

OF GIFTS, SERVICE AND THE SERVANT

Service is what God deliberately created and shaped man for. He made him in his likeness and after his image. He endowed him with talents, abilities and gifted him gifts of diverse form. All of the endowments he made in man are meant for service and excellence in service. He shaped man to work and to bring about improvement and make advancement, thereby making for the ease human existence and value addition to human life and society. Humanity then, only finds fulfillment in its engagement with service. And to serve implies spending energy to bring about the betterment of either someone or a system/organization. It is a positive unleashing by the individual of purposeful labour.

By implication, everyone great or small, highly placed and at the peak of life, or lowly placed and at the bottom or ebb of life, is a servant. The difference however, is only defined by what services they individually render.

Labour is sweetest when divided. A task produces the best of results when its bits and pieces are gift or ability detailed and handled. When gifted people handle matching parts, work is not only made easy but made enjoyable, God glorifying and the result a wonder to behold.

Everyone of humankind then, is a unique make: we are tailor and custom made. And as unique as our shapes and looks are, so are our gifts. Everyone is specially gifted to do one thing exceptionally well. Therefore your gift is not someone else's. Yours is in you and never outside of you. Look inward and you will find it there. When your eyes go off and look outside of you, you will see someone else's bright and shining gift and be attracted to, envy and tempted to have it. Such a diversion does not make for the best of results of human labour. It only grows jealousy and sometimes terrible and vain hatred for another, most times, an innocent soul who does not have a thing against you and who probably may holding in high esteem.

Nothing can be as distracting and as destructive as gift envy. For you fool and kill yourself when you abandon your own gift and begin to pursue another's.

Desiring, pretending, coveting and trying to practice what you are not shaped for, but another person's gift, is gift suicide; for you kill your gift by not using it. Mark you, you cannot be anyone other than who you are-who God made you to be. God shaped you a special shape and one of its kind. You are shaped for a unique touch on God's assignment in service to him via humanity. So if you want to frustrate yourself, try to be someone else. For in doing that, you will discover that rather than growing to become a giant and an authority in your gift, you are going down and becoming a dwarf; rather than rising, you find yourself falling, rather appearing and being in the limelight, you are diminishing and disappearing into oblivion, and rather than increasing in fortune, you are ever noose-diving and decreasing.

This happens through a gradual but sure killing of your gift by neglecting it while struggling to be someone else in competition. And try as you may, you surely will never be someone else. For take a look at your physical shape; if you do not like it and are attracted to another's, no matter

how much you admire, desire and covet it, you will never take on their shape and be they. Even if the best of plastic surgeons works on you, you will never at all be they. So appreciate, be happy and enjoy what the Lord has made of you in your gifts.

Gift envy is an attempt at rubbishing God's deliberate and unique make of the individual human being. Rather than reducing yourself to mediocre by impersonating, your best bet is to rejoice that someone else's gifts-abilities are there to make up for your gift deficiencies; that your gift weaknesses are made up for in someone else's gift-strengths.

By neglecting and not putting your unique gifts to use and struggling to be someone else; you, instead of enjoying what you are doing and producing great results, are enduring it and limiting yourself. The best use of your life is the employment and unrepentant deployment of your special shape. Work hard at discovering who you are, by knowing what your unique endowment is. Sanelly estimate your abilities. Know and be convinced about what you are good at. That which you do well and is result oriented; that which you enjoy doing, that which people identify you with and appreciate you for; that which by it, value is added to lives and are blessed by. That which brings about transformation to an organization or to society.

How do you know who you are? You do this by checking your heart and personality. Carefully explore who you are on the work you either have been given and are engaged with or where your passion ever is. Check your enjoyment or otherwise of what you spend time doing. Note particularly the time when you come fully alive. Monitor your experience, examine it and extract the lessons you have learned from it. Take a review of your life and reflect on how it has shaped you overtime. The experience you cannot remember may be of no use to you. For, forgotten experiences are useless and not worth passing through.

