



Your Hidden Talent

A Devotional
from the  of Lara Love
& Walk by Faith Ministry

Have you ever watched a dog bury a bone? The dog buries it, goes away, comes back, digs it up frantically, only to return and bury it once more. Over and again, dig, bury, hide, unbury, dig, well, you get the point. To the dog, it's a game. But to those of us who have spent our lives digging, hiding, and burying the gifts and talents God has given us, it's not a game. It's a tragedy. I should know.

I spent decades totally broken as a result of childhood sexual abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, multiple addictions, self-mutilation, wanting to kill myself for almost 20 years, debilitating depression, horrible anxiety, abandonment by my family as a result of talking about the sexual abuse, abandonment by two husbands, and tons more, combined with my sickeningly sin-ridden lifestyle. I was such a mess for so long that I had no sense of purpose and spent years burying and hiding, digging up, and burying again the gifts God had given me.

No, it wasn't a game; my life was a tragedy, and I was living a miserable life and headed straight for hell. Not using the gifts God had given me was the least of my problems. I didn't believe in Jesus Christ, and even when I came to believe in Him, it was a long time before I understood what it meant to become a committed follower of His. When I did finally truly commit my life to the Lord, the change over time was, and continues to be, astounding.

Have you ever heard the Bible story people often refer to as the "parable of the talents"? I read, studied, and heard preached that story for years before the Lord opened wide my eyes and showed me something I had never seen before. By that time, I had become a believer in, and committed follower of, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I had at last unburied the gifts I had been given and learned how to use them for the glory of the Lord. My life was no longer a tragedy. I had become a living, walking, breathing, miracle filled

with love, peace, hope, joy, and a stronger sense of purpose than imaginable. What the Lord showed me in that story was not only what I had finally found in my own life, but became a message I desperately want to convey to others.

If you are not familiar with this Bible story, here it is in a nutshell. Three servants are given a bunch of “talents” (possessions or money) by their lord before he goes away for a while. The lord entrusts his servants with these talents. The amount he gives each of them is based on their ability. When he returns, and the servants have to give account of what they did with their lord’s talents, two of the servants share how they invested the talents and got a really good profit for their lord. Guess what the third servant did. He buried and hid the talent. Why? He says he was afraid of his lord, and that his lord was a “hard” man who reaped what others sowed.

Know what the lord says about the first two servants? He calls them “good and faithful”. Not

only that, but he says these servants can enter into his joy. Now how about the third servant? Exact opposite! The lord says he is “wicked and slothful”. And forget about the joy of his lord. This servant will be sent into outer darkness. This isn’t a game. The third servant is headed for hell.

So if you’re wondering what any of this has to do with me and you, let me explain. For the life of me, I couldn’t understand what was up with this third servant. I pressed into the Lord until He by His Spirit showed me. All three servants call their master “lord”, but only the first two servants treat their master as lord and have the attitude of servants. In plain English, they have servants’ hearts. What about the third servant? He calls his master “lord”, but he has an evil, lazy attitude. He thinks of his lord as a “man”, not a lord. And he calls him “hard.” He doesn’t think his lord deserves to profit from his servants’ work. But aren’t servants supposed to serve their lord? Aren’t all three of these servants supposed to use

what their lord has entrusted them with to serve and benefit their lord? Of course!

So here's my question. How many of us are walking around calling Jesus "Lord," while we are living our lives for ourselves? How many of us have taken the gifts God has given us and hidden them? It seems I have generally met four kinds of people when it comes to the gifts God has given us. People who don't believe God has given them gifts. People who know God has given them gifts but have hidden them. People who are using the gifts God has given them for their own purposes. And people who are using their gifts for the glory of the Lord. I can relate to all four types of people. I started writing as a little girl. For many years, I did not believe in God and did not know He had given me a gift. When I came to believe in God and realized He had given me a gift, I buried and hid it. When I stopped hiding the gift, I used it for my own gratification and purposes. At last, I have discovered the joy of having a servant's heart and

using the gift to bring glory to His name. I still find myself at times forgetting I have been given a gift, or hiding it for a little time, or using it for my own pleasure, and need to repent when the Holy Spirit shows me I am doing any of this. But most of the time now I find myself humbling myself before Him and doing my best to use it to love, honor, serve and adore Him.

Perhaps the number one reason I find among people who are struggling through trials and tribulations and who are broken in one way or another and who are not using the gifts God has given them is that they have no sense of purpose and cannot for the lives of them figure out what purpose they could possibly have. Whether they do believe in the Lord, or do not believe in Him, most, it seems, can't imagine that there is any legitimate reason for them being on this earth. I should know. Before I believed in God, and even after I came to believe in Him, I still had no sense of purpose.

