

## **Investing Your Talents**

By Don Potter

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I usually write to musicians and praise leaders but this article is for all who carry a gift of some kind and want to gain a talent. I know that sounds strange as we all believe that gifts and talents are the same, but there is a time space between a gift and a talent.

I want to show you a parable, an allegory that Jesus gave His disciples that explains how to gain talents from your abilities, how to walk in Godly ambition and best of all, how to get spiritual authority. Well hidden in the following verses is one of the keys that will be used to bring a great revival/reformation and how gifts and talents play a role in this. If you are interested in this let me show you.

### **Matt 25:14-29**

**14 "For {it is}(the kingdom) just like a man {about} to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them.**

**15 "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.**

**16 "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.**

**17 "In the same manner the one who {had received} the two {talents} gained two more.**

**18 "But he who received the one {talent} went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money.**

**19 "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.**

**20 "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.'**

**21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'**

**22 "The one also who {had received} the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.'**

**23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'**

**24 "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no {seed.}**

**25 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.'**

26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no {seed.}

27 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my {money} back with interest.

28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

29 "For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. (NAS)

**NOTE:** In Luke 19:17 this parable says that the Master gave the servants authority over cities as a reward for their wise investment.

This parable is the third of four that the Jesus spoke to His disciples to explain the kingdom of heaven and the end time happenings. Though they are wonderful stories it is hard to imagine what the kingdom of heaven is really like by the telling of these. The reason they are parables is to keep the understanding of the kingdom a mystery. After reading them all again and again and hearing countless sermons on them, I think they remain a mystery only to be opened by the Holy Spirit to whoever would seek them out.

The Lord gave me the idea to look at Matthew 25 as meaning talents, like musical talents or a talent to do anything well, and not just money. With this in mind, the idea of investing in them becomes a concept that has some wonderful spiritual meaning.

In verse 14 it says that a land owner entrusted his servants with his possessions when he went on a journey. This is a parable or allegory of the kingdom. So the land owner is the Lord, the possessions range from gifts of the Spirit, talents, other servants and all the way down to actual money. The Lord is sharing what the kingdom of heaven is like.

I believe music is a gift from God because it belongs to Him. I should say that the understanding of music is a gift from God. Music remains as it has been since time began, and it is only the understanding of it that a person carries while on earth. It is the same for any gift that comes from above. Anything that has to do with creativity must come from a Godly understanding of whatever it is. That can range from a talented plumber or car salesman to a carpenter and to the visual arts as well as music. It doesn't take long to recognize the difference between someone who has understanding from someone who does not.

I also believe that sometime later in your life, after some character building, the Lord gives talents according to your ability. Notice that this is about three different things—talents, gifts and ability. That is because the word "ability" in these scriptures doesn't mean what we think it does. Let me explain.

Verse 15 says, "**each, according to his own ability.**" The word ability is the Greek word, *dunamis* which many are familiar with meaning miracle working power. This is the power that Jesus had. However, "dunamis" also means *power residing in a thing by*

*virtue of its nature, as well as a moral power and an excellence of soul. (ref. Thayer's and Strong's)* This means the Lord gave talents to His servants according to their moral power and excellence of soul and took into consideration the power that He saw in them through the virtue of their nature. So there is power in morality; power in excellence of soul and a power that can come on you just by your nature.

A practical example of this is when I was young the Lord gave me an understanding of music. When I would try to play the ten dollar guitar my father bought, I was tireless. Though my fingers were sore and the guitar unforgiving, I couldn't stop. Nothing captured my heart like wanting to play what I could hear in my head. My musical life has been the same for all these years. I just want to play what I can hear. That does not make me a great musician, just someone with a degree of understanding about music. The blessing was when I discovered that it was the Spirit who was giving me the sounds in my head and He was having a good time doing it.

The choice here is you don't have to do anything with that understanding or gift from God. You can just be content with the knowledge and live your life that way. It is what you do with the knowledge that causes the Lord to be watching out for ability to be growing in you.

God is developing in us abilities and as those abilities grow He will release a talent to match the power of morality He sees; or the excellence of soul that is evident. He doesn't seem to show favorites in this as many in the world carry excellence of soul. However, it is very difficult to carry a power by virtue of your nature without coming to know Jesus.

Don't get this mixed up with being saved by grace and made righteous by the blood—or gaining eternal life through confessing our sins and believing in Jesus. What I'm talking about here is gaining spiritual authority by investing in the talents the Lord gave.

