. The collapse of Enron and Volkswagen serves as a reminder of the dangers of not embracing the principles of stewardship, risk and accountability. In contrast, Patagonia and TOMS Shoes demonstrate the rewards of embracing principles of risk, accountability and stewardship to build a sustainable and socially driven business environment (Patagonia, 2025; TOMS, 2025). The blending of ethics and theology can assist business leaders to act in accordance with their principles and values and in turn to create a more compassionate and fair consumer economy.

2.2 Comparative Ethical Frameworks in Light of the Parable

Utilitarianism: It is a popular ethical theory that, in simple terms, argues for actions that result in the most good (happiness) for the most amount of people (Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2014). This ethical framework essentially suggests that the most ethical action in any given situation is the one that will result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people and can be used as a guiding principle in complex ethical decision-making where moral choices need to be weighed up in terms of their likely effects if they are implemented (Fivable, 2025). In corporations, utilitarianism can be applied as a tool for ethical decision-making by prompting consideration of the impact of financial reporting, business practices and decisions on various stakeholders with the aim being to achieve the greatest good for all people while minimising harms. This can be in the form of a cost-benefit analysis, where the expected benefits and costs of different actions are weighed up for all stakeholders. Some even defend the goal of profit maximisation in business from a utilitarian view, by arguing that it leads to greater overall satisfaction of preferences (Berkey, 2025).

However, the focus of utilitarianism on the satisfaction of the majority could be a clash that is seeking to re-emphasise individual responsibility as advocated in the Parable of the Talents. It places emphasis on the impact of actions on the majority but the parable certainly emphasises the individual's responsibility for the individual resources that are entrusted to them and their relationship with the master (Whelchel, 2013). In some cases, a utilitarian approach may condone actions that may disadvantage some minority stakeholders if it was believed to benefit the majority (Berkey, 2025). This may be at odds with the parable's focus on the individual's faithfulness and managing their individual resource.

2.3 Stewardship Ethics

Alternatively, stewardship ethics offers another view of business ethics. This perspective implies humans and their organisations are primarily stewards or managers of resources which are ultimately owned by a superior being (in the context of religion, often God) or on trust for future generations (IMD Business School, 2025). This view of business ethics emphasises the importance of planning, managing and conserving these resources by taking into account the environmental, social and economic consequences of resource utilisation in the long term. In business, stewardship means not only doing what is best for the

company's shareholders but for all stakeholders, and having a focus on something other than the usual quest for profits (Weiss, 2024). These purposes include engaging in ethical employment practices, adopting sustainable environmental policies and engaging in social justice activities. One of the biblical passages often cited as evidence for the notion of stewardship is the Parable of the Talents because it highlights the importance of servants making wise use of the talents they have been entrusted with (Whelchel, 2013).

2.4 Comparative Analysis

While both utilitarianism and stewardship ethics can lead to a consideration for the consequences of business actions and decisions on society, the motivations and ethics are very different (Sirico, 1994). Utilitarianism is focusing primarily on the maximisation of the overall utility (or well-being) in the light of probable consequences (Markkula, 2014). But stewardship ethics is largely centred on the notion of duty and responsibility towards the ideal resource owner, whether this be God or the next generations that will inherit the planet (Weiss, 2024). These different motivations might lead to different ethical judgements and decisions in similar business contexts. For instance, a "utilitarian" ethics might be able to justify a degree of pollution, if it is evident that this pollution does lead to substantial economic benefits to most people (Markkula, 2014). By contrast, a steward might not condone such pollution because of the intrinsic value of the environment and stewardship responsibility to protect it for the good of future generations, rather than the short-term economic benefit to the majority. The Parable of the Talents, which stresses the servants' duty to work hard with the master's money, and the need to account to the master on his eventual return is more in harmony with stewardship ethics (Weiss, 2024). Ethics has to do with the profit-versus-purpose conundrum. While a utilitarian could have profit-making as a priority if this is viewed as the best way to maximise happiness and well-being, the steward might have a more integrated approach, where profit-making is ethical and done in a way that leads to a more holistic ethical end, which might include social and environmental factors (Alowais, 2024).

