

## 51--- Are You Fulfilling God's Purpose for Your Life?

In our session "What are your gifts", you identified and examined the gifts that God had bestowed on you. The best teaching is Matthew 25:14-30, better known as the parable of the talents. Take a moment to read these verses then take measure of how you are using your gifts. Are you the servant with five talents who invested wisely or the servant with one talent who buried the talent?

When you arrive in heaven will you hear 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Or will you hear, 'you wicked, lazy servant!' How you use the gift God has bestowed on you has eternal consequence for you and those who are denied the benefits of your talents. God has gifted you so that you can be His ambassador. You are to show the world what the Lord looks like. If you fail to use your gifts think of the consequences for your family, friends and all those in your sphere of influence! God was planning on you to share the Good News. He was planning on you to minister to those in need, visit the prisoners, feed the hungry, show mercy and grace to those who need it most. If you choose not to follow His plan He has every right to call you a wicked, lazy servant. I think you get the picture so let's move on to being the good and faithful servant. Have you activated your search radar so that those in your sphere of influence who need grace and mercy are clearly identified for you? Are you ready to serve? Have you equipped yourself, been trained and coached? There are many churches and organizations that can take your gifts, train you and put you on the mission field. I was fortunate to be introduced to Alongside Ministries in 2000. I never saw myself going into the state prison system and mentoring men prior to and after their release. But that is where I was deployed. What a blessing to stay in touch with men whose lives have been transformed by this ministry. Men whose lives are a living testimony to the words of **Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." If I had said no in 2000 who would have walked with these men? Who would have seen Jeremiah 29:11 fulfilled

again, and again? It was imperative that I answered that call. Otherwise I would never have seen the fruit of God's plans for these men's lives. I would have denied God, denied these men and denied myself. Yes, burying a gift denies you the blessings God intends for you.

Not convinced? Let me share the story of how my wife and I serve in our church's marriage ministry. Talk about hidden blessings! We mentor couples in a marriage prep program. We spend 15 to 20 hours with these couples as they prepare for the most important day of their life--- dedicating themselves to each other for the glory of God. Many of these couples have become long term friends. We have the honor and privilege of walking with them as they prepare themselves to be stewards of the marriage God has designed just for them. Once again there are multiple blessings - the couples, their families and us as their mentors. So deploying the gifts God has given you impacts many people. But, never using those gifts denies the blessing to God, those who would benefit and you.

Ready to step up? It's not difficult. Identify your gifts. (see the gifts inventory in the appendix) Talk to your pastor and ask him where you could serve based on your gifts. Get trained up and go to work. Then reap the benefits of seeing lives change--- theirs and yours!

### Verses:

**Matthew 9:37** "Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

**1 Corinthians 12:12** "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ."

**Personal Reflection:** Are you using your gifts? If not where could you be using your gifts?

**Group Discussion:** Can we be serving as a group? How can we encourage all in the group to serve?