Today, I not only know my own purpose, but I have come to understand the number one purpose we ALL have in common. See, every single one of us human beings was created to love and serve the Lord with all our hearts; to have an intimate relationship with God forever by repenting, believing in Jesus Christ as Lord, and following Him; to love others as ourselves through Christ; to live our lives to bring glory to God almighty, and to tell the world about Jesus Christ. We all share this purpose to love the Lord with all our hearts, whether or not we are aware of this purpose or are choosing to live our lives to fulfill this purpose.

Now because the first humans Adam and Eden sinned in the Garden of Eden, they were kicked out of the garden and their perfect lives there and most importantly of all lost their intimate relationship with God. Ever since, humans have been born into sin which ends in death and forever in hell and the lake of fire. Because we are sinners and the Lord is perfectly holy and just, we are

unable to have a relationship with Him and cannot be in His presence on earth or in heaven. How then can we fulfill our purpose?

Because of the Lord's amazing love, mercy, and grace for us, He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to the cross to die a heinous death in our place so He would take the punishment for our sins – the wrath of God and separation from Him – upon Himself. Why? So if we repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ, we will be forgiven, enter into a relationship with God because we have been restored to Him, and be promised eternal life. This is just a starting place; it is called being saved and born again. True faith in Christ is followed by a lifelong commitment to being conformed to His image and learning to live according to God's ways.

Believing in Jesus Christ is where our purpose begins. Why? Because of His death on the cross and resurrection, and our faith in Him, we can now have a relationship with God whereby we

have the opportunity to love and serve Him with all our hearts as we were created and are commanded to do. So what about our gifts, you wonder? If we all have the same purpose, do we all have the same gifts? No, we don't. Not only does God give us different gifts of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-31), but He gives all of us different individual gifts and talents that we get to use in fulfilling our purpose of loving Him, loving others, sharing the Gospel and bringing glory to His name.

Remember the three servants? Their lord entrusted them with "talents", which was likely money if not some kind of possession. God might entrust us with money, but the greatest gifts with which He entrusts us besides the gifts of His Spirit are individual talents. But not only have many of us struggled with knowing and believing our purpose, but many of us have struggled with figuring out what our gifts are. And many of us have struggled with learning how to use these gifts

for the glory of the Lord instead of for ourselves, for the world, and even for the devil.

What kinds of gifts has God given us? All sorts of gifts. Music. Writing. Art. Teaching. Working with children. Engineering. Building houses. Listening. Banking. Cleaning. Caregiving. Helping the elderly. Sports. The list goes on – and on and on. Though most assuredly we may enjoy using the gifts God has given us, the main purpose of the gifts is to glorify Him. How can we honor God with the gifts? Go back through the same list of examples of gifts and consider the possibilities. For example, music? Writing worship songs. Writing? Writing devotionals. Teaching? Teaching Sunday school. Working with children? Teaching them about Jesus. Engineering? Helping third world countries. Building houses? Helping low-income families build houses. And so on. You get the point.

Do you understand your purpose? Are you aware of the gifts you have been given? Are you

using your gifts for God's glory? Do you believe that no matter the trials and tribulations you may face, no matter how broken you may feel, no matter what a mess your life might be right now, that the Lord has the love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, strength, hope, peace, and everything else you could possibly need to learn how to truly live the life He has given you for Him?

I am reminded of a short season of my life during which I was preaching at an assisted living facility. No matter how many times I told the dear elderly people that God still had a purpose for them as long as they were alive and breathing, I don't believe they believed it to be true. How many of us, no matter how young or how old, have gone through our everyday lives with the notion that we will never amount to anything, that we will never accomplish anything, that we will never get past the hard places where we are, or even that we should live our lives to bring

ourselves pleasure instead of to live to please the Lord?

The parable of the talents is not just a happily ever after little story that we can afford to think about for a few minutes and then leave behind in the dust; the story ends with a dire warning, not merely to that third servant from so long ago, but to us. Too many people, I have found, are walking around believing they are headed to heaven because they simply believe Jesus is Lord. Even the demons believe, and they sure aren't headed for heaven! God isn't looking for mere believers; He is looking for committed followers who are genuinely dedicated to Him. The third servant was headed for outer darkness because though he called his master lord, he did not live his life to serve his lord. Let this be a warning to us all, as well as a loving reminder.

If we are still alive and breathing on this earth, God has a purpose for us. And He has given us gifts. And once we repent of our sins and place

our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are committed to learning how to live according to the ways of the Lord instead of the ways of this world. we need to take the gifts with which God has entrusted us and learn how to bring glory to the name of the Lord. The joy in the Lord we will find and enjoy both now and forevermore when we live our lives utterly for Him and love and serve Him with all our hearts and with the gifts He has given us will be greater than we can possibly imagine. No matter our circumstances, our trials and tribulations, no matter how broken we may be in this very moment, we must place our hearts, lives, and gifts in the loving hands of the Lord and commit our ways unto Him – forever!



