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Talents: Use Them or Lose Them

Key References: Matthew 25:14-30; *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 25, pp. 325-365; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 183-186; *Our Beliefs* nos. 17, 21, 11



powertext

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith” (Romans 12:6).

Think back to when you were learning to ride a bicycle. Did you manage it the first time? No? Some things take time to learn to do. In the same way we need to practice using our talents. The more we practice the better we will be and the more we can do to serve Jesus. Let's imagine the story of three servants who were given talents by their master.

Jotham, Korazin, and Lamech looked at each other. They stood waiting for their master. Why had the master sent for all three of them? They were the three most senior servants in the household, but it was unusual for the master to send for all three at the same time. Something was up.

Jotham and Korazin stood speculating about what the master had in mind when suddenly Lamech caught a glimpse of the master striding toward the house. “Here he comes,” he whispered to the others.

“There you all are,” said the master with a smile. All three felt much better. The master was fair, but when he was not happy about something, he let you know.

“I have had an unexpected message today, and I have to go away on business. I will be away for some time. I have been watching each of you closely and feel that you are ready for some more responsibility. So I am going to give each of you some money to use while I am away. When I come back, I shall expect you to account for it.”

Jotham, Korazin, and Lamech looked at the master not knowing what to say. The master continued, “Jotham, here are five talents of gold. You have the most experience, so I am giving you most.”

“Korazin, I am giving you two talents of gold. Use them wisely and well.”

“Lamech, I know you are young, but this is your chance to prove what you can do. Here is one talent of gold. Now, gentlemen, I look forward to seeing you in a few months and hearing a good report.”

The three men left and went their separate ways. Each one was wondering what was the best thing to do with the money.



We serve God when we use our talents to help others.

Sabbath

Do Do the activity on page 61.

Sunday

READ Read Matthew 25:14, 15 and this week's story, "Talents: Use Them or Lose Them."

DRAW Draw a gift box and write the power text on it.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to reveal to you the gifts or talents He has given you.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 25:16-18.

REFLECT What are your talents and how are you helping them grow?

LIST List your talents in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to impress you with His plan for your growth.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 25:19-25.

EXERCISE Run or do some hard physical exercise.

COMPARE Compare the need for physical exercise and the need to exercise your talents.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that God will show you a good "exercise routine" for the abilities He has given you.

Jotham invested his in a new housing project. Korazin bought some land and planted a good cash crop. Lamech did not know what to do. He saw what the others had done and shook his head. *What will the master say if the houses don't sell? What will the master say if the crops fail and there is no profit? What should I do with my talent?* At last he hit on a fail-proof plan.

Late one night he went out into his garden and dug a big hole. He buried the talent and planted a small bush to mark the spot.

Time went by. Lamech felt a bit uneasy when all Jotham's houses sold for good prices. Korazin had an excellent crop and doubled his money. Lamech wondered if he should have done something more. Then he shrugged. At least he would not have to face the master's wrath for having lost his money.

Then the news came. The master had come home and wanted to see all three again. They all arrived at the appointed time. Jotham and Korazin looked relaxed and pleased. Lamech looked just a little nervous.

"Well," said the master, "how have things gone?"

Jotham cleared his throat. "I invested in the new building project on the edge of town and doubled your money. Here are 10 talents of gold."

"Well done, good and faithful servant!" said the master and beamed. "You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." Then he turned to Korazin.

"How did you do, Korazin?"

Korazin said, "I knew the extra houses would mean more people, so I bought a plot of land and grew some crops. They were good, and I also have doubled your

money. Here are four talents of gold."

The master's smile grew even wider, and he said, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." He looked at Lamech. "Now, Lamech, have you also doubled your talent? What did you do?"



