“Do not Neglect the Gift that is in You”

I. Introduction.

A. Text for the week: 1 Timothy 4:12-14.
   1. “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you.”
   2. The theme for the week is that young people are vital to the church.
      - you’ve got to realize your value.
      - you need to show people what Christianity is about.
      - and there are certain habits you need to learn now.
   3. The lesson we are going to study tonight is the climax of the study and of this set of verses.
      - “Do not neglect the gift that is in you.”
      - You are important; You know what you can do and need to do; Now don’t neglect to use what God has given you.

B. Timothy was given a gift from God.
   1. Vs. 14, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”
   2. This is very similar to what Paul says in his 2nd letter to Timothy.
      - 2 Tim. 2:6, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying of my hands.”
   3. The gift to which Paul is referring could very well have been a miraculous spiritual gift, which were given in the early days of the church.
      - and Paul is telling Timothy to use that gift.
   4. But I tend to believe that Paul is simply referring to the talents and abilities of Timothy that God had given him.
      - specifically the talent and ability to preach and to be an effective minister of the gospel.
   5. The point to Timothy.
      - Use the talents and abilities that God has given you.
      - Do not neglect the gifts that God has given you.

C. Tonight, we are going to talk about the gifts and abilities that have been given to each person in this audience.
   1. Particularly to those who are younger.
   2. And we’re going to discuss how we can and should use these gifts for the benefit of the gospel and the church.

II. Everyone is Gifted in Some Way.

A. Turn and read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.
   1. These passages are talking about miraculous spiritual gifts.
2. By looking at this same letter, we understand that we do not have miraculous spiritual gifts today.
   - They served a particular purpose during the early days of the New Testament.
3. While we don’t have miraculous spiritual gifts today, we do have gifts that God has given us to use in the church.
4. I want you to notice a couple of points that Paul makes here in this passage.
   - “given to each one for the profit of all.” Vs. 7
   - different Christians are given different gifts. Vs. 8-10
   - we all don’t receive the same gifts.
   - “distributing to each one individually as He wills.” Vs. 11

B. Everyone has been given special talents and abilities by God.
1. Reference to hand-out.
2. Positive Roles in the church.
   - **An Encourager**: a person who can uplift the weak and push the strong to new heights.
     - Acts 11:23, Barnabas “encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue in the Lord.”
   - **A Teacher**: a person who imparts knowledge by putting things in a way that others will understand.
     - Acts 18:26, “When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him (Apollos) aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”
   - **A Helper**: a person who might not be a leader but is willing to aid in any way.
     - Romans 16:2, “she (Phoebe) has been a helper of many and of myself (Paul) also.”
   - **An Organizer**: a take-charge person who can plan and coordinate various needed activities.
     - Whether it be arranging a Bible study or a work day, or just a time to spend together as brethren, someone has to take the initiative.
   - **A Socializer**: a person who is adept at communication and makes people feel needed and welcome.
     - Either in the assembly or out of it, some are able to communicate more easily and effectively than others.
     - Communication is necessary in edification.
   - **A Questioner**: a person who challenges tradition and always ensures that we stick closely to what the Bible actually says.
     - Acts 17:11, the Bereans “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”
   - **A Mender**: a person who can act as a mediator and help others solve disagreements.
     - Phil. 4:3, “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women (Euodia & Syntyche) who labored with me in the gospel.”
- **A Giver**: a person who has the resources (not necessarily money) and willingness to give for the needs of others.
  - 1 Tim. 6:18, “Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.”

- **A Binder**: a person who is a consistent and strong example of a Christian and is part of the backbone of a congregation, the glue that holds it all together.
  - Gal. 6:1, “You who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.”

- **A Visitor**: a person who makes it a habit to visit other members of the church, to encourage the weak, the sick, and the strong.
  - James 1:27, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

- **A Comforter**: A person who can empathize and sympathize with people who are going through tough times.
  - 1 Thess. 5:11, “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

- **A Server**: a person who humbles himself and seeks to serve his fellow man and brethren in whatever way possible.
  - Matthew 20:26, “Whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant.”

