The Stewardship of our <u>TALENTS</u>

(Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:3-8; I Peter 4:10-11)

7-21-2021

As faithful stewards, we must use the talents God has entrusted to us!

I. <u>USE</u> your Talents or <u>LOSE</u> your Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

II. Use your Talents <u>HUMBLY</u> (Romans 12:3-5)

III. Use your Talents <u>FULLY</u> (Romans 12:6-8)

IV. Use your Talents <u>FREELY</u> (I Peter 4:10a)

V. Use your Talents <u>RECIPROCALLY</u> (I Peter 4:10b)

VI. Use your Talents <u>FAITHFULLY</u> (I Peter 4:10c)

VII. Use your Talents <u>DEPENDENTLY</u> (I Peter 4:11a)

VIII. Use your Talents <u>DOXOLOGICALLY</u> (I Peter 4:11b)

It is a blessing to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the gifts he has given us!

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I. USE your Talents or LOSE your Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Matthew 25:14-30

***Be faithful with what God has given to you until the Lord returns!**

Be faithful because. . .

1. **The Lord has entrusted you with responsibility** (v. 14)

Be faithful because. . .

2. **The Lord has not entrusted you with more than you can handle** (v. 15)

Be faithful because. . .

3. **The Lord expects you to use the "talents" He has given to you** (v. 16-18)

Be faithful because. . .

4. **The Lord is coming back and will hold you accountable for what you have received** (v. 19)

Be faithful because. . .

5. **Faithfulness in little things** (in this life) **will be rewarded with greater privilege in the future** (v. 20-23)

Be faithful because. . .

6. **There are no adequate excuses you will be able to offer the Lord at Judgment Day** (v. 24-27)

Be faithful because. . .

7. **There are severe and serious consequences for unfaithfulness** (v. 28-30)

II. Use your Talents HUMBLY (Romans 12:3-5)

After exhorting the Roman Christians to let God have their lives (v. 1), and to let God change their lives (v. 2), now Paul makes an appeal to let God use their lives (v. 3ff).

"After a right relation to God (v. 1-2) comes a right relation to our fellow believers" (Thomas, p. 331).

After surrender (v. 1-2) comes service (v. 3ff).

We are saved to serve (Eph. 2:10 - "unto good works...before ordained") and we are gifted to serve in a particular way.

V. 3

Many Christians tend to go to two sinful extremes -

Some say, "I'm worthless" (I have nothing to offer the Body of Christ).

Others say, "I'm indispensable" (I'm everything in the Body of Christ).

Both of these extremes are corrected in verses 3-8.

* **Don't think too much of your gifts (v. 3-5)**
(Have a humble mind in the Body of Christ)

Some think within themselves: "I'm the greatest thing that ever happened to Christianity." "What would this church be without me?"

To such attitudes Paul responds:

V. 3

"For I say, through the grace given unto me" - a reference to Paul's position as Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:15-16; SEE Eph. 3:1-8).

Paul, who is about to exhort us toward humility (v. 3b), himself reveals humility as he gives credit to the grace of God for making him what he was.

Humility because of the grace of God was a characteristic feature of Paul's life as evidenced by the words: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:10).

"To every man" - the appeal to humility is for all Christians (No one has the right to claim superiority in the body of Christ).

"Every man who is among you = Everyone who is in your midst (a reference to the local church at Rome).

The exhortation that Paul will give comes to Christians in the setting of a church.

"Think more highly" - to think too much of yourself; lit. to think above ( ) and beyond ( ) what you should

To suppose you are something you really are not - is pride or arrogance.

[NOTE Paul's previous warning to the saved Gentiles about viewing themselves as something special and superior to the Jews who were lost and alienated from God's salvation (Rom. 11:18-20, 25)]

"Think soberly" - to think sensibly. Someone who is proud is like someone who is drunk - they both think they can do anything; they both think they are the greatest; they both think too highly of themselves.

The phrase "to think soberly" is actually one word in the Greek - lit. to have a "saved mind" (Gk. "sozo" = to save; "phren" = the mind).

To have an accurate viewpoint of ourselves is a result of salvation. The more you know about your depravity and the greatness of God's saving grace, the more sensible your own estimation of yourself will be.

NOTE: This is wy Paul adds the phrase - "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Our duty is--through eyes of faith--to see our gifts and only our gifts; and to by faith exercise them.

