

TRUSTED WITH AN ABILITY

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Introduction: There is this man who is confined to a wheel chair, unable to move anything except his left hand and that only to move the little lever that guides his wheel chair. He is unable to even lift his head up down or to turn it from side to side. He can only move his eyes and speak. Somebody has to do everything for him, even feed him. Nobody envies him or wants to have all his physical disabilities. However, this man has a photographic mind. Whatever he reads, sees or hears, he never forgets and can recall instantly, in exactness, everything in precise order. He is a preacher and he can recite chapters upon chapters of the Bible, exactly as written and more quickly than the congregation can find the passages and keep up with him. Everybody sits in awe and marvel at the eloquency of this man with God's Word. Oh, to have this man's ability to remember. Well, God has other abilities He has given out and every believer has at least one special gift/ability that has been given just to him/her. Do you know what your ability is?

I. ALL ABILITIES ARE GIFTS OF GOD (*Acts 17:25*)

1. Receiving a gift from God makes one a steward (caretaker) of that gift.
 - It could be breathing, walking, talking, thinking, speaking, etc.
 - David gave God the credit for his feats, even those of slaying a lion to killing the giant.
(*1 Samuel 17:37; Psalm 144:1*)
2. All abilities come from God and are to be used to glorify Him. (*John 15:5*)
 - Ever lose your balance, voice, eyesight only temporarily?

II. ALMOST EVERYONE HAS ALL THE COMMON ABILITIES

1. Common abilities are those such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, etc.
2. When placed in the hands of Jesus, they become acts of ministry and service such as:
 - house cleaning, listening to others, driving.
 - Remember Naaman's servant girl who told him about someone who could help him get well? A very simple act using a common ability, that of speaking.
3. No matter how small, any ability can be used by God.
 - A small lad had five loaves of bread and two fish and gave them to Jesus.
 - A lady confined to a wheelchair was always smiling at people and that made them happy.
 - A woman was always baking goodies and giving them away.
 - A man was always taking people to the doctor, the grocery store, the drug store, and doing minor house repairs and yard work for those who couldn't.
 - There was Dorcas who was always sewing and giving it away, and God honored her.
 - We can all be stewards of our common abilities and bring honor to God with them.

III. SOME PEOPLE HAVE SOME UNCOMMON ABILITIES

1. *Exodus 31:2-6*. God gave some uncommon abilities to two men and they used them to honor God.
2. Many people today have uncommon abilities.
 - Surgeons, athletes, musicians, money makers, etc. none are "holy" activities, but all can bring honor and glory to God. Do you have a "rare" ability?
 - God wants to use any and all of our abilities.

IV. HIDING OR DENYING AN ABILITY IS NOT GOOD

1. *Matthew 25:24-25*. Burying or trying to hid money or anything God can use is not good.
2. Nothing is too small for God to use.
3. The best benefits and rewards come from our abilities when we use them for God and it is God who gets the honor and glory, not us.

V. EVERY BELIEVER HAS AT LEAST ONE SPECIAL GIFT

1. Every believer has been given a special ability to be used in serving in God's Church.
 - No believer is left out.
 - If a believer, then there is a special gift.
 - Most believers don't know what their special gift is.
 - Some believers haven't even heard that God has given them a special gift and that it is to be used in their Church as God directs.
2. Believers do not have the exact same gifts, some may be similar, but not exactly the same gift.
 - Every Church has different needs.
 - Every Church needs different kinds of gifts.
 - Every Church needs people who smile, are friendly, care about children, care about the building and grounds, the sound system, the kitchen, the music, the youth, etc.
 - Some can use their vehicles to bring others to Church services who can't drive.
 - Some can work around the Church doing odd jobs that need doing.
 - Some can help out in the office.
 - Some can visit those who visit the services.
 - There is something in the Church that needs doing and somebody in the Church can do it.
3. Gifts differ, but it is the same God who selects and gives each believer his/her gift to be used.
4. *1 Corinthians 12:14-25*. God uses our body to explain His gifts and how they are to be used and what happens if someone fails to use his/her gift.
 - Many churches are limping along because some of the members are not using their gifts.

5. God's gifts to us are not to be used selfishly, but are given specifically for use in His Church.
 - When every member of the Church family uses the gift God has given, then the Church will not lack for anything.

VI. THE BELIEVER WILL BE BLESSED BY DISCOVERING AND USING HIS/HER GIFT

1. Jesus' spiritual hunger needs were met when He used His abilities to glorify God with the woman at the well.
 - When we use our abilities to serve God, then our needs will also be met.
2. We are responsible for ONLY the gifts we have, but are responsible for ALL the gifts.
3. We need to discover our gift and begin to use it for God and His Church.
 - Be thankful and willing to use that gift for God's purpose and glory.
 - Be patient and not envy what others have been given and do not look down on what you have been given.
 - Pray and admit that God has given you an ability, believe His Word, thank Him for being so gracious to you.
4. Ways to discover your gift:
 - Think about the activities you enjoy. What gets your interest?
 - What do others say about you? People often see your gift before you do.
5. All gifts of God are wonderful, even the sense of humor, gift of talk, and even physical looks.
6. Find ways to sharpen the use of your ability. Remember it took Jesus a long time to get the disciples able to be left on their own.
7. When you discover your gift USE IT! Wonderful things will happen in your own life and in the life of your Church, but most of all, Jesus will be honored.

CONCLUSION:

1. Stewardship of abilities begins with thankful acceptance of what God has given you.
2. Stewardship continues with discovering and using that ability as God wants you to.
3. Stewardship of our abilities ends in that awesome moment when we stand before the Lord.
4. ***"Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do with all your might." (Eccl.9:10)***
5. Every believer and his/her God-given gift/ability is needed for the Church to be able to fulfill its purpose for being here - to bring others to Jesus Christ and to teach them God's Word.
6. "Thank you for giving to the Lord..." goes a song, may someone sing it about/to YOU.