Scriptures - "parable of the talents"

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a

few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

“He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

“His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with

usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
Matthew 25:14-30



The Best Message in the Universe

Ever since the first man and woman Adam and Eve sinned against God and were kicked out of their perfect lives in the Garden of Eden and lost most importantly their relationship with God, all humans have been born into sin which results in the curse leading to death and eternal separation from God in hell and the lake of fire. Why? Because we as sinners cannot be in the presence of a perfect and holy God. We all fall short of God's glory, and nothing we can do can earn His love, forgiveness, and everlasting life.

But God loves us so much He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to the earth as a man, to die a heinous death on the cross to pay the death and hell penalty for our sins by taking God's wrath at us for our sins upon Himself, and to be raised from the dead and to now sit on the right hand of God in heaven until He returns again as the final steps unfold leading to His forever

Kingdom of heaven that will be filled with Christ's followers. If we are genuinely sorry we have sinned against God and repent of our sins, believe Jesus is the Son of God and died for us and was raised from the dead and is Lord, turning from our sins to a life devoted to God and His ways, we are forgiven and enter into a relationship with God and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven with Him! We are born again spiritually with a clean slate and saved from God's wrath, death, and hell and the lake of fire.

Belief in Christ as Lord is NOT an intellectual faith. Even the demons believe. True faith in Christ is an ongoing belief in Him, all that He is, did, is doing, says in the Bible, and a true trust in Him as Lord whereby we turn from our wicked ways and live according to the ways God teaches us in the Bible. We are not called to just believe in Christ in our minds. We are called to follow Him by yielding to God our very lives and demonstrating in our hearts, words, and actions

that we have turned away from the ways of the world and turned to the Lord. We are to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him whereby we die to ourselves and live for Him. Countless people who believe they are going to heaven based on an intellectual belief, an emotional experience, church attendance, good works, etc., will be turned away by Christ and end up in hell and the lake of fire forever apart from God because they neglected to understand and put into practice that believing in, and following, Christ is a WAY OF LIFE of living for God!

God commands us above all else to love Him with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22:37-40). Once born again, we must go through a life-long sanctification process in which our minds are renewed by studying the Bible, our lives are transformed by God's Spirit, and we are conformed to Christ's image. Good works cannot earn our salvation, but good works should be the fruit of true repentance demonstrating we are truly

living for the Lord. Our purpose is to love God, to love others, to proclaim the Gospel message to others and to help lead people into God's Kingdom as we follow Christ, using the gifts God has given each of us to bring Him glory while rejoicing in and enjoying forever fellowship with Him!

Spend time with the Lord daily, studying the Bible and learning to live by it, praising and worshiping Him, pouring out your heart to Him, praying and seeking His face, listening for His voice which will always line up with His Word, and loving and obeying and revering and fearing and honoring God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Assemble in fellowship with fellow followers of Christ as God commands us whether in a church, Bible study, and/or house church.

As the world draws to an end, and God's judgment nears, evil and false teaching abound. Check everything you hear and read against the

Bible because God only and always speaks in line with His Word. Anything not in line with His Word is not from Him.

Live day by day, breath by breath, to love and serve the Lord with all your heart forever! Rejoice in Him! Grow in Him! Live to bring Him glory forevermore!



Scriptures

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:” Romans 3:10

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Eph. 5:6

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Mt. 13:41-43

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:3-6

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10:9

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Colossians 1:13

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”
Matthew 7:21



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Scriptures from King James version of the Bible.

Special Invitation & Request

If you would like a free copy or copies to distribute of my *Finding the Light* Gospel tract, which includes my personal story along with the life-changing message of the Gospel written in a clear, simple, straightforward manner, please contact me using the contact information on the back page of this devotional. You can also see a copy of it on my ministry website.

I also have a special request. If you have finished reading this devotional and do not believe you will read it again in the future, please don't throw it away. Instead, would you consider giving it to a friend, family member, co-worker, someone you know well or a complete stranger, sending it in the mail to someone, leaving it in a public location where someone might pick it up, or giving it to whomever wherever you are led? Only God knows how He might use it to change the course of someone else's life on earth and eternity.

Love & blessings, **Lara**

About Lara Love

I am a 100% Jewish follower of Christ, evangelist & author & special needs & senior rescued dogs mom devoted 24-7 to loving & serving the Lord and helping people to become and remain forever followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For loads of love, encouragement, inspiration, & help, and to read my story & see my books, Gospel tracts & devotionals, & Daily Inspiration online, and to meet the ministry's very special dogs, please visit me and my little ministry online & feel free to get in touch if you are led!



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