Wednesday

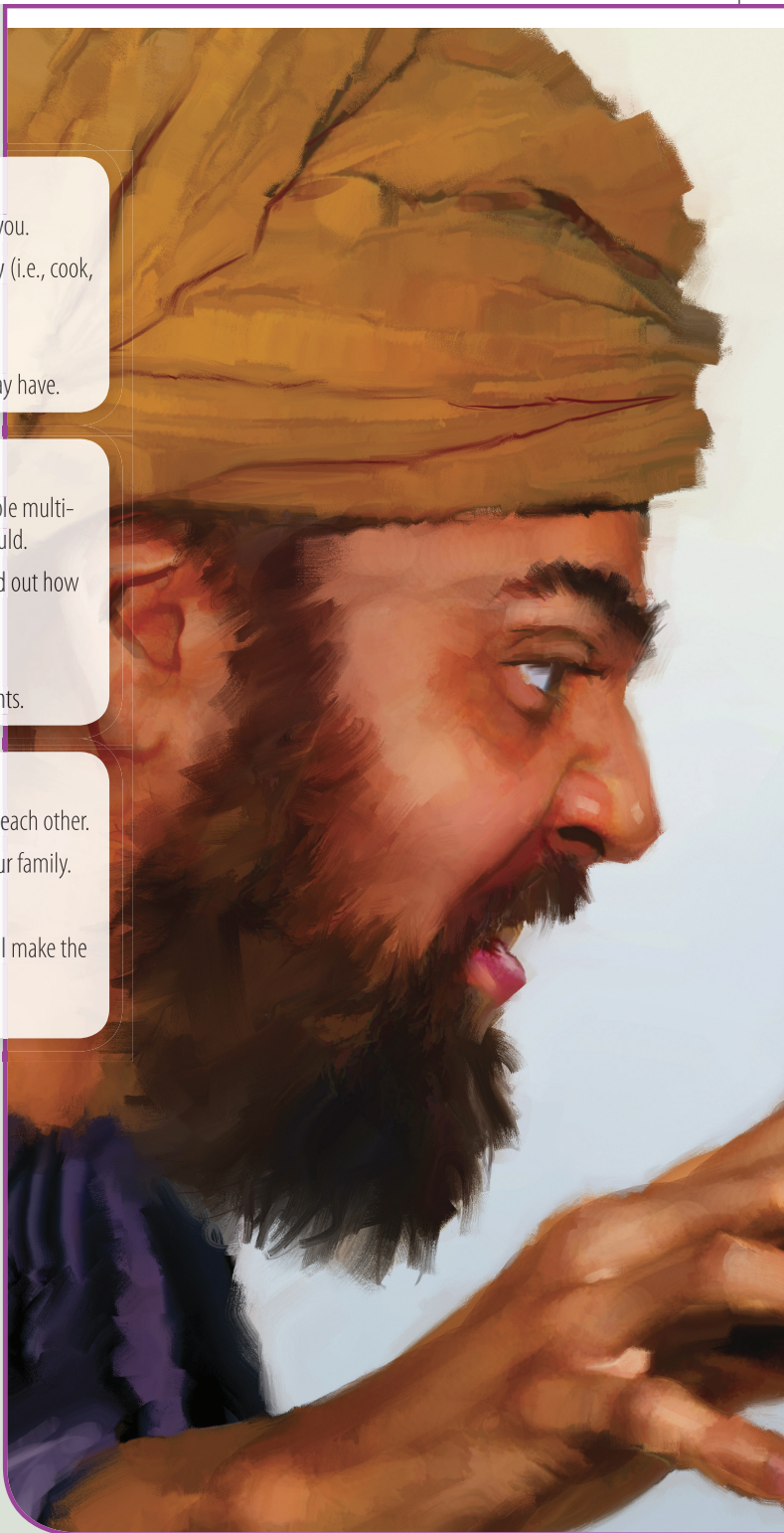
- READ** Read Matthew 25:26-28.
- THINK** Reflect on the talents God has given you.
- USE** Use your talents to help someone today (i.e., cook, cut the grass, look after a sibling).
- REVIEW** Review the power text.
- PRAY** Ask God to reveal other talents you may have.

Thursday

- READ** Read Luke 19:12-19.
- RESEARCH** Research Bible stories about people multiplying their abilities by using them as they could.
- ASK** Interview your friends and family to find out how they keep their talents in top condition.
- REVIEW** Review the power text.
- PRAY** Pray for opportunities to use your talents.

Friday

- READ** Read Luke 19:20-27.
- SHARE** Share what talents you appreciate in each other.
- DO** Use your talents to plan a surprise for your family.
- SAY** Repeat from memory the power text.
- PRAY** Pray that each person in the family will make the most of their talents.



Lamech looked down at the floor and wished that he were anywhere but there. "I . . . well . . . it was like this . . ."

The master looked impatient. Lamech took a deep breath and said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and I went out and hid your gold in the ground."

The master turned red in the face. "You did what?"

"I . . . I buried it," stammered Lamech.