It is not wrong to recognize gifts in your life (recognition of gifts is what is meant by the reference to "faith").

It is wrong:

1) To suppose that you by yourself gained that gift (sinful independence)

2) To suppose that you are better than others because of the gift you have (sinful feeling of superiority)

3) To suppose that you have gifts that you really don't have (sinful self-deception).

We need to use what we have and recognize what we don't have; see our strengths and know our limitations, and work accordingly.

V. 3b

". . . God hath dealt . . . the measure of faith."

"Dealt" = to divide up; allot; to measure out.

Lit. "God has measured to each (of you) a measure of faith" - God determines the degree (extent) of your faith. The "faith" described is a faith for living the Christian life (Rom. 1;17). It is the faith which motivates and energizes you to use your gift(s) with eternity in mind.

God cannot and will not use a proud individual.

Why not? Because God wants the glory for what He does through your life. Pride robs the credit from God.

Phil. 2:3 - Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

"Vainglory" - the idea of a "look at me" selfish attitude.

Three humbling thoughts:

A. Pride is foolish when you realize:
God intends us all to have differing abilities (v. 4)
(Our Diversity in the Body)

"We have many members . . . not the same office."

"Office" = function, practice, action

Just as we have many parts ("members") in our physical, human body, and each part has a different function
(KJV = "office"), so is the Body of Christ.

The various parts of our physical body can do some things, but cannot do others.

EX: The eye can see, but cannot hear;
the ear can hear, but cannot taste;
the lungs can take in air, but not water (or else you have pneumonia)

ILLUS: of the foolishness to put all attention to one part of the body. EX: Someone who exercises his biceps but has "chicken" legs and a bony chest.

Every body part is essential and should be developed in the Body of Christ. There should be no "show off" parts.

Don't have an overestimation of your worth to the Body of Christ.

Don't be deceived into thinking that the other "body parts" are inferior to you or other members have a lesser function than you.

Diversity in the church Body is part of the marvelous plan and wisdom of God.

The key to any sport team is diversity - each player performing his own role (job) to accomplish the goals of the team.

B. Pride is foolish when you realize:
We are all in this Body together (v. 5a)
(Our Unity in the Body)

"So we being many are one body in Christ"

The goal of ministry is "unity" and maturity
(SEE Eph. 4:11-13).

If the key to our effectiveness for Christ is our unity (SEE John 17:21-23), then we had better be on guard because our unity will be that which Satan will attack. His most effective weapon against unity is pride!

We must stop viewing ourselves as an:	And see ourselves as a vital part of the whole:
stranded soldier	-- army
independent player	-- team
isolated soloist	-- grand choir
sole laborer	-- great work force
unneeded church member	-- Body of Christ

C. Pride is foolish when you realize:
How much we need each other (v. 5b)
(Our <u>Dependency</u> in the Body)

"Everyone (of us are) members one of another"

We need each other!

"Members" - this word shows the need for commitment to <u>church membership</u>.

No believer is an island unto himself. We need each other!

The dependence of the human body is exemplified by:

1. Eating -

   You depend on your hands to bring the food to your mouth;

   you depend on your tongue to tell you if it is too hot, etc.;

   you depend on your teeth to chew it up;

   your tongue pushes the food back, and you depend on your throat to force it down to your stomach;

   you rely on your stomach to digest it with the help of certain acids which come in at just the right time;

   your food then passes into the small intestine, where the nutrients are transported to the hungry blood cells which carry the nutrients to various parts of the body to build up muscle tissue, etc.;

   then you depend on your large intestine to carry away the waste.

   All of the above mentioned functions are essential for a healthy body, and al of the bodily operations work because of the brain.

   Just as <u>no</u> part of your human body <u>exists for itself</u>, but for the assistance of some other bodily function, so no part of the Body of Christ is to exist selfishly for itself.

   "Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with" (Wiersbe, p. 555).

III. Use your Talents FULLY (Romans 12:6-8)

Don't fail to use your gifts (v. 6-8)
(Have a servant's heart in the Body of Christ)

Our question is not "How can I shine?" (v. 3-5) But "How can I serve?" (v. 6-8) (Thomas, citing Gore, p. 333)

V. 6-8

All of the gifts mentioned are gifts that help (edify) others. (none are for self-edification)

Every gift we have is to be used to help someone else or else we are misusing or neglecting what God gave us.

