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## Excerpt from the "Cultivating A Spirit of Excellence" Workshop Series

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### The Parable of the Talents: A Biblical Lesson —

#### Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup>"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup>The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup>So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup>But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup>"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

<sup>21</sup>"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>22</sup>"The man with the two talents also

came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

<sup>23</sup>"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>24</sup>"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup>So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

<sup>26</sup>"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup>Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

<sup>28</sup>" 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup>And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Parable of the Talents has always been one of the most sobering bible readings for me since I have come to understand that God had a purpose for giving us all

different gifts and talents. The reality is that He expects a return on His investment...some profitability from what He's placed in us. It's often said that the gifts and talents that we have in us are God's gift to us but what we do with those gifts and talents is our gift to God. I think this is a nice way of emphasizing that YOU are responsible for developing YOUR talents. It is important to take time to discover our gifts and talents. There are many gift discovery tests that can help us determine many of those gifts and talents. What is it that you do and you do it well? Do others often comment that they are blessed or encouraged by what you do well? What small step could you take to enhance what you do well so that you can do it even better? What big step could you take? Now take the distance between your small step and your big step and mark this as your "opportunity road" for improvement. The small step should get you moving and provide a more immediate result to keep you encouraged as you move forward on the road. The big step should give you something to reach for so that you keep walking on the road. Don't sit back and hide your talent like the one servant did (whom the Master called wicked and lazy). Remember your gifts and talents are not just for you.

While we all may have different gifts

and talents individually, we are still a part of ONE body; which is Christ. No one gift or talent is more important than the other because they are ALL needed in the body. Just think what it would be like if everybody served on the Music Ministry and we had no Ushers (YIKES!). Imagine what our places of worship would look like if no one had the gift of cleaning (AWFUL!). Every gift and talent is important. If it were not so, God would not have put those talents in us. Don't take your gifts lightly or for granted and please do not despise them.

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