

The Carpenter



There is a story which is set in a carpenter's workshop where the wood work tools were holding a conference. The Hammer presided.

However several suggested he leave the meeting because he was too noisy. The Hammer replied, "If I have to leave this shop, Then the Wood Screws must go also. You have to turn him around again and again to get him to accomplish anything."

The Wood Screws then spoke up. "If you wish, we will leave. But the Wood Plane must leave too. All his work is on the surface. His efforts have no depth."

To this the Wood Plane responded, "The Steel Ruler will also have to withdraw, for he is always measuring folks as though he were the only one who is right."

The Steel Ruler then complained against the Sandpaper, "You ought to leave too because you're so rough and always rubbing people the wrong way."

In the midst of all this discussion, in walked the Carpenter of Nazareth. He had arrived to start His day's work. Putting on His apron, He went to the bench to make a pulpit from which to proclaim the gospel. He employed the hammer, the wood screws, the wood plane, the steel ruler, sandpaper, and all the other tools.

After the day's work when the pulpit was finished, the Wood Saw arose and remarked, "Brethren, I observe that all of us are workers together with the Lord."

TALENT (according to Webster's) is described as "an Intellectual ability, natural or acquired; a mental endowment or capacity; skill in accomplishing; a special gift, particularly in business, art, or the like"

Stewardship is everything I do after I say 'I believe'.

2. TALENTS



Jesus told a parable in Mathew 25 about a man who was going on a journey. He entrusted one servant with five talents, another with two talents and another with one talent.

The man who had five talents used them to make another five talents. So did the man who had two talents make another two talents. The man who had one talent dug a hole and hid the money. When the master returned he asked his servants to account for their talents. The man who had five talents gave the master ten talents. The master was delighted and place him in charge of many things. The man who had two talents gave the master four talents. He also delighted the master and was put in charge of many things. The man who had one talent and had buried it, returned the one talent. The master was angry because he was lazy and did not use the talent that had been entrusted to him.

Stewardship is how we spend our time, how we use our treasure, and how we use our talents.

Our Talents

Everything we have belongs to God. We are allowed to borrow things for a number of years. We brought nothing into this world and we are taking nothing out of this world when we leave. We are here to manage and use God's resources.

What talents has God given you? How many talents or gifts you can think of? People are given different talents, but no-one is without any talents. How are we using the talents God has given us? Why is it wrong to bury what God has given us?

If we use our gifts and talents to serve other people, those gifts and talents will start to grow. God encourages us to step out in faith in this. If we use our talents wisely, we will be rewarded.

How can we use our talents or gifts more? What did God say to these stewards? What was their reward?

What were the reasons one steward gave for not using his talent? How much did he respect his master?

Fear often keeps people from using their talents. Remember that God likes to use imperfect people. A \$10 note, however dirty or torn, is still worth \$10. In God's eyes we never lose our value!

Special gifts

God has given each of us special gifts – those things we do well, those things we love to do – our talents. We typically think of things like singing, teaching, leading worship, organizing and planning, working with our hands – baking, woodworking, gardening. What about listening, caring, making strangers feel welcome, dancing, drawing? These are all talents, gifts from God to be used to bring God's message of hope and healing. How we use these gifts is also stewardship.

We often think of talents as those things we are good at. But they can be those things that we love to do, even if we think that we aren't very good. And talents can also be those things that we think might be interesting to try – even if we have never done them before.

Things like assisting in worship, reading the bible in Church, coaching a children's sports team, accepting a new work assignment. These sparks of interest may be God calling you to use your talents in new ways or develop a talent you never knew you had.

Our individual talents are a significant part of how God trusts us to be stewards in our own unique way. We cannot do everything by ourselves and it is in the gift of community that we join our talents. What may be difficult for one is a joy for another.

Celebrate God's trust in you!

A priest once preached a sermon on the subject of the parable of the talents and he urged his people to place at God's disposal the gifts and abilities with which God had endowed them.

After the service a man came up to him and said "Father, I am not a particularly gifted man. I don't really feel capable of teaching in the Sunday School or converting people to Christ or able to visit sick people or do any of the other things you talked about this morning BUT I do have one talent that might be of some use to the church."

"And what is that?" asked the priest. "Well," said the man, "I have the talent of criticism. I can criticise your sermons, I can criticise the choir, I can criticise the liturgy, I can criticise the youth group, I can criticise everything about the church. What should I do with my talent?"

The priest remained silent for a while, praying for wisdom, and then replied: "Do you remember what the man with one talent in the parable did?" He buried the talent in the earth. "I suggest you would be well advised to do the same."