2.5 Kantian Ethics

Kantian ethics, a significant moral philosophy, emphasises the importance of duty, respect for moral law and inherent value of all individuals (Team, 2024). This approach is based on the Categorical Imperative, a guiding principle that states one should only act on maxims (principles) that they would rationally will to

be a universal law for all people, at all times (Schmidt, 2024). In addition, Kantian ethics also asserts that humanity, both as oneself and others, must be treated always as an end and never only as a means to a particular end (MacDonald & Marcoux, 2018). Duty is a key tenet of Kantian ethics, which holds that morally good actions are those that are performed out of a sense of duty to the moral law, rather than from any desire for particular outcomes or self-interest. From a business ethics perspective, Kantian ethics suggests the duty of businesses to treat all stakeholders - employees, customers, suppliers, and so on - as having inherent value and dignity. It also highlights the importance of maintaining truthfulness and openness in attitudes and behaviour and behaving in a socially and environmentally sustainable way.

The Parable of the Talents, which clearly displays the expectations of the master as to how the servants should manage his property, can be understood in terms of duty as per Kantian ethics. As servants, the servants were owed a special duty to their master to not squander his property, but to invest it wisely. The subsequent commendations of the two servants who faithfully discharged this duty, and the condemnation of the third servant who was idle, can be seen as an evaluation of the servants' fulfilment (or failure) of this duty (Rattee, 2025). The parable, therefore, can be seen as a powerful exhortation to make good use of the talents, abilities and privileges that have been entrusted to us. Building on this, from a Kantian standpoint, this call can also be seen as a duty on the part of each person in the "kingdom" or society to "work hard" and contribute to the well-being of the community (Whelchel, 2013). Thus, we can see the actions (or inaction) of the third servant who buried his talent as not only failing to his master but also failing to his duty to contribute to the good that might have been done had he invested his talent (Whelchel, 2013).

Kant's Categorical Imperative applied to the parable makes us confront two questions (Schmidt, 2024). First, is the master's call to invest resources in everyone possible? This excludes those with limited ability, resource or structural barriers. Second, does the master's treatment of the servants treat them as ends in themselves, or means to his increasing wealth? Kantian ethics promotes treating humans as ends rather than means, but the master-servant power imbalance could treat the servants as a means. But the parable shares the Kantian emphasis on duty. The servants' duty to manage resources responsibly represents acting for duty's sake, not inclination, and the master's assessment of the servants' actions shows the significance of responsibility. Although Kant's ethics challenge the parable's fairness and individual

ethics, the emphasis on responsibility echoes Kant's notion of duty (Tresch, 2017).

2.6 The link between Islamic and Jewish Ethics on Wealth Management

Matthew 25:14-30 provides valuable lessons on responsibility, stewardship and ethics of wealth management, particularly in the context of Islamic and Jewish ethics. Islamic ethics views wealth as an Amanat (trust) from God and individuals are accountable for its management and distribution. This parable echoes this theme as the servants are given talents (a large sum of money) to manage and invest. Those who are faithful to their charge (and make their talents grow) are rewarded, paralleling the Islamic idea that wealth should be productively used for the good of the individual and society. This focus on responsibility and efficient use of resources is a key characteristic of Islamic finance and business ethics (Epperhart, 2024). Jewish ethics also emphasise the importance of the use of wealth and stewardship. The example of the parable of the servants' judgement by the master is an illustration of the Jewish value of tzedakah, which means charity and justice. The servants who do not invest their talents are punished, showing that one has an ethical responsibility to use his or her resources to benefit others rather than to keep them all to oneself or to waste them. This is consistent with the Jewish notion that money should be put into circulation to benefit the community and reduce poverty (Carson, 2024).

