

Things That are Needed in the Church (IV)
Learning to Use My Talents
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Introduction: Some have observed that 10% of the people in a local church typically do 90% of the work!

- A. Regardless of what others do, I must not be numbered amongst those who are simply observers in the work of the Lord.
- B. It is simply stated in God's word that those who are converted to Christ will be active in God's work.
 - 1. Because of His gracious gift, we will be zealous of good works. (**Titus 2:11-14**)
 - 2. Again every Christian is expected to "abound" in God's work. (**1 Cor 15:58**)
- C. The key to using our talents is to have a heart that sees things as God does!
 - 1. That will make you a joyful debtor in His service. (**Rom 1:14-15**)
 - 2. I pray that each of us may renew our love as to have the heart of God. (**Rev 2:4-5**)
 - 3. Let us examine how God views us and our opportunities.

I. I must see Myself as a Stewart

- A. What is a steward? (**1 Cor 4:1**)
 - 1. **oikonomos** - steward 8, chamberlain 1, governor 1; 1) the manager of a household or of household affairs 1a) esp. a steward, manager, superintendent to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures.
 - 2. How would our attitude change if we really see that all we have is really God's? (**1 Cor 4:7**)
 - B. Our attitude towards possessions may reflect a wrong attitude!
 - 1. We often become defensive when we are told what to do with "our" affairs.
 - 2. What kind of heart do you have? (**Mt 6:33; 1 Tim 6:17-19**)
- "What you are is God's gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift to God."
- C. God owns all things.
 - 1. There are many talented folks who need to see this. (**Jas 1:17**)
 - 2. He does not need these things however. (**Psa 50:12**)
 - 3. God wants us to view life this way! (**Acts 17:24-25**)
- "There was a rich man showing a preacher his possessions. The wealthy man took the preacher off for lunch, and then walked him through his elaborate gardens, woodlands, and farm. "Now are you going to tell me," he demanded when the tour was completed, "that all this land does not belong to me?" The preacher smiled and suggested, "Ask me that same question a hundred years from now.""
- D. There will be a day of accounting for our stewardship.
 - 1. We must be found faithful. (**1 Cor 4:2; Lk 16:10**)
 - 2. We have a greater responsibility in accord with greater blessings. (**2 Cor 8:12**)
 - 3. What will you say in your account on judgment day? (**2 Cor 5:10**)

II. I need the courage to try new things.

A. How does God develop talents with each of us? (**Mt 25:14-30**)

1. What did God call us to do? (**2 Thess 2:13-14**)

2. As a Christian I am to look for doors of opportunity and with wisdom increase my service to God!

3. One door of faith leads to another! Consider the example of David.

(**1 Sam 17:34-36**)

B. We must remember what the work of the Lord is. (**1 Cor 3:11-16**)

1. Let us pray for wisdom to see what we can do to build up others.

2. What different abilities are needed in the work of the Lord? (**Eph 4:16**)

C. Let us avoid the fruits of a faithless fear.

1. **It will sell you short. (Matt 25:25)**

a. What was this man afraid of? What did he get?

"Fear makes come true that which one is afraid of." -- Victor Frankl

b. We must act and not sit during difficult times.

Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

---- *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

c. Without proper leadership and example a church often follows the example of fear. "Let us avoid any trouble!" Often this means running from our problems and sitting and doing nothing.

d. How many churches are afraid of real leadership!

Backward Christian Soldiers

Backward Christian soldiers,
fleeing from the fight,

With the cross of Jesus clearly out of sight:
Christ our rightful Master stands against the foe,
But forward into battle we are chicken to go.

Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God;
Brothers we are treading where we've often trod,
We are much divided, many bodies we,
Having different doctrines, not much charity.

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus hidden does remain;
Gates of hell should never 'gainst that Church prevail,
We have Christ's own promise, but think that it will fail.

Sit here, then, ye people, join our useless throng;
Blend with ours your voices in a feeble song.
Blessings, ease, and comfort, ask from Christ the King.
With our modern thinking, we won't do a thing.

-- George Verwer

2. **It will cause you to forsake reason. (Matt 25:25)**

- a. Fear painted a picture here that blocked reason.
- b. If he has laid out all options then he surely would have chosen the right path. Fear is blinding because it only sees the harm and stops all action.

