



## Belong

Start the group with an opportunity for community. We want this to be a place where the body of Christ can belong.

- What is one high and one low from this past week?
- What area of your life do you feel like you are most talented or gifted?

Start the group with prayer.

## Believe

### Matthew 25:14-30

14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had

received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

We all have talents. God has blessed His people with gifts and abilities that reap benefits for the Kingdom of Heaven when used correctly. In this story, the master blesses all three servants with talents. One gets five, one gets two, and one gets one all according to their abilities.

This seems odd, right? Is scripture really saying that we all have different capacities or unequal abilities? Yes! Scripture is clear that we have been given talents for a purpose.

To give some context, this story actually is not about talents as in abilities or gifts. To the original hearers, talents were a large unit of monetary value. Anyone who had a single talent was very well off so to receive multiple made you extremely wealthy. However, the story Jesus is telling is not particularly about the money itself but more so about stewarding the gifts you are given. In English, when we say someone is talented, we don't mean they're rich; we mean they are gifted. Any talent that you have is a gift from God.

## **Your gift is not about you**

Just as the servant who was given one talent, it may seem unfair to you as well that you have been given less than those around you. Being given less when others have been given more can appear unfair to a proud heart. Comparison is the thief of all joy.

The reality is, the one talent was worth about \$600,000 in today's money. This is insane! Some are given more, some are given less, but what God has given you is worth using for Him.

*Luke 12:48 Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

This is why the master calls the servant "slothful and wicked." The servant was hindered by shame, jealousy, and insecurity from ever reaping useful benefit. Both of the other servants doubled what was given to them. One had less than the other but the master had the same response to their diligence; *'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

When you begin to feel bad about yourself for what you think you lack, you are being fueled by pride. Feeling bad about yourself is about you. This is a story calling out the pride of those who think they deserve more when all that they have has been given by grace.

## **Do something!**

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:5 "10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." Paul realized he had been given gifts to use for the kingdom so he used his grace gifts to work harder than anyone else. This was not about what Paul could do for himself, it was about what he could do for the God who had given them to him.

The slothful servant who went and buried his talent decided to do nothing. The others realized they had an opportunity and they got to work. You have been given talents. It may be one, it may be ten. God wants to use our capacities. Psalm 139 says He formed you and your days, He knitted you together, and that you are not hidden from Him. Your talent(s) are valued very highly by the Lord. What are you doing with them?

Let this question sink into your mind. For every servant who is faithful with the talents entrusted to them, the Master will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23). This is what we want to hear. God does not call us to be more talented or gifted than the next person. He calls us to be faithful with what we are given.

### **You'll be used, you may not be remembered**

This is an issue of motive. Galatians 1:10 says "*If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*" There is so much talked about on the topic of approval of man. This seems to only be in light of not caring about the critique of man because we are just servants of Jesus. However, if we are going to not care about the criticism, we should also not care about the praise. Paul says he has no reason to please man or be remembered by man because He is simply a servant of Christ.

How often do we bless the world around us for self serving purposes? The gift is given, the service is done, the sacrifice is made, all flowing from the fountain of self. One day, you will be judged according to what you *really* were and did. 1 Corinthians 4:5 says Jesus "will bring to the light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart." You will not just be judged for the sin in your life, but your very motives for what you do will be laid out.

If your motive in using your gifts is to be remembered for them, you're missing the point. Our gifts are so that the cause of Christ is advanced, not our own legacy.

### **Questions:**

- Have you ever thought of insecurity as pride?
- What more can you do with your talents?
- What can you do in secret this week to be a blessing that will not get recognition?

## **BECOME**

You have been given gifts. Maybe you have more than another person or maybe you have less, but all have been given much. The life of a Christian is not a talent show but a life of faithful service.

We must first, repent of pride. This parable shows the danger in feeling like a less talented servant. There is the temptation to feel bad for yourself. Repent from this mindset and heart.

Secondly, trust that the Lord has developed your life and purpose. God's purpose is usually far different than the perception we see them with. Pray for contentment in what you have been given.

Lastly, just be faithful and enter into his joy. No matter if you have 5, 2, or 1 talents, faithfulness precedes joy of the Lord.