

DEVOTION: "DEVELOPING OUR TALENTS FOR GOD"

BIBLE STORY: "Parable of the Talents"
BIBLE TEXT: Matthew 25:14-28

INTRODUCTION: ■ Ask: What is a parable? (It is a story with a heavenly meaning.)
■ Say: "Jesus told many parables or stories that taught lessons for our lives. Jesus told the Parable of the Talents. One talent was worth more than a thousand dollars." (Then tell the Bible story.)

BIBLE STORY: (PARABLE):

A man was going on a journey. Before leaving he called his three servants, entrusting his belongings to them. The first servant he gave five talents of money (more than five thousand dollars). The second servant he gave two talents (more than two thousand dollars). And the third servant he gave one talent (more than a thousand dollars). He gave each one according to their capabilities of taking care of the money. Then he left on his journey.

The first servant immediately left and worked, investing his five talents. He gained five more talents.

The second servant also worked, investing his two talents and gained two more.

But the third servant was afraid he'd lose the one talent. So he dug a hole and buried it in the ground.

After a long time, the man returned from his journey and called his servants to him, wanting to settle the accounts with them.

The first servant said: "*Master, you entrusted me with five talents and I have gained five more. Now look, here are 10 talents.*" The master was very pleased. He told him that he was a good and faithful servant with a few things, but now he would be in charge of many things.

The second servant came and said: "*Master, you entrusted me with two talents and I have gained two more. Look, here are 4 talents.*" The master was also very pleased with this servant. He said that he was a good and faithful servant with a few things, but now he would be in charge of many things.

The third servant dug up his hidden talent and brought it to his master. He said: "*Master, I was afraid that something would happen to the talent because you are a hard man. So I hid it. See, here it is.*" But the master was angry and replied, "*You knew that I wanted you to invest this money wisely. At least you could have deposited this money in the bank in order to get back interest on it.*" The master took his talent and gave it to the first servant. This last servant received nothing.

LIFE LESSON: Talents and abilities need to be developed to honor our Lord.

Explain: The first two servants received their talents, worked, invested and multiplied their money. Their master was very pleased and gave them more responsibility.

Illustrate (1): When King David was growing up, he helped his father by watching their flock of sheep. To protect the sheep, he killed a bear and a lion with his sling shot. One day his father asked him to take some food and check on his brothers, who were fighting their enemies. He obeyed and left. When David arrived, he saw that everyone was afraid to fight against the enemy's nine foot leader Goliath. David told the king that with God's help he would fight Goliath. God helped the boy David as he slung the rock from his sling shot and conquered Goliath! David had developed his talent using the sling shot!

Illustrate (2): Also, David liked to play instruments and sing songs as he watched the sheep. Later he was invited to go to King Saul's home. David's music soothed and helped King Saul feel better. Today we can enjoy many of David's songs which are in Psalms in the Old Testament.

Illustrate (3): The twins Tony and Joey, watched as their Dad played the guitar. Oh how they wished that they could play a guitar too. So they asked their Dad for a guitar for their birthdays. What a surprise! On their birthday, Tony and Joey each received a guitar!

Both eagerly asked their Dad for help and their Dad sat down and helped them learn how to play. Their Dad said, "I can help you learn how to strum and the basic cords, but practice, practice, practice. That's the secret of playing the guitar.

Both eagerly began to practice what their Dad showed them. But soon Joey got tired and went outside to play baseball with his friends. Tony, though, stayed inside and practiced each day. Afterward he would go out to play baseball.

The days, months and years passed. Tony was able to play his guitar for church gatherings and on mission trips. And Joey? His guitar was dusty next to some clothes in a corner of his closet.

Apply: God has given each of us talents and abilities, such as music (playing an instrument or singing), writing, creative art (painting, drawing), computer skills, etc. We need to develop our talents and abilities for the honor of our Lord. God will help us increase our abilities.

One day may God say to you, "***Well done good and faithful servant.***"

PRAYER (optional)

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