“No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.” - *Edmund Burke*

3. Consider the power of this fear. (Mk 14:26; Matt 28:4; Lk 9:45; 21:26)
 Charlie Brown: "I have a new philosophy. I'm only going to dread one day at a time." - Charles Schulz

III. I Need the patience that will not let me quit.

A. Who are those who accomplish the most in the Lord's church? (**Jas 5:7-9**)

- 1. It rarely is the ones who have the most talent. (Ex. Brother Painter)
- 2. It is always those who do what they can every day and never quit.
- 3. How do we maintain this daily strength?

B. I must seek the praises of God rather than men.

- 1. Pride will always seek men over God. (**2 Cor 10:12,18**)
- 2. When we can really live as to please God, we will be consistent. (**1 Pt 1:7**)
- 3. How consistent is the praise of men? (**Gal 1:10**)

C. I need to be encouraged by faithful men. (**Heb 10:24**)

- 1. fear as well as courage can be taught and shared by others.
- 2. What was the great sin of the ten spies Israel sent? (**Num 13:32-14:4**)
- 3. Sometimes the “leadership” of the church is like this.

D. My steadfastness will reflect the quality of my faith. (**Lk 14:28-30**)

- 1. Satan never quits. (**1 Pt 5:8**)

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

2. When we lose urgency then we fail to act. (**2 Cor 5:11**)

“There is an ancient story about three demons who were arguing over the best way to destroy the Christian mission in the world. The first demon says, "Let's tell all the Christians there is no heaven. Take away the reward incentive and the mission will collapse." The second demon says, "Let's tell all the Christians there is no hell. Take away the fear of punishment and the mission will collapse." The third demon says, "There is one better way. Let's tell all the Christians that there is no hurry" and all three immediately say, "That's it! All we have to do is tell them there's no hurry and the whole Christian enterprise will collapse.””

E. How does the Lord view my abilities?

- 1. For many of you there are things within your ability that you are afraid to try. (**Josh 1:7, 23:6**)
- 2. Remember that the Lord will be with us. (**Matt 28:18; Acts 18:10**)
- 3. This courage will help us overcome disappointment over the outward results.

“Relinquishment of burdens and fears begins where adoration and worship of God become the occupation of the soul.” - Frances J. Roberts

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers.”

4. Some are following a pattern of failure and need to learn a better way.
- F. We need wisdom in the ordering of our personal lives. **(Mt 11:29-30)**
 1. When you give of your time you are giving of your life! **(Col 4:5)**

“No one has any more time than you have. It is the discipline and stewardship of your time that is important. The management of time is the management of self; therefore, if you manage time with God, He will begin to manage you.” -- Jill Briscoe in Before You Say "Amen."
 2. We need to make these things a part of our lives and not something “extra.”
 3. We need to be realistic in what work we can do and the amount of work to take on.
 4. Here is where we must “weed out” worldliness and the ways we waste our time.

IV. Christians need to begin training and showing others how to do this work.

A. Good leadership will have the wisdom to provide training. (2 Tim 2:2)

1. It is not enough just to have a strong rebuke about the lack of work. We need leaders! **(1 Cor 11:1)**
2. How many businesses just “put one to work” without training.
3. In God’s work you learn best by seeing someone else do it. Some may need to start by just being there while another is teaching!

B. Training should start as early as possible. (Mt 28:19-20)

1. When I first became a Christian in college I was trained immediately how to teach.
2. New converts often have a large number of people who are willing to listen.

C. Training should give one experience in a controlled setting.

1. How does the navy teach its recruits to swim?
2. I have found the best training occurs in the home and will simulate as much as possible the conditions he will later face.
3. By receiving the help of others this work will become more attainable.

Conclusion: How does God see the things in my life?

A. The material things are only temporary. (1 Tim 6:6-8)

1. He sees things from beginning to end. (Ex. Looking at a train on a high bridge)
2. Jesus warned us about how God views our actions. **(Lk 16:10-12)**

“God entrusts us with money as a test; for like a toy to the child, it is training for handling things of more value.” -- Fred Smith

B. What work will last for an eternity? (Heb 6:10-12)