Having known what your gift is, you equally know what it is not. And this also points to the fact that you are never and cannot be good at everything, and neither can you do everything. This is because you are not called to do everything. And as you live out your gift in service, men will judge you based on what you do with them and what results they churn out, they may sometimes go on to judge you on the gifts you do not even have and as such, judge you on what is not your gift. Sometimes they are then, objective in what they say of you. At other times, they are bias. For hear what John Bunyan said "If my life is fruitless, it does not matter who praises me, if it is fruitful, it does not matter who criticizes me." John Bunyan's positing however, to my mind, implies that beyond men's comments about you, is what God says. What God says of me, matters most. For what he says cannot be faulted and will either confirm or rubbish the assessment of men. He will assess me based on what I have done with my gifts as given of him, and not on what I have not done with the gifts he did not give me.

So when you know who you are and what your special gift is, get to terms with it; put it to use. Hold it in high esteem, love and grow it to its peak potential. For gifts, abilities and talents can be lost when not put to use. While ever used gifts, abilities and talents multiple and enlarge. The parable of the talents here suffices. The exercise of gifts grow and develop them. You

become what you practice. The more you practice, the more you become the master of your gifts. You are therefore in your gifts usage, never any better than what you practice.

Practice your gifts and they will make and establish you; they will become you and you them. When you become a master of your gifts; they announced and promote you. Your gifts run ahead of you and open doors for you to high and exalted places; your gifts highlight and separate you from the mediocre-men of no repute. "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men" (Proverbs 22:29).

In your gift is your promotion, your adornment, your crown and your place of honour; for diligent hands rule, but laziness ends in slave labour. In your gift is your game, for the lazy man does not roast his game, but a diligent man prizes his possessions. In your gift is your breakthrough; in your gift is your advertisement and your publicity; in your gift is your fame and your acceptance; in your gift is your fortune and your treasure; in your gift is your future and your living.

To develop yourself, you must unusually stretch yourself out as you unpack and straighten out your gifts. Ever sharpen your gifts and abilities, doggedly develop your capacity to standing out like light on a hill that cannot be hidden. Never you settle down to anything less than the highest height of your gifts. Develop, pull them out and get them to their zenith. Bury them not; pray let them not to sleep, but dig them up to serve their purposes, wake them up to life, stir them up and fan them to flame; get them working and serving their God given purposes.

Note that though God has gifted no one to do all alone, you certainly have a gift and that gift may be unique to you. It is God's special touch for your shape. It is intended for exceptional service. Therefore know and recognize yours, just as you identify and appreciate the gift of God upon others; know what yours is, identify it; as you seek a synergy with others asking the giver-God how you could jointly put all to maximum use to serve humanity the best way possible; to bless and add value to lives; to build, grow and develop humanity and society; seek to know how all individual gifts could be pulled together and thus harnessed for the common good.

Through life there are designated places of service. Some in the church, others in politics, civil service and private practice. Wherever you find yourself, serve as if you were doing it for God.

If in church, build the church, if in politics, build governance; if in civil service, build the public service; if in private practice, build self-reliance and private practice. In all services, build faithfulness, diligence, honesty, sincerity, commitment and grow a humanity and society running on the wheels of integrity and excellence, hinged on the fear of God.

You sure have a gift. Do you know what it is? How have you handled it? How have you grown and developed it over time? Are you using it? What have you been using it for? Are you enjoying or enduring it? If enduring it, then it may not be your gift. If enjoying it then it is yours. If it is blessing lives and adding value to them, then it is a confirmation. If it is positively

affecting and transforming society, then it is the right unleashing of your shape in service to God. But if selfishness and self-benefit is its pursuit, then it is a misuse and God is not it.

On the day of the Lord however, there will be gift accountability, with a commendation and a condemnation to be pronounced, a reward and a punishment to be awarded, a discharge and acquittal and a conviction and condemnation to be passed in verdict.

What will my gift and its use earn me? What will yours earn you? Certainly something to earn awaits you and me based on the way we are individually using our gifts today.

On that day of the Lord, may we go with Christ and not with satan on account of our gift use. May we be accepted and ushered into eternal life and not be rejected and thrown into eternal damnation.

OF YOUR GIFTS, YOUR SERVICE AND THE SERVANT IN YOU.

“IN HIS GRACE GOD HAS GIVEN US DIFFERENT GIFTS FOR DOING CERTAIN THINGS WELL...”

(Romans 12:6 NLT).

+Jwan Bukuru