

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH when it comes to our Talents?

Welcome to our **Final Week** of “**How Much Is Enough?**” We have been on a three week journey where we have been diving into the question of “**How Much is Enough**” when it comes to our TIME, TALENT and TREASURE? Over the last couple of weeks we have looked at “How Much is Enough” when it comes to our TIME and our TREASURE and today we want to close out our series by taking a look at “How Much is Enough?” when it comes to our TALENT.

As we have said each week, God has given all of us the resources of time, talent, and treasure so that we may be stewards of life on this earth. Ultimately, our lives should bring Him glory where we are to take our resources and use them to make the earth a glorious place to live reflecting the very glory of the One who made us and gave life to us! Our theme verse for this series is **1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

You see, when God established mankind on earth it wasn't so we could live as we please utilizing and taking advantage of all that God has given us for our own vain pleasure, but so that we could love one another and care for one another on the earth being faithful stewards of the various forms of God's grace. When we ask the question, “**How Much is Enough?**”, if we are honest with ourselves we ask a question that at its root comes from a place of selfishness. We ask “How Much is Enough?” because ultimately we want to place a limit on what we give to God so that we can use the rest for ourselves.

As we switch gears today and examine our TALENT, how do we apply the question “How Much Is Enough?” to our abilities and giftedness? I mean, it is easy to quantify TREASURE because we measure that in dollars and cents. When we talk about TIME, we can measure that in hours, minutes and seconds of the day. But when it comes to our TALENT (that which we are gifted to DO, our abilities) how do we measure it? How do we quantify it and use it in terms of God and His purposes?

As we unpack this third leg of the trifecta of resources God has given us, I want us to do so by answering two clarifying questions when it comes to our TALENT. The first question is, **What is the attitude of your heart when it comes to exercising your TALENT?** The reason this is important is because when it comes to exercising your talent, WORK is involved. WORK must be exerted in developing your skills and abilities and in actually using those skills and abilities to accomplish something significant. For example, you may be musically gifted, but you must put forth effort to practice and sharpen your skills to maximize those abilities. The attitude you have when it comes to exercising your talent and abilities says something about how you value what you have been given and it also pays dividends regarding what you can accomplish with those abilities. I truly believe that in life there are lots of talented people who have never fully realized their full potential because they treated their gifting as no big deal and have never really put in the work to sharpen those skills let alone accomplish anything of significance. So, the first question I want us to deal with is, **What is the attitude of your heart when it comes to exercising your TALENT?** The second question I want us to answer is, **Why does my**

TALENT and the way I exercise it matter? Who cares what I do with my talent? It's my talent, if I want to squander it or use it to do great things for myself that should be my prerogative. In the end I should be able to do what I please with it. So as we address, "How Much is Enough?" when it comes to our talent, these are the two questions I would like for us to address.

To help us analyze our hearts in regard to these two questions I want us to use Israel as an example of what can happen when the people of God show up with the right attitude regarding the use of their talents and abilities and why it is significant when it comes to God and His purposes.

If you would turn with me in your portion of God's word to **Exodus 35**. Before we get started let's **PRAY** and ask God to reveal to us what it is we each need to hear and that He would create in us a heart that wants to follow through with what He shows us.

Oftentimes when we study the children of Israel we see "**what not to do**" as it relates to our relationship with God. But, in the scenario that we are looking at today we see a beautiful example of "**what to do**" especially as it relates to our abilities and our resources.

(Background) In Exodus **Chapters 25-31** God gives Moses specific detailed instructions on how to build the tabernacle. The purpose for the tabernacle was to provide a sanctuary for God to dwell among His people (remember Week 1 when we talked about the Temple in Haggai). The tabernacle was the portable version of the temple and it would serve as a center of worship to God until the children of Israel reached the Promised Land and had the ability to build a permanent temple structure.

The real beauty of the "tabernacle"/ "temple" was that its construction and services performed therein served as symbols and object lessons through which God could teach His people about His ultimate plan for redemption. In fact, every part of the tabernacle and all its appointed ministries were to Israel a symbol and testimony of the coming Messiah and His blessed work of redemption. You could say the TABERNACLE served as a sign or picture of Jesus who would in fact come to dwell with His people.

Let me just give you just a few examples of this because we could spend the whole sermon on this one topic:

The first example has to do with the entrance and doorway design leading into the tabernacle courtyard and holy of holies respectively ([Show picture of Tabernacle](#)). The holy of holies of course being the place where God's presence was said to dwell. The "entrance" into the courtyard and the doorway into the Holy of holies had only one way in and one way out. This was on purpose because it is to remind us that when it comes to a relationship with God there is only one way to Father and that is through Jesus the SON.

John 10:9-10 (NIV) 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

John 14:6 (NIV) Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

There is only one way to God and Jesus is the only way to a relationship with God!

The second example has to do with the decorative curtains that were used to decorate the tabernacle walls and that would make up the veil that covered the doorway into the holy of holies. These curtains consisted of three primary colors (blue, purple, and scarlet) and they were to be made of fine linen.

