

Gifted to Serve

I believe that every one of us had been given a unique array of gifts and abilities, by God, designed specifically for His use and service. You may not have discovered them, nurtured them, or developed them to their full potential - but still, they are present in you. Following on from last week's message on "fruits," your natural gifts and abilities, will definitely affect the quality and quantity of your results. And according to the Parable of the Talents (**Matthew 25:14-29**), the more you use your gifts and abilities the greater their effectiveness.

Wise use of your gifts will increase their productiveness very significantly, and wise usage is always centred on your service to God. The elementary definition of "service" is, "*the doing of work for another*" or "*being a servant for another*." The verb "to serve" (to minister) in the Greek is "*to render any kind of service*."

Exodus 36:1 says, "*... Every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.*" God will give you wisdom and understanding in order for you to know how to serve Him with your gifts and abilities. Note, your gifts and abilities are primarily designed for you to do *all manner of work* in your service to God. In other words, what ever God has purposed for you to do, you will the ability to successfully complete. Completion is vital!

The fundamental principle of 'service' is centred on this one truth. You cannot serve anyone or anything with your gifts and abilities unless you have first served the Lord with them. Jesus said, "***If anyone serves Me, let Him follow me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, Him My Father will honour***" (**John 12:26**). Notice, the servant is always with his master – by His side, serving Him. And, when ever (or wherever) you've chosen to serve Jesus with your gifts and abilities, God the Father will promote you to a place of honour.

But there's more! The Greek word for "**honour**" literally means "*to place a value (a price) upon*" something. Therefore, when you serve the Lord with your gifts and abilities, God places significant value on them. Implying that until they are operating in service to Him, they have no real merit – they are deemed worthless.

In this regard, here are 3 points to note:

[1] Your rewards in life will be in direct proportion to the value of your service to God, and in turn, to others. But remember, the value of your service can only be determined by God Himself - when serving the Lord. Therefore, the process of effective service is this: "*Bring your gifts and abilities into the kingdom, so that they can have substantial worth when taken out.*" If your gifts are not working effectively in your life it's probably because they have not yet been *honoured* by God. This is the well known principle of **seeking first** His kingdom and everything is then added [**Matthew 6:33**].

If you want great rewards in life, or if you want to add true meaning to your life, you must be serving God in some way or other. However, serving God is only part of it. **Galatians 5:13** says we ought to, "***Serve one another through love.***" Therefore, you must also serve each another in an attitude of love and respect. But this principle extends beyond just serving believers. Jesus, as a true example of servant hood, He led the way and set distinct parameters – He served everyone (saint and sinner).

In **Matthew 20:26-28** Jesus said, ***“Whoever desires to be great among you, let him serve... Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”*** True greatness is achieved through serving others. Your primary job is to find the best way to incorporate yourself into the fabric of society by serving as many other people “as well as you possibly can.” With the result your life is flooded with rewards in direct proportion to the value of your service.

[2] All success stories begin with the supplying of personal services. There are almost five million self-made millionaires in the US and each of them did it by finding a way to serve others more efficiently. How much more should we be achieving with the gifts and abilities that God Himself has placed such great value upon? By using what is already “blessed” to serve others is a guarantee of success! So let’s not squander it on pointless programs or selfish desires. Let’s use every gift more effectively, by serving others more efficiently, and in greater proportion – to the glory of God.

[3] If you wish to increase the quantity of your rewards, you must first increase the quality of your service. The more *quality* you put in, the more *quantity* you will get out. You have to become increasingly more productive in (and valuable to) God’s kingdom. But this must also be extended to those whom you are also serving. Most Christians want to put in less and get more out! They also have very little understanding of true quality. You must have both quantity and quality when providing any good service. Serve with as much quality that you can provide – in as much quantity that is possible!

Whether you like it or not, you are ultimately only rewarded in life for results. You live by grace, so you are not measured by performance, but results are fruits and fruits can be tested and measured. Jesus Himself said, ***“You will know them by their fruits”*** [Matthew 7:16]. In others words, you will know them by their results.

The good news is that you can increase your value, both to God and to the society, by increasing the quality and quantity of your results (your fruits). Monitoring and measuring results, when trying to please God and your fellow man, is the guiding force of successful living. The most successful men and women in our society are those who sincerely desire to “loose themselves” in service to those who depend upon them – family, friends, employers and others. But as a believer you should not “loose yourself” in anything until you have first “lost” yourself in God. ***“In Him you live and move and have your being”*** [Acts 17:28].

When you devote yourself completely to serving God, and others, you start to enjoy a wonderful feeling of meaning and purpose to life. You begin to feel that you are really making a difference (being a real asset and not a liability). When you know that you are putting in more than you are taking out, that you are making a real contribution, you feel great about yourself. When you put your whole heart into pleasing God, and making those around you happy by serving them both better, you take complete control over your own future. You suddenly ‘fast track’ everything you’re involved in.

Remember, God’s contribution toward you is measured first, by your contribution toward Him, and then, your contribution toward others. Therefore, it’s the **quantity of the output** and the **quality of the effort** that counts. Little output and poor effort is never rewarded!

This is how you can apply yourself right now:

Identify the people in your personal life who depend on you in some way or other – family, friends, employer, the church, etc asking yourself three things, (1) ***“How can I serve them better”*** greater output and more

effort? (2) ***“What can I do to enrich their lives”*** by being kind, considerate and obliging? (3) ***“How can I become more valuable to them”*** carrying more responsibility and taking ownership?

Whatever your answers to these questions, write them down, make a plan, and then take action. Your whole future may depend upon it.