

**Group Gathering Question:**

Who was one of the most talented people you knew in high school or college? What happened to that person?

**Read this week's scripture and discuss:**

1. Is it fair that in the parable, the servants get different talents (or amounts of talents)? Is it fair that people receive different talents today?
2. Do you think the way you view God shapes if/how you use your talent? If so, how?
3. What would it feel like to hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"?
4. The servant with the one talent said he was afraid and hid his talent. Can you relate to the one who might "hide" his talents out of fear?
5. What is a talent that you have that you easily overlook or hide? How might you use that talent in the days or weeks ahead for God's kingdom?
6. If the Master returned today, what would the Master say about how you have used your talents? How have you worked at developing your talents?
7. Who is someone you know who uses his or her talents with "energy, intelligence, imagination and love?" How do you see this? Reach out to that person this week and encourage him or her on the way they use that talent!

**Activity:** Consider using the spiritual gifts inventory at [zpc.org](https://www.zpc.org) to find your spiritual gifts. You might decide as a home group to all take the test and then compare answers. The test should take you 10-15 minutes. Enjoy!

<https://www.zpc.org/resources/spiritual-gifts-inventory/>

## prayer requests

- Prayers of comfort for Ms. Evelyn, Noah's Ark teacher, in the death of her son.
- Prayers of healing for Kylie Sutton.

We are all made in God's image and God has gifted each of us. Yet, we all look different physically and we all have different gifts and abilities. This parable from Jesus challenges the readers to consider how they are using their talents and gifts. In the parable, the Master returns to check on the servants. Jesus will one day return, too. Will he find that we have used our talents to live a full and abundant life and to serve God?

1. At first glance, it doesn't seem fair that the servants receive different amounts of talents: 5, 2, and 1. The servants probably received the amounts based on their abilities and what they could handle. We are all made unique and receive different talents. Today, some of us are surgeons, while others are good at numbers, or writing, or using our hands for a trade, and some have great people skills. Embrace the differences and your talents.
2. The first two servants were confident in who the Master saw them to be to "invest" the talents and use them to make more. The third servant was afraid of the Master and protected himself and the talent by literally hiding it or burying it. Our God is a loving God who desires us to use our talents and prosper with those talents for him.
3. To hear these words from God could be amazing, overwhelming, humbling and very intimate. We can't earn God's love but are called to follow him and to live as Jesus lived while using our unique abilities.
4. It is common for people to act out of fear: fear of rejection, fear of failure, afraid to get out of our comfort zones. When we live in fear, we too can hide our talents and not live the fullest life we might have before us.
5. We probably have overlooked talents. For some we enjoyed doing certain things when we were young, but with the demands of life and work and family, we set those aside. How might you bring out or share a talent that has been set aside?
6. Jesus is coming back. So should we wait on him to return and just do "spiritual things"? No, we are called to live today, and to partner with Jesus in bringing about God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, developing our talents and using our talents in everyday ways.
7. This language is used in the questions we ask of our church elders and deacons. Who is that person who uses their talents creatively? Describe them to your group. Use that person as an inspiration to use your own talents.

**Activity:** Try the spiritual gifts inventory on your own or as a group. Our gifts and abilities sometimes change with time, yours might have changed too. Use the inventory and see if you agree with what it tells you – and be encouraged to use your spiritual gifts.