The parable also highlights the need for trust and risk-taking to promote growth and productivity. The servant who hides his talent for fear of loss is chided, showing that complacency and fear are unacceptable in management. This echoes the Islamic and Jewish emphasis on taking the initiative in managing resources and to avoid complacency (Whelchel, 2013). Furthermore, the parable's emphasis on the master's return and the reckoning of accounts emphasises that everyone will be accountable for their stewardship. This resonates with eschatological themes in both the Islamic and Jewish faiths, which see the day of reckoning as a time when all individuals are accountable for their use of God's bounty. The parable reminds us that financial ethics is not only about managing one's wealth for personal benefit but about fulfilling a spiritual obligation to responsibly manage wealth (Weiss, 2024). Therefore, it offers a valuable foundation for the ethical considerations in business ethics surrounding wealth management. The parable, with its mix of Islamic and Jewish ethics, emphasises stewardship, responsibility and the productive use of resources for the common good.

Such an interfaith approach adds to the conversation on business ethics and provides valuable insights for ethical wealth management.

2.7 Concerns about its Use in Business

Some of the criticisms of the Parable of the Talents concern the possibility that if narrowly interpreted, the focus on the master rewarding the productive servants by further investing their talents for the sake of increasing his profits could be used to justify poor labour practices and a relentless drive for profits independent of basic moral considerations (Byars et al., 2018). The apparent punishment of the servant who did not increase his talent might be seen as encouraging a business culture with a fear of failure and a "do whatever it takes" approach, potentially resulting in unethical practise as people and organisations strive to meet high expectations. A narrow interpretation of the parable might concentrate almost exclusively on the financial aspects of the parable, while ignoring the many ethical obligations of business towards its employees, customers, society and the environment (Khwaja, 2023).

The power dynamics inherent in the story of the parable (particularly between the master and his servants) also raises questions about the potential for abuse if this parable is applied unthinkingly to employer-employee relationships in the business world (Paul, 2020). There is an obvious hierarchy depicted with the master having a superior position of power and control over the servants. If directly applied in a contemporary business setting, this could unconsciously be used to justify authoritarian forms of leadership, and most likely exploitation of employees in the constant effort to increase profits for the owners/shareholders of the company (Carson, 2024). Moreover, the fact that there is no explicit mention of the well-being of the servants beyond their productivity potential is also a major point of contention when considering the parable from the perspective of contemporary ethical considerations, which heavily emphasise the importance of justice and well-being for all stakeholders (Ungvarsky, 2024). However, potential and more nuanced interpretations of the parable highlight the need to make use of "talents" (interpreted as the diverse abilities, opportunities and resources) for the common good and so contribute to the well-being of the community and the common good, rather than just a sole emphasis on personal financial gain or the benefit of a single individual or entity. These readings suggest the central point of the parable is about the need to actively and productively engage with the world and the resources

given to us, while adopting an ethics that goes beyond material success (Weiss, 2024).

The Passage, with its obvious emphasis on individual entrepreneurialism, a competitive attitude (inferred from the varying returns the servants received), and the direct correlation between individual achievement and reward, could perhaps be considered to insinuate a primarily Western capitalist economic system that historically and culturally tends to place fundamental concern these extreme values. The potential for applying such a function indiscriminately to global business ethics might overlook or even clash with other entrenched cultural views that emphasise the importance of collective social good, cooperation and view success and responsibility in very different terms (Byars & Stanberry, 2018). The notion of "profit" and its attachments of morality can be vastly different across cultures and different economic systems (Smith, 2024). Acknowledgment of the diversity of cultural perspectives and practices that are associated with the parable becomes crucial to developing a sophisticated and holistic view of its real meaning and relevance to the diverse world of global business ethics (Fulthorp, 2009). For example, what may be seen as a merit in one culture (vigorous individual competition) may be seen as a sin in another culture where co-operation and corporate success is more highly valued (Khwaja, 2023). Hence, a cross-cultural approach is needed when trying to extract ethical lessons from this ancient tale and apply them in the diverse and interconnected global sphere of business (Khwaja, 2023).

