

Buried Talents

Ryan Goodwin

“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability” (Matthew 25:14-15).

Like the gifted men here, we are entrusted by God with various talents and ministries, each individually unique and valuable. The very fact that a word like “entrusted” is used tells us that our abilities are tools given to us by God with an expectation of return. He has invested talents in each of us, and wants to see His investment produce fruit. Similarly, Paul writes, *“And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly” (Romans 12:6).*

“Immediately, the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents...” (Matthew 25:16-17).

“Immediately...” It is interesting to see that the first two servants do not wait to begin using their talents. There is an earnestness that is admirable in the way that they “immediately” go out and start working. Unfortunately, many of us tend to be lackadaisical about our God-given duties, placing them on the back burner along with failed hobbies, social functions we neglect, and people we do not care for. We give first priority to our own activities, and then give our leftovers to God. But how would the master have responded in this story if the servants had allowed their master’s possessions to sit at the bottom of a “to-do” pile, collecting dust? Worse yet, how would the master have responded if they had used the talents for their own purposes, supposing that they would have enough time to cover their tracks and make up the money along the way?

“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 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?
- 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.
- A life that does not "measure up" when compared to scriptural expectations for every Christian. While we each have unique talents, there is no ignoring God's call to moral purity, participation in worship, meaningful prayer, or practicing kindness and charity.