

Talents (part 2)

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“But he who had received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master’s money” (Matthew 25:18).

There are a lot of excuses that we make for burying our talents, but none of them hold water when we consider the harsh reality of God’s expectations:

- Did you bury your talent because of a harsh or over-indulgent parent?
- Was there a perceived lack of resources or opportunities?
- Did you try and fail just too many times to want to try again?
- Did somebody say you could never do it, never accomplish anything?
- Did you surround yourself with people who facilitated your “failure” attitude?
- Was it always somebody else’s fault?
- Were you too scared to try?
- Was there always somebody who had your same talent, but did it so well that you thought you were useless?

Evidence That You Are Burying Your Talent

- Letting long term wishes and dreams go ignored. Do not confuse envy with desire. You may be envious of someone else’s position or success because you have lost touch with your own dreams.
- Often the biggest sign that tells us of things buried in the heart is numbness and a life that does not feel alive.
- Being “bugged” by something that we cannot readily identify.
- A feeling of not accomplishing anything significant and that one is living a purposeless life.
- Lack of activity on our part, not being involved, and being annoyed by God’s expectations.

The Danger Of Fear

“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours’” (Matthew 25:24-25).

Perhaps the most crippling fault of this one talent man was his failure to perceive his master properly. He was operating under an assumption what was invalid, and that produced action which was incongruent with the master’s expectations. Similarly, many of our spiritual failures come when we are not careful about our view of God, when we think we know what God wants apart from His revelation. Consider the disparity in moral and ethical standards amongst religions that do not view God biblically: how do deists, Unitarians, agnostics, Catholics, etc. respond to certain situations in light of their false perceptions about the Almighty? While the first two servants embraced a chance to serve

the master, the third man viewed this talent as a burden and a liability. He saw the master as harsh, unwavering, and cruel, while the first two saw him as merciful, friendly, and approachable.

The one talent man was so paralyzed by the fear of failure that he simply did nothing with his master's possessions. There was no satisfaction, no reward, no fulfillment, no production. He made no difference in the world and affected nobody. He contributed nothing. Ironically, though, the servant still expects praise from his master for his perceptiveness and shrewdness. *"There is very little reward in life without taking risks. The one who buried his treasure in the ground did so to avoid risk of loss, failure, and disapproval. In the end, though, he reaped all three of these disasters. Clearly avoidance of risk is the greatest risk of all"* (*Nine Things a Leader Must Do*, Cloud, p. 24). When we allow fear to cripple us, we miss out on the richness of life and all of its rewards. Many people convince themselves to avoid confrontation at all costs in marriage, which actually only causes emotional withdrawal. We fear risks in dating, in evangelism, in pursuing a career that makes us happy, in having children. Avoiding risk and conflict only succeeds in bringing unhappiness.