A. Use your gift! (v. 6b-8a)

V. 6

Prophecy = to forthtell God's Word (I Cor. 14).

Our speaking about the Lord is a result of our faith in the Lord (II Cor. 4:13 - "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.").

"Faith: is a gift from God.

Some believers have it to a greater degree than others (since God has opened their eyes to more truth in the Scripture).

In a context similar to Romans 12:3-8, note what Paul says in I Cor. 12:4-7, 11 -- Cp. v. 9 - "To another faith by the same Spirit"

Faith is a gift (cp. Eph. 2:8).

"Proportion" - a different word, but similar idea as verse 3 ("measure of faith"). As in verse 3, God is "warning against going beyond what God has given" (Vine, p. 225).

In other words, don't prophecy (preach) about that which God has not revealed.

If God did not say it, don't proclaim it.

If your gift is forthtelling the word of God, don't go beyond that which your beliefs (convictions) dictate. Preach only what you know to be true; don't utter speculations.

Neither emotion nor human reason should dictate our message, but faith.

Using computer language, if God gave you 10 megabytes of Bible truth, don't give out 11 megabytes! But on the other hand, don't proclaim only 9 either!

Give to others all that God gave you, but only give what God gave you. This is what is meant by "proportion of faith."

V. 7

"Ministry" = humble service; to be one who helps those in need.

EX:Deacons (Acts 6) Phoebe (Rom. 16:1)

"Teacheth" - to impart Bible knowledge on all levels.

We have so much to teach in the Scriptures, and so many to teach it to in the world, but sad to say the laborers are few.

If teaching is your gift, use it for Christ!

V. 8a

"Exhorteth" = to encourage; it describes someone with the gift of comforting others (to lift up others).

Examples of the neglected talent in the Body of Christ:

Approximately 5% of believers do 95% of the ministering in the average local church.

B. Use your gift to the fullest! (v. 8b)

In verses 7 - 8a God is concerned that we use our gift, whereas in v. 8b, God is emphasizing how we use our gift.

Note the change in grammatical structure:

V. 7-8a =
prophecy . . . prophecy
ministry . . . ministering
teacheth . . . teaching
exhorteth . . . exhortation
V. 8b =
giveth . . . simplicity
ruleth . . . diligence
mercy . . . cheerfulness

V. 8
"Simplicity" denotes:

1) Sincere giving (from "haplous" which means single, in contrast to "diplous" - double).
Our motives are to be single - to please God; no duplicity.

2) Generous giving - giving liberally (same word translated liberally - Ii Cor. 8:2, 9:13).

In other words, our giving is to be both open-hearted (sincere) and open-handed (generous) (Reinedeer, p. 376).

Someone who gives with "simplicity" does not keep a complex journal of every gift they give. Rather, they give and think nothing of it.

"Ruleth" = lit. to stand in front; i.e. to lead. The gift of leadership is in view.

"Diligence" = earnestness, zeal.

This word has the idea of doing something in a businesslike manner ("business" - v. 11), as opposed to a lazy, "lazaifaire," "let life go on," looser fashion.

"Cheerfulness" = hilariousness.

Be a light-hearted, joyful forgiver.

If showing mercy is a problem for you, maybe it is because you have never been on the receiving end of the mercy of God.

If you are conscious of His mercy, showing it yourself will be "no problem!"

IV. Use your Talents FREELY (I Peter 4:10a)

"Every man" - You have a gift whether you know it or not. (don't seek other's gifts)

"received" - given to you in the past

"gift" - a result of grace. No matter what gift you have been given, serve one another with it.

V. Use your Talents RECIPROCALLY (I Peter 4:10b)

"One another" = Fellow believers in a local church. Whether it be a gift of singing, mechanical, artistic, technical, musical, or teaching skill or an ability to comfort, help, finance, encourage etc. use it to the glory of God.

VI. Use your Talents FAITHFULLY (I Peter 4:10c)

"Good stewards" - A good manager, put in trust. (ex Joseph in Potiphor's house). (ex. parable of the talents)

-Stewardship involves responsibility. We must do the best with what we are entrusted with. To not use your gifts in the assembly is to sin against God.
-Stewardship involves accountability. We will answer to the Master one day. "To whom much is given, much shall be required".