- The Blue represented – the Heavenly nature of Jesus the Messiah (He is Divine)
- The Purple represented – the Kingship of Jesus the Messiah - (He is King of all kings)
- The Scarlet represented – the Blood of Jesus the Messiah which covers our sin - (He is our Savior)
- The Fine Linen represented – the Righteousness nature of Jesus the Messiah - (He is one who is without sin)

All of these are symbolic in describing the nature of the Messiah.

The third example has to do with “the veil” or “curtain” that separated the Holy of Holies from the other parts of the tabernacle. The curtain would serve as a veil to conceal the most Holy place where God’s presence was said to dwell and reminds us of how holy God is and how our sin is a barrier to us being able to fellowship with God fully. This is the veil that was referred to as being torn when Jesus died on the CROSS.

Matthew 27: 50-51 (NIV) And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split. When Jesus died on the cross He removed forever the barrier of sin that separates us from God

You see, every detail was significant in its meaning and had to be constructed according to how God instructed Moses because at stake was a symbol that painted a picture of our deliverer Jesus the Messiah. And as time went on and Jesus was revealed, these significant elements could be used to teach the early church about Jesus and His salvation. This isn’t just any old tent. This is to be the dwelling place and symbol of God’s desire to dwell with His people. Now, with that as our understanding, watch what happens next when God calls His people to build this tabernacle.

Exodus 35:4-10 (NIV)

4 Moses said to the whole Israelite community, “This is what the LORD has commanded: **5** From what you have, (Note: they are called to take from the resources they have already been given! And when it comes to what God calls us to do today, He desires the same thing!) **5** From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing (Also, I want you to notice that

God is calling only those who are WILLING to do so! Those who have a willing heart, those who want to give. Those who see this opportunity as a privilege, not because they HAVE to but because they GET to) 5 From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze; 6 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 7 ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; 8 olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 9 and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. (This is a call to give of their TREASURES. Btw, spoils given them while in Egypt before they left, of which they will not be able to replace anytime soon.) 10 All who are skilled among you (As they have been given abilities and skills, God wants them to be used for the building of God's tabernacle. God wants us to use what skills and abilities we have required to build His Kingdom) 10 All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded: (Here is a call to invest their TIME in order to see this through) Notice how the people responded!

Exodus 35:20-21 (NIV) 20 Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, **21** and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.

Exodus 36:2-7 (NIV) 2 Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. **3** They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning. **4** So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing **5** and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done." **6** Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, **7** because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.

What if we responded to God the same way Israel responded to God in this instance? I want you to notice that they did so with only a glimpse of a promised messiah as dimly shown through the pictures and symbols of a tent. How much more should we respond with our lives considering what we have been shown through the CROSS and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ

From this passage I want us to go back and answer the two questions that I posed to us at the beginning of this message. First,

What is the attitude of your heart when it comes to exercising your TALENT? I want you to notice three characteristics that defined Israel's attitude when it came to exercising their talent and then I want you to compare their attitude with yours as it relates to your service for God.

Characteristic #1 - They had a WILLING attitude that SHOWED God was WORTHY of their OFFERING.

Exodus 35:21 (NIV) and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.

They willingly brought what they had and what they were given because they had an attitude that was lifted up by the worthiness of God.

The word used for the phrase “**whose heart moved them**” is the Hebrew word “ne-sa-ov” which means to *lift up, to carry, or take*. **My heart will not lift up anything for God until I am lifted up by His glorious presence and I am moved by His worthiness.** They were stirred to action by the God who is worthy of all worship and all honor and all praise. As far as they were concerned, this was the least that they could do for a God who had done so much for them.

They brought their own stuff and gave it to God willingly because they realized if it were not for God they would not have had it to begin with. This also went for their talent and skills as well. They surrendered their abilities to God to be used for His purposes and they did so gladly.

Exodus 35:25-26 (NIV) Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. **26** And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair.

Exodus 35:30-35 (NIV) 30 Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31 and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— 32 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 33 to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts. 34 And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35 He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers.

Characteristic #1 - They had an attitude that SHOWED God was WORTHY of their OFFERING.

Characteristic #2 -They had a WILLING attitude that MOTIVATED them to SERVE with a SPIRIT of EXCELLENCE. They didn’t just serve God by showing up for the cause or by just being present in that moment, but they intentional brought their best stuff to God!!

They gave of their very best! Not out of their left overs or the parts they didn’t want. They gave away their most valuable things to God to be used for the construction of the tabernacle. Those who served gave of their talents, which could have been used for themselves only, but they chose to give themselves to the work of the tabernacle because God and His mission is a worthy endeavor!!

Exodus 35:22-24 (NIV) 22 All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD. 23 Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat

hair, ram skins dyed red or the other durable leather brought them. 24 Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it.