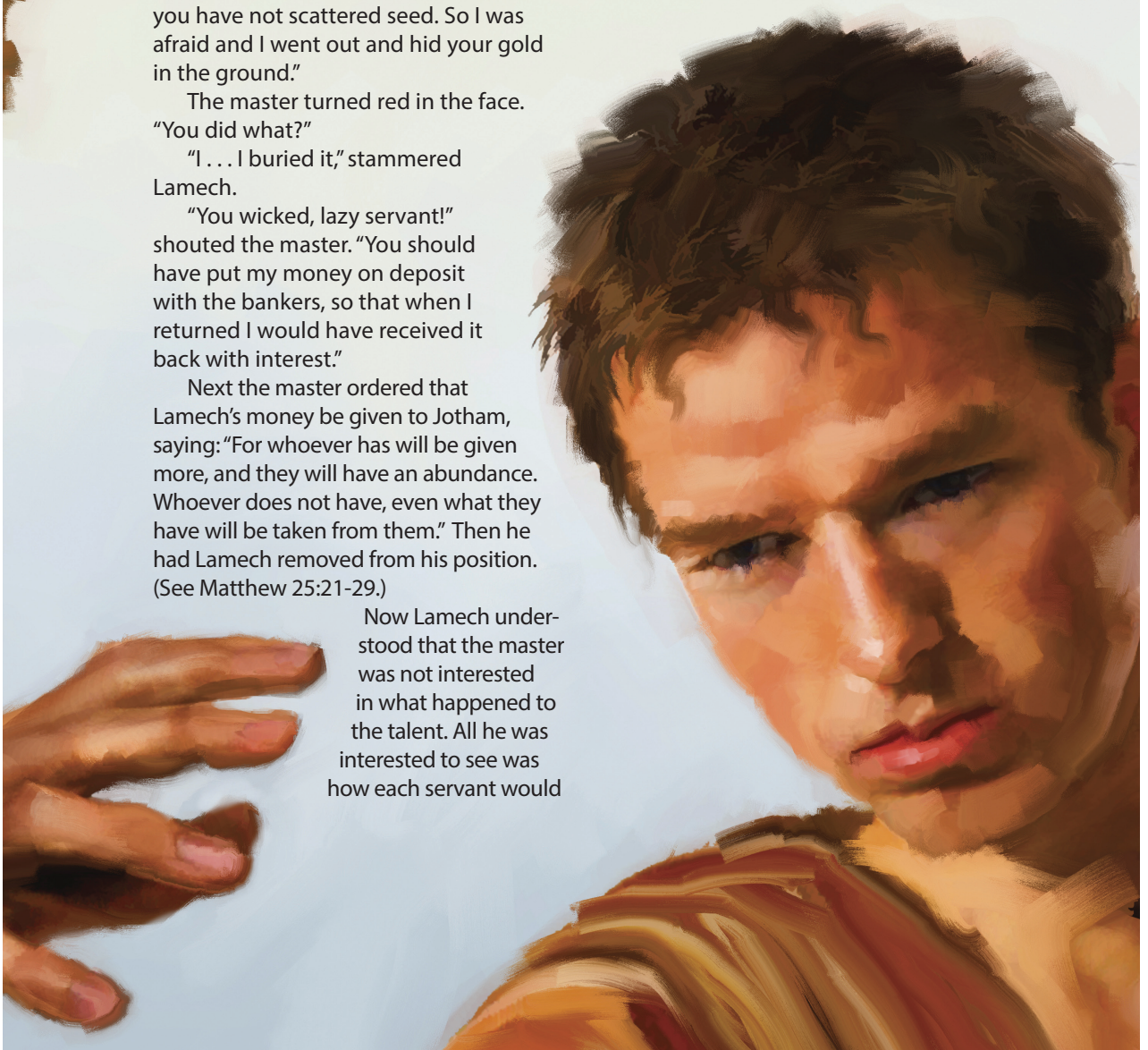
"You wicked, lazy servant!" shouted the master. "You should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest."

Next the master ordered that Lamech's money be given to Jotham, saying: "For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." Then he had Lamech removed from his position. (See Matthew 25:21-29.)

Now Lamech understood that the master was not interested in what happened to the talent. All he was interested to see was how each servant would

improve his skills by using his talent. But it was too late.

After Lamech left, the master turned to Jotham and Korazin and said, "Well done. Let's have a meal, and you can tell me more about what you have been doing."



WHERE IS IT?

Instructions: Find the word “talent” in the puzzle below. The word twists and turns (either forward, backward, upward, downward, or diagonally) and does not follow a straight line. Can you find the one hidden “talent”?

X N X K L H T R I V D T U S S O R G W I
 J T V B L A R U M Y X D Y Q T H R J O K
 B F I K D S T L L W F H H H H J I P I S
 H F J H X I E R L A V U U S H C T B C P
 P O T X N D D U G H W Q E Q Y M O U M K
 Y H Q K O Q I G V G N C M R F E U J P R
 E X G A R I D Q E U Q D A U V S Q C N O
 W N X D G E L R O P J G P P T C H D M J
 Q U J G Q C H E G J P W J M O D P I L L
 W X U I V T L T H M L V B P E S K N J B
 Q H U B E Q N R N C U O F O C N G D Y O
 P B I M B H A T I J R Q N G W Y F W M S
 E E F B F N N E M G M W N Q W K G D V P
 W P G E L P T Q I P E Y F V K V X R T B
 O H A A N X F O E X R B A L X F N L R U
 H T U R T T I G Y K O X X P R Q D R E Q
 D O C A Q U Y W N U D R U O O M A C S F
 Y I T M T L D H W C Q T O U G X M B Q K
 H I H F X T W U J Y V J N F F F N X H O
 R X B B H E J F T H W L V Q W F K T O I