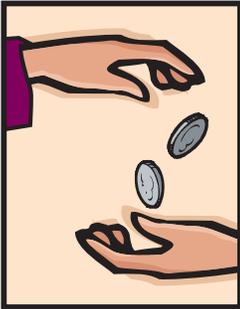




The Ten Talents

Matthew 25:14-30



Jesus used the parable of the Ten Talents to teach us more about the kingdom of God. Jesus taught that God gives each of us different talents and gifts, and He expects us to use them for His glory.

Day #1: Talent-ed

In the parable of the ten talents, a wealthy man went on a long trip. Before he left, he handed out some money (called talents) to his servants. He expected his servants to use that money to make more money for him. The man gave each of the servants a different amount of money. How did he decide how much to give each man?

✝ *The man gave each servant the amount of money he knew the servant could take care of. - Matthew 25:15b*

The wise man knew his servants very well. He had studied their ways. He knew that one man was very trustworthy. This servant followed his master's instructions. But there was another servant who was not as trusted. He had not proven to the master that he would do the right thing.

In the story, God is like the wealthy man, and each of us is like one of the three servants. Just as the man trusted different amounts of money to the servants, God trusts each of us with different talents. When we become followers of the King, He wants us to put our talents to work for Him and His kingdom.

Just like the wise master, God ALWAYS knows best. He knows each of us inside and out (1 Samuel 16:7). He knows your family, your friends, and your schoolmates. He knows every situation you will be in. He knows whom you will meet and whom you will befriend. God has given you the exact talents and skills that fit you best. Now He wants you to use them for His glory!

✱ What talents has God given you? (Mom and Dad can help point these out!) Thank God for giving you the talents you have.

Day #2: Waste Not

What is your favorite kind of cake? What if your mom spent all afternoon baking that cake? You could smell it baking and it made your mouth water. You couldn't wait for it to cool so your mom could frost it. You went outside to play, but you couldn't get your mind off of the delicious cake. When you came back inside, you didn't see the cake. You asked, "Hey Mom, where's the cake? Can I have a slice?" Then your mom replied, "Oh, I threw it in the trash."

What a ridiculous waste that would be! A perfectly good cake that should have been enjoyed by several people would never even be tasted.

That is sort of what it is like when we don't use the talents that God has given us. It is truly a waste. He gives us gifts and talents in order to help, encourage, and bless other people. When we use our gifts for this reason, He receives the glory.

✝ *God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully. If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God's very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides. Then in all things God will be praised through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 4:10-11 a*

Another way to waste our talent is to use it only for selfish reasons. (This would be like your mom eating the entire cake by herself!) When we only use our talent to get praise for ourselves, no one else is helped, and God does not receive the glory.

✱ How do you feel when things are wasted? How do you think God feels when we waste what He has given us? Ask God for wisdom so you will not waste your talents or gifts.

Day #3: Different Talents

Do you ever wish you had different talents than the ones you have? Many people long for the ability to do something they can't do. Sometimes we wonder why we aren't good at other things. The Bible says that this is sort of like a nose wishing it were an eye, or a foot wishing it were a hand.

Day #3 continued:



*If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear?
If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell?
God has placed each part in the body just as He
wanted it to be. - 1 Corinthians 12:17-18*

What if you had four ears, but no eyes? You would miss out on seeing the beautiful things in God's creation. What if you had four legs and no arms? How could you hug your mom or dad?

Our physical body has many parts that each does something different. And all the parts use their abilities together to live as one healthy body. In the same way, each person in God's family can do different things. When we all use our abilities, we work together, as one "body," to show God's greatness to the world.

Some of us sing, some teach, some encourage, some play sports, and some help others. If we all played sports, who would sing? If we all wrote music, who would teach? We should not worry about the talents we don't have. We should enjoy the talents of other people while we use our own talents to point people to God, our Creator and King.



Pinch your nose and try to smell a piece of fruit. Close your eyes and try to read a book. Cover your ears and try to listen to your favorite song.

If you don't use the talents that God gave you, His body will not be at its best.

Day #4: Spiritual Gifts

Do you think that God gives spiritual gifts to believers of **all** ages? Paul told his young friend, Timothy, that he could be a great example to others, even though he was **young** (1 Timothy 4:12).

Romans 12 gives us a list of seven spiritual gifts. Let's look at this list and see what each of the gifts mean. Don't imagine that you have to be a grown up before God gives you these gifts. God gives all believers His Holy Spirit. All believers have gifts from God.



In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. - Romans 12:6

Prophecy - Boldly telling others about your faith.

Serving - Meeting the needs of other people.

Day #4 continued:

Teaching - Helping other people understand the Bible.

Encouraging - Building up others with words and actions.

Giving - Being generous to others in need.

Leading - Being a good example for others to follow.

Mercy - Showing kindness and compassion to others.



Discuss the list of gifts. Do you see any of these gifts in yourself? Do you see any of these gifts in your family members? Use your gifts and ask God to increase them! (1 Corinthians 12:31) When we use our spiritual gifts, people will praise God (1 Peter 4:11).

Day #5: Giving it Away

Imagine that you had two friends that you sat with at lunch every day. One day you left your lunch at home. Both of your friends had plenty of food in their lunchboxes. You asked both friends to share a small amount of food. One friend gladly gave what he had, but the other friend would not give you a bite.

The next time you needed help, which friend would you go to? You would go to the one who had been faithful to share what he had.

In a similar way, God has given each of us talents and gifts - like a lunchbox full of good food to share. Every day God gives us opportunities to share our talents and gifts with others. When we are selfish with our gifts, God will give us fewer opportunities. He will give us less to share. He will give those gifts to someone who will share them generously.

But when we do use our gifts and talents to help others and point them to God, God gladly gives us more to share! It has been said, "You can't out-give God." He will always pour more good gifts into us than we could ever give away.



To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. - Matthew 25:29a NLT



Ask God how you can use one of your talents or gifts to serve someone this week.