## **INVESTING IN YOU TALENT**

I think there is a mix-up in the idea of gifting and talent. Most of us believe that a talent is a gift. Though the talent is given to us it is more like an investment from God in us. The talent comes after character development. In a manor of speaking we must become deserving of a talent.

The way to gain authority over cities is to invest in the talent you were given. However, there are some complications over what has been given us and what is to be done with it. Luke 12:48b says, **“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”** (KJV)

The second half of this scripture is usually never quoted. If you were given much then you are required to give it, is all I've ever heard quoted. The rest of the scriptures show that if you commit this to people, they will ask all the more. God will only require what He gave you—men will ask for more than that. When gifted people come to the church it

is for the glory of God. We often get that turned around to believing that it is for the glory of the church. Glorifying the Lord with the gifts is what edifies the church.

Selfish ambition has made it very hard for gifted people to invest in their talents. When an ungifted person is willing to sell themselves to fulfill a fantasy, it makes a gifted person have to battle for a place that their gift should have afforded them. Godly ambition comes in after God has seen excellence of soul, moral power and a virtuous character. Not after you have promoted yourself in an arena you mislead yourself into believing.

It has been my experience that most everyone who believes on Jesus is gifted by God, but not everyone agrees with what He chooses to give as a gift. The church can sometimes exalt the obvious gifts over the more general ones. This causes those in search of significance to desire the obvious gifts and miss the gift they were given.

Once I watched the movie “Rudy.” It was about a small young man who always wanted to play football for Notre Dame. His size prohibited that from ever happening but his heart said different. His father would sit and watch every game the team played and say they were the best in the world. There would be no greater honor then to play on that team.

Rudy set his mind to accomplish that task. The movie is dedicated to the amazing struggle he went through just to get into the collage and then overcoming his size deficiency with heart. In the end he only played in the last 2 minutes of the last quarter of a televised game. What was interesting to me was his gift was heart not football. Many times what we want is overshadowing what we’ve been given.

Investing in the talents given means you respect the giver, and it means there is an honoring of the gift. This also means you are responding to a gift from the Lord and doing your best to see as much fruit as possible comes from it. It is dishonoring to the giver to do nothing with it and a disdain of the gift to merely gain interest with it.

I’ve spent too much time trying to humbling say I have no gifts when that was false humility. I guess that was because I unconsciously knew I would have to do something with it if I accepted its existence. The first half of Luke 12:48 makes clear what happens to people who don’t know what their master expects of them. **“But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.”** (KJV)

## **WHAT DOES INVESTING IN YOU TALENT LOOK LIKE?**

The best way I can try to explain this is to use myself as an example. I realized some years ago that God had given me the gift of music. If I applied myself and practiced with passion, God would see it as excellence of soul. From that gift God gave me a talent according to the character He had already built. Then I learned to write songs, produce records, work as a studio musician, engineer records, and even build studios which is up to three now. All these things are offered back to God to do with as He wants.

As a result of that He has given me a more precious thing—spiritual authority in certain areas. He sends my wife and me out to minister in praise to parts of the body of Christ. From that He has spoken to me about teaching and writing some of the things He is showing me and now I'm working on my second book.

It would take a long time to explain how all these things came to pass and how much dying to my own ambition had to come. I could not keep working on what I could get from these gifts but on what I could give with them—and that all had to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

An interesting way to see this is, when God gives someone a talent it makes the gift He gave earlier in life spendable. I could play the guitar for years, but one day God made it spendable for me. How I chose to spend it came under a lot of scrutiny by the Holy Spirit but one day it all turned toward God and I'm experiencing wonderful things in this hour of my life.

To bury this talent causes great anger from the Master and the talent will be taken away and given to the one who has the most already. Sometimes the Lord will give you an unexpected talent later in life because the one He originally gave it to distained it or was simply jealous over the one who had more.

## **CONCLUSION**

There isn't a way to make a conclusion to all this—only a continuing investment in the things God has given.

For the most part having a spendable version of your gifts could be considered influence. The world chooses to use their influence to get others to buy something or gathering as many people as possible to give you praises for your gift. It can be used to manipulate people into giving money for worthy and undeserving causes.

All in all, if anyone with a gift from God that has gained a talent as a result of character, uses this with the hope of offering it to a returning Master; they will know great authority and share in a greater joy than they've ever known.