- **A Taker**: a person who seeks to benefit from the group but does little to give anything back.
- **A Complainer**: a person who is quick to complain when things are not done the way he/she wants and does not support the decision that is made.
- **An Arguer**: a person who likes to instigate disputes over matters that are usually trivial.
- **A Discourager**: a person who, by disposition, words, or action, brings down the spirit of others.
- **A Loner**: a person who seeks to do everything on his/her own, one who does not appreciated spending time with brethren.
- **A Compounder**: a person who has a knack for making matters worse by saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing.
- **An Agreeer**: a person who goes along with everything, regardless of the consequences or the scripturality of the decision.
- **A Disagreeer**: a person who does not go along with anything that is not his/her idea, regardless of the consequences or the scripturality of the decision.
- **An Offender**: a person who consistently says or does things that offend his/her brethren and gives little heed to how words or actions will affect others.

C. What are your talents?
  - pick two or three in the first list.

III. Everyone Needs to use their Gifts for the Growth of the Body.

A. Turn back to 1 Corinthians 12.
1. Read verses 12-14.
   - the body is made up of many different members.
2. Read verses 15-16.
   - every part of the body is important.
   - just because you may not be a hand or an eye, doesn’t mean that you aren’t important and needed.
   - a humorous picture.
   - if the whole body were an eye or one member.
   - point is that all members of body are needed.
   - God has made each member as He wanted.
4. Read verse 21.
   - every member is needed.
   - nobody needs to look down on anyone else because of their talents and abilities.
   - just because you may have more talent, doesn’t mean that you are more important.
5. Read verses 22-25.
   - more honor to the unpresentable parts.
   - more honor should be given to the work behind the scenes.
   - visible work of members isn’t the most important.
   - we’re all in this together.
   - God has given each one of us different gifts.
8. Read verse 31.
   - we should all want to be the best we can be.
   - don’t be satisfied with what you can do now; develop your talents so that you can do more at a later time.

B. Points to consider from this passage.
   1. Everybody can’t play the same position.
   2. Everybody is needed for success.
   3. Nobody is more important than anyone else.
   4. You’re only as strong as your weakest link.
   5. God gave each of us certain abilities, and we need to use them.

C. 1 Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
   1. We are to use our gifts to help each other.
   2. The Church needs you!
      - we need you!

IV. God Expects Us to Use Our Talents.

A. 1 Peter 4:10, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
   1. A steward was a servant who was given charge over the master’s property.
- manager of the house or household affairs.
- manager of the farm or land.

2. It was someone who was given authority over some things by the master.

3. Peter talks about Christians as stewards.
- God has given each one us certain gifts.
- Peter says we need to use them as good stewards.

4. The question is: Are we good stewards? Are we using what God has given us?
- 1 Cor. 4:2, “it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”
- God is expecting us to be faithful and to use what He has given us.

5. Luke 12:42-43, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will so doing when he comes.”
- the point is that a good steward is working with what the master has given him.

B. Parable of the talents. Matthew 25
1. Man gave talents to three of his servants.
- 5, 2, 1,
- vs. 15, “to each according to his own ability.”

2. Man went on a journey.

3. In verse 19, the man returns from this journey and comes to his servants.
- vs. 20, 5 talent man had earned 5 more talents.
- vs. 22, 2 talent man had earned 2 more talents.
- vs. 24, 1 talent man had hid his talent in the ground.

4. What are the lessons for us?
- God has given each one of us talents.
- God has given some more talents than others.
- God expects us to use all of our talents.
- God will reward us if we use our talents.
- God will punish us if we neglect to use our talents.

5. It’s as simple as that.
- God’s expectations are for us to use the gifts He has given us.

C. Three more passages and points.
1. Use all of the abilities that we have.
- Rom. 12:6-8, “having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”
- Determine what your abilities are.
- Use them to the best of your ability.

2. Push yourself to do as much as you can and to develop talents and abilities.
- 2 Corinthians 8:3, “For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much
urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”
- Some abilities are not visible at first.
- Some require practice and work.
- Illustration: a boy’s ability to play baseball will not be manifested until he attempts it.

3. “To whom much is given, much is required.”
- Lk. 12:48
- if you have been given a lot of talents, then you can be sure that God expects a lot out of you.
- it doesn’t matter how you compare with what others are doing, the only thing that matters is what God expects out of you.

V. Conclusion.

A. There is a day coming when we must give account.
   1. Consider the context of Matthew 25.
   2. All three sections deal with the coming of Christ in judgment.
      - Parable of the ten virgins.
      - Parable of the talents.
      - Picture of the judgment scene.
   3. On that day, God will require us to give an account of how we have used the talents and abilities that He has given us.

B. What will you say on that day?
   1. Excuses will not be accepted.
   2. Will God say:
      - “Well done, ... enter into the joy of your lord?”
      - or will he command us to be cast into “the outer darkness?”
   3. The choice is up to us.