

TALENTS

In the Bible, the book of Matthew Chapter 25 shares the Parable of the “Talents.” During the time of Jesus, talents were gold or silver coins used for currency, much like our money system today. This parable tells the story of a wealthy master who was going on a journey and before leaving, called in three of his servants. To one servant he gave five talents (or coins), to the second he gave two talents, and to the third he gave one. After the master’s departure, the servant with five talents went and invested them and in turn received five more talents in interest. The servant with two talents did the same and likewise made another two. However, the third servant, fearing punishment by his master, went out and buried his talent to keep it safe. Upon the master’s return, he called the servants in to settle accounts with them. The first two servants shared that they had invested their talents and had doubled their value. To each the master replied, “Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.” As the third servant came forward, he shared that he had buried his talent out of fear of losing it. In reply, the master said, “You wicked, lazy servant... Should you not have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then, take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten... Throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.” Obviously, Jesus told this parable to emphasize the importance of investing wisely and making the most of what we have, so that its value will increase. In the process, we will make our master (God) proud!

This Bible story has always been one of my favorites on a couple different levels! First, it states pretty clearly that we are expected to use the gifts we have been given to the best of our ability. Next, it insinuates that as we “invest” in our gifts, and ourselves, we tend to get much back in return. Finally, the parable addresses that there are those who have gifts that they disregard, or “bury,” and never do anything with them. The fact that the master (God) is clearly not pleased with this is a pertinent point!

I find it interesting that the word “talents” in Jesus’ day referred to actual coins, whereas today when we hear the word talents we tend to think of one’s physical and mental gifts and abilities. Just as Jesus’ lesson from 2,000 years ago was relevant to the people of that day when talking about money, the same message is just as important to us today, especially as athletes! Without question, God had something very special in mind as He created each of us, and we all have our own unique set of gifts and abilities, both physical and mental. Just as in the parable, God has given each of us different levels of ability in different areas. One of the things I have always appreciated about athletics is that there are so many different sports to choose from that require different abilities! If a person is willing to work hard and keep a great attitude, they can almost always find something they can do and be successful!

I have learned over the years that regardless of the gifts with which we have been blessed, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to make the most of our talents. The more we “invest” in these abilities through hard work, determination, courage, and self-discipline, the more we will get back in return! Certainly, there will be those around us who will “bury” their talents and abilities by choosing not to do anything with them. In return, they will get little to nothing out of themselves and will never come close to reaching their potential. In the process, our “master” will not be proud or happy with this effort!

Each day we have that choice. Will we sit back with our abilities buried and stagnant, or will we make an investment in ourselves through hard work, determination, commitment, and mental toughness? Will we take pride in ourselves and what we are doing? **EACH DAY THE CHOICE IS OURS!!**

Everyone is gifted... but some people never open their package.