1. Words of commendation from Jesus
   a) Share a time when you were encouraged by some words of commendation.
   b) Matthew 25:21a—“Well done, good and faithful servant.” Imagine Jesus speaking those words of commendation to you. What is your response?
   c) Matthew 25:14-23 Why did the master in this parable of Jesus speak these words of commendation to two of his servants?
   d) How has Jesus called you to serve Him as you wait for His return in glory?

2. A heavenly reward for faithfulness
   a) The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is not a reward—it is gift of God’s grace through faith in Jesus our Savior. Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, etc.
   b) However, the Bible teaches us that there is also a heavenly reward for faithfulness. Revelation 22:12, Isaiah 40:10, 62:11, Matthew 5:11-12, etc.
   c) What reward was given to the faithful servants in the parable of Jesus? Matthew 25:21 (also v.23)
   d) What heavenly rewards will be given to faithful servants of Jesus in addition to the gift of salvation? Revelation 21:1-4, 22:1-5
   e) What are your thoughts about the heavenly rewards given freely to those who are redeemed by God’s grace?

3. The tragic consequence of unfaithfulness
   a) There is also an unfaithful servant in the parable of the Talents. What is the tragic consequence of this servant’s unfaithfulness? Matthew 25:24-30
   b) What is the root problem with this unfaithful servant? (See also Matthew 25:12, 7:19-21)
   c) Jesus told another parable about two servants, one faithful, the other unfaithful. What additional lessons can we learn from this parable? Matthew 24:45-51

4. Pressing on toward the goal
   a) The apostle Paul experienced many hardships on his journey as a follower of Jesus that might have distracted him from his goal. 2 Corinthians 11:24-27
   b) What was Paul’s testimony to Christians in Philippi who were experiencing some of the hardships that he himself had experienced? Philippians 3:12-14
   c) What encouragement does Paul give to each one of us as we press on toward the goal? 1 Timothy 6:12, Romans 8:16-18, etc.
   d) What is your response to Paul’s confession in 2 Timothy 4:6-8?
   e) What is your personal response to this study?