The story starts with a master entrusting his servants with varying numbers of talents (resources/abilities) depending on their abilities. This initial distributing illustrates the inequity of the world; not everybody gets the same amount of resources. The rationale of the master to distribute talents in accordance to the capacity of the servants, suggests a wise management decision, which allows the servants to be tested but not over tested (Whelchel, 2013). This is in line with the doctrine of stewardship which emphasises the productive use of resources rather than distribution. The two servants who were allocated five and two talents respectively, increased their investment by 100% and 100% respectively, showing hard work and entrepreneurship. Their behaviour exemplifies the productively use of the advantages and opportunities, which results in greater compensation and rewards. This story underscores the importance of taking risks and entrepreneurship in the development of one's talents, which is at the core of entrepreneurship (Sirico, 1994). The parable thus promotes a mindset of growth, which focuses not only on the preservation of

what one has, but also the expansion and growth through investments and work. But, the servant to whom the master gave only one talent hid it, due to fear and a misunderstanding of his nature. The paralysis of the servant thus emphasises the consequences of not putting one's talents to good use. The merciless reaction of the master to the servant underlines the importance of the ethical duty to make the most of opportunities and not to do nothing due to fear (Rattee, 2025). This element of the parable is a reminder of the dangers of complacency and that action needs to be taken after careful consideration and not fearfully squander the opportunity to grow.

The scripture also speaks to accountability. The master's return and subsequent evaluation of the servant's actions emphasise that each person will be accountable for the use of his/her talents. This is not only in terms of the financial return on investment, but also in terms of the responsibility of stewarding all resources, such as time, talent and opportunity (Tresch, 2017). Therefore, it encourages a whole - person view of stewardship of all of life and work. In resolving the inequity expressed in the parable, it's important to recognise that the allocation of talents is not arbitrary but in line with individual abilities and the potential for growth. The master's expectation is that each servant will use his talent to the fullest, regardless of whether it is 1, 2 or 5 talents. This context changes the emphasis from the amount of talents to their management, emphasising initiative and effort over talent. So, the Parable of the Talents provides a nuanced view of the implications of privilege and inequality in business. It highlights the importance of stewardship, initiative and accountability in using one's talents and opportunities to the best of one's ability. Such an approach can help to create a more level playing field in business, which is conducive to growth and innovation.

3. Conclusion

The passage provides an immense timeless approach to moral behaviour in today's business environment. This research has combined biblical teachings with modern business ethics to explore the enduring principles of stewardship, accountability and risk-taking that are important for good corporate governance. Its accentuation of dynamic stewardship of resources highlights the importance of active involvement and management. The responses of the servants to the master's trust show the consequential impact of creative initiative over fearful passivity and offer a strong narrative that is relevant to our ethical concerns. The socio-economic context of 1st century Palestine also adds to our understanding of the parable,

demonstrating its pertinence to the socioeconomic world of the time, as well as to the business world today. The parable's theological themes - grace, trust and judgment - offer a greater perspective into the ethical implications of the parable of the talents. The emphasis on faithful stewardship and the consequences of poor performance is a moral appeal for a business to ethically earn and invest profits in sustainable and profitable businesses for the common good. This integration of faith and practice results in a more integrated business ethic that pursues business strategies in harmony with ethical considerations for a fairer and more equitable future. The parable brings together principles from various ethical traditions and cultures to emphasis the role of stewardship, responsibility and wise use of resources to benefit others. This cross-cultural and interreligious approach adds depth to the debate on business ethics, and provides insights for ethical practices in wealth management in the diverse and globalised business environment.

4. Recommendations

This study recommends that:

- There needs to be more work done on the link between theology and business ethics that can translate into new approaches to business governance and social responsibility.
- Governments and business leaders can work together to develop policies and guidelines that encourage ethical stewardship and corporate responsibility, and create a business culture which emphasises sustainability and social responsibility.
- There should be a proper rendering of the parable which highlights the need to use one's abilities for the greater good, and not only for personal gain.
- There should be more research and policy development based on these insights for a more integrated and ethical business environment.

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