

Short & Sweet: 2 Ways to Grow Your Gifts



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One of my constant prayer requests is for God to expand my gifts.

I continually ask Him to *gift me greatly* so He can use me deeply. Recently I discovered we have a responsibility in growing our gifts—it's not all up to God. There are two things we can do to help grow our gifts.

1. Use them.
2. Give them.

While both methods closely related, they have subtle differences. Using your gifts requires planning and training, while giving your gifts requires responsiveness and obedience.

Use your gifts.

14 *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods*

to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money."

When the man returned from his travels, he rewarded those who used their gifts, but to the last servant the master said, " 'You wicked and lazy servant ... take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.' " Matthew 25

What happened when the two servants used their gifts?

They were doubled. Wow! Who wouldn't want to double gifts? I know I do. Imagine being twice as good teacher/speaker/writer/principal/secretary/designer/builder than you are now. We can grow our gifts by *using* them. Saving or burying our gifts and talents keeps us small, dark and cold. Only dead things are buried.

Use or lose.

What about the last servant? He lost what he would not give.

As modern Christians we neglect our gifts when we *bury* ourselves in fear, busyness, apathy and laziness. Don't wait until you *feel* ready and don't give up when the going gets tough. God wants us to push through negative emotions. The start of a new project is very exciting! But bumps in the road are bound to come and discouragement can set in. Set backs do not mean God's calling has been revoked—quite the opposite is true. When passion and motivation dwindle, disregard the

lassitude and continue working. Take a step of faith and get busy.

People need what you have to give.

Give and gain!

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Phillip answered, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted." John 6

Feast or Famine.

Compared to the size of the need, how big was the boy's lunch? Did the size of his gift stop him from using it? What happened when the little guy gave his lunch? Jesus multiplied it—exponentially. Having raised two hungry sons, the fact the boy gave his lunch is a miracle itself. Giving always requires sacrifice. Like the boy, we have a choice.

1. Keep gift for self. Small. Safe. Unfulfilled. One person benefits.
2. Give gift to others. Big. Scary. Amazing. Everyone is filled. Leftovers!

If we keep our gifts, others will go hungry.

Give your gifts large or small, no matter the size and watch them grow. Your gifts may be small, but your Savior is huge.

Give what you have and watch your gifts grow! Use and give.

Action Points:

1. **Risk!** Admit it. There is something you've been waiting to give, but you think it's too small. Walk by faith and give it today.
2. **Look!** See it. Ask God to make you hyper-aware of opportunities to give today. A kind word, \$2.00, a single flower, a short note. They are not too small. Do it.
3. **Unbury!** Face it. You have some buried gifts, dreams, skills that need exhuming. Take a step today to dig them up and use them for God's glory.

Pray

Father, we give You our talents (Matt. 25), our widow's mites (Luke 21), our last drop of oil (1 Kings 17), and our brown-bag lunch (John 6). Please help us to use what You have given us and give what you have entrusted to us so we may greatly impact our world for Christ.

Amen.

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