"manifold" - many kinds, various kinds, different, diversified. Your gifts are different than mine.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the some Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the some Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the some God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."(I Cor.12:4-7)

Don't be selfish with your gifts. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."(Acts 2:44-45)

VII. Use your Talents <u>DEPENDENTLY</u> (I Peter 4:11a)

(God is the source of your <u>words</u>)
Ill. Of child mimicking the words of parents. Your words are to reflect your heavenly father.

You are a <u>mouth piece</u> of God. A representative. An ambassador.
Ask yourself: "What would God say in this situation?"

In your teaching, preaching, witnessing, counselling, encouraging have: A **seriousness** in your conversation.

<u>Pure</u> speech-God's thoughts & words; not vain worthless talk. "Every idle word...shall give account.." (Mt.12:36)

<u>Authoritative</u> speech- Not your own personal feelings or suggestions on issues the Bible clearly speaks. "Now when they saw the <u>boldness</u> of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."
(Act.4:13)

<u>Confident</u> speech- Without fear of man. "For we cannot but speak the things we have seen & heard"(Acts 4:20).

Ill. of Moses' reluctance to speak for God - God's reply: "Who made man's mouth?...I will be with thy mouth" (Ex.4:10-12)

<u>Unhesitant</u> speech- "Be ready always to give an answer..."(I Pet.3:15) "Let the redeemed of the Lord <u>say so</u>, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." (Ps.107:2)

This speaking would exclude: lying, gossip, untruth, slander etc.

*** SERVE WITH THE POWER GOD PROVIDES** (v.11b)
(God is the source of your <u>strength</u>)

"Minister" - Serve (same word as "deacon")

"ability" - ( ) Physical & intellectual strength, might, power. (Ex. We are commanded to love God with all our strength. Mk.12:30)

"giveth" - To supply, furnish, provide.
(Ill. Of a Doctor working for a hospital. The hospital supplies the necessary instruments and equipment.
(Ill. Of a Soldier going to war. The National army supplies him with arms. He doesn't go out & buy his own tank, ammunition etc.) **God supplies His soldiers** with the necessary power to fight the spiritual warfare.

"Which God giveth":

1) We can't take pride in it. (I Cor. 4:10; 10:27) God uses the weak (I Cor.1:25-ff), and empowers them. (ill. Paul's thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7)
We need to rely of God's power because in man there is no power sufficient for the task.
"I can do all things through Christ which strengheneth me." (Phil.4:13)

2) We can't do it in the flesh. Spiritual work accomplished by decaying flesh stinks!
Why do we do work for the Lord in the flesh? Confidence of self-strength, or desire for self-glory.
(Ex. of Hymn: "Brethren we have met to worship" says: "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down".

VIII. Use your Talents DOXOLOGICALLY (I Peter 4:11b)

Why should we have a strengthened service? "that (for the purpose and result that) God alone will receive the credit, and praise. ("Glory" N.T.- ( ): radiance, that light or brightness which shines out from God. Honor, fame, repute.

The Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit) are the **power house** (power source)
Jesus Christ is the **power line** (channel of power) "through"
God's Servants need to be **plugged** in to God's power! (Usage of power).

"in all things" - in every sphere of life.

Why should Jesus Christ receive Glory? Because He is Glory; (the light of world) and He is the power & might (dominion). (All power is given unto me)
"All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father..."(Jn. 5:23)

When you minister by God's power (people know it isn't you who is doing it) but it is God through you. And consequently all the praise goes back to God (who really deserves it)

It is a blessing to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the gifts he has given us!

Some encouragement for weary servants:

1. *Serving the Lord*…Returns the Greatest <u>Gratitude</u>

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

2. *Serving the Lord*…Fulfills Life's Greatest <u>Purpose</u>

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. *Serving the Lord*…Meets People's Greatest <u>Needs</u>

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
2 Cor. 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

4. *Serving the Lord*…Taps into the Greatest <u>Power</u>

Col. 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

5. *Serving the Lord*…Receives the Greatest <u>Honor</u>

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

6. *Serving the Lord*…Pays the Greatest <u>Rewards</u>

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

7. *Serving the Lord*…Fills the Heart with the Greatest <u>Joy</u>

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

8. *Serving the Lord*…Brings God the Utmost <u>Pleasure</u>

2 Cor. 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.