When you serve God do you give Him your best or do you give Him your leftovers? **When it comes to the people we love we have a tendency to give them our leftovers.** Do we do this with God whom we say we LOVE? Again, God's worthiness comes into play here. Are we motivated by His worthiness? Do you feel compelled to give your best with a spirit of excellence? After excellence is GOOD ministry! This is what God the Father gave you!! He gave you His son!! The very best of heaven in exchange for my sin and your sin!

Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. **14** But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" **15** Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. **16** As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. **17** And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

When you serve God what is the attitude of your heart?

Characteristic #1 - They had an attitude that SHOWED God was WORTHY of their OFFERING.

Characteristic #2 - They had an attitude that MOTIVATED them to SERVE with a SPIRIT of EXCELLENCE.

Characteristic #3 - They had a WILLING attitude that didn't PLACE LIMITS on their GIFTS.

Exodus 36:2-7 (NIV) 2 Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. 3 They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning. Btw, they were not content with a one time gift as far as God was concerned. He was worthy of more!! 4 So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing 5 and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done."

6 Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, 7 because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.

I want you to know that we do not have this problem in the church. This is not a problem we have on the mission field. This is not a problem we have trying to plant churches. What if you

and I didn't place restrictions on what we will and will not give God? What would happen? What if we gave of ourselves without limits and let God tell us when to stop? Here is the reality the church is facing today and that we have faced since the beginning over 2000 years ago.

Luke 10:1-2 (NIV) After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. **2** Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Are you one of the laborers who we've been praying for but instead have neglected God's call due to selfishness or fear? Have you opened your hands up to God and with all of your heart in surrender said, "*Lord, here I am, send me?*"

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few;

This, which Jesus said to His disciples, still holds true today! But WHAT IF!!

WHAT IF we had an attitude that SHOWED God was WORTHY of our OFFERING?

WHAT IF we had an attitude that MOTIVATED us to SERVE with a SPIRIT of EXCELLENCE?

WHAT IF we had an attitude that didn't PLACE LIMITS on our GIFTS?

This brings us to our second question that we started our message with, Why does my TALENT and the way I exercise it matter? What does the right attitude really accomplish anyway?

When we use our resources and our giftedness for God we can accomplish an awesome task!

For Israel when they did so they created and built a glorious tabernacle for God to dwell among His people! When, we the church respond as Israel did, we can accomplish the church's vision and mission of winning our community and the world to Christ. Our Vision is to Share the HOPE of Jesus with our communities and the world. We want to lead people to be passionate about Jesus so they can lead others to Jesus! This is God's mission for us and it cannot be accomplished with half-hearted service!

When we use our resources and our giftedness for God His GLORY is proclaimed in the world!

For Israel the tabernacle allowed God's Glory to dwell among His people and be displayed before their neighbors! When we serve God with a spirit of excellence going above and beyond the requirements of the law, God is glorified by our love and our worship. It stands out and it draws people to Jesus. It causes them to ask questions and to take note.

Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV) 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Are you working for God with all your heart? or are you working for God when you feel like it only?

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 (NIV) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. **32** Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— **33** even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

What if we served one another with a spirit of excellence when it comes to our love? What difference would that make?

John 13:34-35 (NIV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This doesn't happen with half-hearted service where we give out of our leftovers or we hold back for ourselves. That is no different than the world around us. **What is the condition of your heart when it comes to your TIME, TALENT and TREASURE?** What we see here in Exodus 35-36 is not just about one of these resources but it really does encompass all of them. These attitudes we have talked about regarding our service for the Lord impacts also our TIME and our TREASURE. **Is God WORTHY of your OFFERING? An offering of your TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE?**

Are you MOTIVATED by His worthiness to SERVE with a SPIRIT of EXCELLENCE in whatever He calls you to do for His Kingdom work?

Are you stirred by an attitude that refuses to PLACE LIMITS on your GIFTS because God does not place limits on His Love? Remember what Paul said in Romans 8.

Romans 8:31-32 (NIV) **31** What, then, shall we say in response to these things? (These things being God's incredible love for us) If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

In his commentary on Romans 8:32 **John MacArthur** says this, **“Paul's point is: Would God do less for His children than He would do for His enemies?”** The idea being that God extends incredible grace to all people no matter where they stand, but will He not even go further with His grace and generosity when it comes to those who actually become sons and daughters through faith. In other words, God would never restrict or place limits on His love especially for those who are His children..

I have been in churches where there is no presence of God, no evidence of His glory and where they were not accomplishing much of anything for God's kingdom. Will that be us Vertical Church? It will be if we do not have the right attitude when it comes to our treasure, time, and talent.

Invitation:

What talents and abilities do you have and are you allowing them to be used for building God's kingdom?

Compassion and care - Care ministry

Good with children - Kids ministry

Hospitality - Greeting/Host ministry

Technologically skilled - Production ministry

Musically inclined - Worship ministry

Are you giving just what is required? or above that?

Are you giving leftovers and saving the best for what you want or are you giving Him your very best?

Is HE worthy? Will you give Him your heart?