

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 25:14-30**.
- B. "Is there a difference between a "spiritual gift" and a "talent"? Example: Your "talent" is writing but your "gift" is edification. Thus, you write letters to edify your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- C. This is an excellent question, and I agree with the example on how Xians are to use their God-given abilities for His glory in the church.

## I. TALENTS, GIFTS, AND ABILITIES.

- A. **Ability** is given at birth to every human being. When a person is given an excessive amount of ability by God (such as an athlete, artist, or musician) we commonly say it is "a gift."
- B. A **gift** is one taking their ability and "fine-tuning" it to better serve God (Rom. 12:6).  
*And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly:*
- C. A **talent** is used several ways in the Scriptures and is very, very similar to a gift:
  - 1. The talent might be an amount of money to use wisely for God. As seen in Mt. 25:14-30 or in Lk. 19:11-27.
  - 2. The talent might be an ability now completely channeled to be used for God.
    - a. Through teaching and practice those who are good become even better.
    - b. Saul of Tarsus used his God-given ability to destroy the church (Gal. 1:13-14).  
*For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.*
    - c. Paul the apostle used his God-given ability to help the church (1Cor. 15:10).  
*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.*
  - 3. The talent might be just an opportunity to just do good.
    - a. This explanation best fits the over-all concept of the parable. Each of the servants had ability, the Master was giving them opportunities to use that ability.
    - b. Xians are to be rich in good works (Ti. 3:14).  
*And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*
    - c. Xians are to be working while there is opportunity (Gal. 6:7-10).  
*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*
- C. These definitions come from my understanding of Mt. 25:15. Notice here how the talents were given according to ability. It would seem to me that the ability came first. God then provided opportunities to serve based on a person's natural God-given ability.  
*"And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey."*
- D. If you have made the same application in your thinking but have reversed the idea of an ability and a talent, it is all right. No reason here to necessarily argue semantics. The simple answer to the question is YES, there is a small difference between one's ability and one's talent (or gift).
- E. Let me illustrate my answer. Some people are better preachers than other are:
  - 1. Under-achievers. Some brethren have been given great ability in public speaking by God. They could be better preachers but they are under using the gift or talent of preaching. We call them under-achievers. God gives them an opportunity to use their gift in the body but they do not

reach their full potential to use it. Some people see the opportunity to use their talents, but are lazy in applying themselves not putting their ability to its fullest use.

2. Over-achievers. Some brethren have less ability in public speaking, but are over-achievers and use their talent in the body to its fullest extent. They are called over-achievers. Some brethren see the opportunity to use their talents, and work hard in applying themselves putting their ability to its fullest use.
- G. This seems to me to be the problem in the parable of the talents. The master distributed the talents (opportunities) according to ability. Two of the three used their ability to its fullest potential and doubled their results. One did not use his ability to its fullest potential and accomplished nothing.

## II. GIFT UTILIZATION: ROMANS 12:4-12.

- A. Find your gift! You are gifted by God (Rom. 12:4-8).

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Verse by verse look:

1. (12:4-5): we are all members of the same body but have different functions due to the various abilities and talents that are present.
2. (12:6a): Everyone has a gift or talent to give to the good of the work of the church.
3. (12:6b-8): Paul lists various gifts and asks that those who possess such use them.
- B. My gifts test. Tests for 20 possible gifts in the body and tries to match abilities to gifts.
- C. The test also shows your weakest areas in your Xian life where you need to grow.

## III. GIFT UTILIZATION: 1CORINTHIANS 12:4-7, 11, 14-27.

- A. Gift utilization must be done in harmony with the other gifts in the body (1Cor. 12:4-7).

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. **6** There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. **7** But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- B. HS decides who gets what miraculous gift, maybe for the non-miraculous too (1Cor. 12:11).  
*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*
- C. No room for pride or arrogance. All the parts of the body are to work together (see 1Cor. 12:14-27).

## IV. GIFT UTILIZATION: 1PETER 4:8-11.

- A. We are to treat one another with love and hospitality (1Pet. 4:8-9).

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. **9** Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

- B. Three important things about 1Pet. 4:10:

*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

1. You have received a "special" gift.
2. You are to use that gift in serving one another.
3. You use your gift as a steward of the manifold grace of God.
- C. Speaking gifts and serving gifts are both to be done to the glory of God (1Pet. 4:11).  
*Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
1. God will supply the words for those using the speaking gifts.
2. God will supply the strength for those using the serving gifts.

**CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. The key is to find out what your gift or talent is in the body.
- B. The commitment is then to exercise your gift with all your God-given ability.
- C. The comfort is to know that God will supply the strength needed.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.