

# From Horseshoes to Swiss Watches

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

A. In a Ripley's "Believe It or Not" column, there is a picture of a plain bar of iron worth \$5. The same bar of iron, if made into horse shoes would be worth \$50. If it were made into sewing needles, it would be worth \$5,000. If it were made into balance springs for fine Swiss watches, it would be worth \$500,000. The raw material is not as important as how it's developed and used.

1. We all start out as bars of iron. We decide what use we will make of the materials we have been given.
2. The Lord began life in the flesh, just as do all human beings. But look at what He did in the flesh.

## I. WHAT HAVE WE DONE WITH OUR RAW MATERIALS?

- A. We do not have the same gifts - 1Peter 4:10-11; Rom. 12:4-8, 11
- B. The raw material we began with doesn't matter as much as what we do with it.
  1. 1Cor. 4:1-2, 7, 12:12-27
- C. The Lord requires us to do something with our raw material - Luke 19:12-27
  1. Matthew's account of the talents is from Mount Olivet; Luke's account of the minas is before a large crowd in Jerusalem. One talent = 60 minas

## II. GOD EXPECTS HUMANKIND TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

- A. Ex. 35:10, 28:2-4, 36:1-2
- B. God has no tolerance for mediocrity and laziness
  1. Ecc. 10:18; Prov. 24:30-32, 12:24, 13:4, 26:16; Judges 18:9
- C. Even secular writers know this to be true.
  1. "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'" (Erma Bombeck)
  2. "If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves." (Thomas A. Edison)
  3. "Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God." (Leo Buscaglia)

## III. HOW DO I USE ALL THAT I HAVE?

- A. Ownership: Everything I have belongs to God - Job. 1:21
  1. If I live to be 100 and work hard and own a great deal, it still belongs to God. I just get to use it for a few years. God made us to use His resources to glorify Him.
    - a. Matt. 25:14 - It was the master's goods.
- B. Allocation: God has given me some talents - Matt. 25:15
  1. Anything that God has entrusted to us, our children, our jobs, our homes, our abilities are considered talents.
  2. We don't have the same gifts; we are unique - Rom. 12:6
  3. Though we have different gifts, we all have the same expectation placed on us by God; that is, we must use them to our full potential

- C. Accountability: God expects me to use them - Matt. 25:19
1. The master had made an investment and wanted a return. God has made an investment in our lives, and He wants a return.
  2. The greater the privileges and blessings, the greater the responsibility and accountability.
- D. Utilization: It's wrong to neglect what God gave me - Matt. 25:18, 26
1. This is the sin of inactivity; the sin of deliberate passivity.
  2. We cannot please God by playing it safe. Why does God want us to take risks with what He has given us?
    - a. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" - Rom. 14:23
    - b. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" - Heb. 11:6
  3. If everything in service to God was guaranteed to be perfectly safe, we don't need faith. Doing nothing is inexcusable. God would rather have we try to serve Him and trip over our own feet, than do nothing.
  4. It is better to attempt something great and fail than attempt to do nothing and succeed.
  5. It is not the man with five talents who does nothing; it is the man with one. He believes that since he appears to have less talent, he must therefore have less accountability. This is a mistake
- E. Motivation: Fear keeps me from developing my talent. Fear is Satan's favorite tool. He has three kinds:
1. Self-doubt - "I could never do that; I'm not qualified." Fear of failure
    - a. "If I give the wrong answer or do the wrong thing, I'm going to look foolish or be criticized." - Matt. 25:25
  2. Self-pity - "I've failed so much in the past that I'm never trying again."
    - a. There are two ways to respond to failure, as exemplified by Judas and Peter. Both committed the same sin -- they denied Christ. Judas gave up. Peter repented in tears and picked himself up. Fifty days later, this same man who 3 times denied Jesus Christ was chosen to introduce the world to the Church.
    - b. It matters less where you've been than where you are going now.
  3. Self-consciousness - "What will other people think?" - Prov. 29:25
    - a. Fear causes us to make excuses for doing nothing - Matt. 25:24
    - b. "The reason I didn't make a profit is your fault!"
- F. Application: If I don't use it, I will lose it - Matt. 25:28-30
1. Mind or muscles: if we don't use them, they will atrophy
- G. Compensation: If I use my talents, I'm going to be rewarded - Matt. 25:21
1. God promises three rewards:
    - a. Affirmation - "Well done." Imagine hearing that from God in the presence of the hosts of heaven!
    - b. Promotion - "You've been faithful with a few things; I'll trust you with many more." Maybe the reason God doesn't trust us with great blessings is because we're not faithful with the little ones.
    - c. Celebration - "Enter into the joy of your Lord" What would result from an audit on our stewardship of talents God has given us?

Only One Life  
By C.T. Studd

Two little lines I heard one day,  
Traveling along life's busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart,  
And from my mind would not depart;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,  
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,  
And stand before His Judgment seat;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God's holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,  
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;  
Each with its clays I must fulfill,  
living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me  
sore,  
When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way,  
Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep,  
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,  
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn,  
And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,  
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,  
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";  
And when at last I'll hear the call,  
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.