

BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY

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*As a child of God, you are more
gifted than you know.*



TALENTS

By Michael R. Morris
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I was too slow for football, too short for basketball, and too weak for wrestling. I played freshman and JV baseball, but by the time I reached my junior year in high school, the other guys going out for the varsity team were faster, taller, *and* stronger.

Three strikes and I was out.

I wasn't popular enough to run for student government, talented enough to pursue the performing arts, or courageous enough to try debate.

Game over at 17, right? Not necessarily.

In English class, I could write essays the night before they were due—and still get a decent grade. I had no problem ordering a burrito in Spanish or asking for directions to the bathroom in German—thanks to my foreign language classes. Somehow, I made the honor roll despite my grades in math. And I could make people laugh.

But did I really have any talents? I wasn't sure until I got older.

FEELING SHORTCHANGED?

You may feel short-changed when it comes to gifts and talents. I know I did.

Most of us wonder why we don't have the abilities that seem to come so easily to others. But when we get down on ourselves for not being faster, taller, stronger,

smarter, more talented, or more popular, we forget something important we learned in Primary: "I am a child of God."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that all God's children have "been blessed with many marvelous capabilities and talents. One of the great objectives of our journey through mortality is to improve upon them."¹

To improve upon them, we first have to recognize them. When we're young, we may not recognize our gifts or talents if they don't bring us recognition or popularity, or point us toward wealth and stardom. But if we could see the future from an eternal perspective, we would realize that some of our most important gifts are spiritual gifts—gifts that bless others.

"A number of spiritual gifts are documented in scripture (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 31; Moroni 10:8–18; Doctrine and Covenants 46:8–26), but there are many others," said Elder John C. Pingree Jr. of the Seventy.

"Some might include having compassion, expressing hope, relating well with people, organizing effectively, speaking or writing persuasively, teaching clearly, and working hard."²

Are you a good listener, a true friend, a champion of Young Women values, or a dependable priesthood holder? Those are gifts too.



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FOUR WAYS TO FIND YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS

Elder Pingree suggests four ways we can identify our gifts and talents:

1. **“Reference our patriarchal blessing.”** Pray over your patriarchal blessing, and study it for gifts and guidance, insights and inspiration. If you haven’t yet received your blessing, consider preparing for it.
2. **“Ask those who know us best.”** Our loved ones, leaders, and friends may recognize our gifts before we do. I was finishing my junior year in college when my mother suggested that I take a writing class. Her advice changed my life.
3. **“Identify what we are naturally good at and enjoy.”** If a gift comes easily, improve it. If a talent looks fun, develop it. If a dream seems daunting, go for it. Don’t be afraid to try new things. You might surprise yourself with what you’re good at.
4. **“Ask God.”** Ask Heavenly Father to help you discover your gifts, develop your talents, and pursue the abilities that interest you or that He would have you develop.³

“Each of you has been blessed with divine talents by our Father in Heaven,” said Elder Rasband. “He is waiting for you to identify, develop, and magnify those talents He has blessed you with.”⁴



DON'T BURY YOUR TALENTS

When President Russell M. Nelson worked as a surgeon, many young people asked him how long it takes to become a medical doctor. He told them that after four years of undergraduate work, they needed four more years of medical school and then another five years to become a specialist.

“That’s too long for me!” some responded.

Then President Nelson would tell them: “Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life. How old will you be thirteen years from now if you *don’t* pursue your education? Just as old, whether or not you become what you want to be!”⁵

Because some of our gifts and talents may take years to develop, we should remember the Lord’s counsel: “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent” (Doctrine and Covenants 60:13). Don’t trade your gifts and talents for too much time with social media, video games, or other distractions.

Back in high school, I had no way of knowing that the fun I had—and the time I spent—studying Spanish and German would help me learn three languages as a full-time missionary. Nor did I know that my latent talent as a writer would lead me to my livelihood. But perhaps the Lord did.

Our gifts and talents from God may not bring us fame, fortune, or short-lived popularity in high school. But if we identify them, develop them, and use them wisely, someday we’ll be surprised how much they bless us—and others—and help further the Lord’s work (see Doctrine and Covenants 46:8–9, 26). And someday, with the wise servants in the parable of the talents, we may hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). **NE**

NOTES

1. Ronald A. Rasband, “You’ve Got Talent,” *New Era*, July 2018, 2.
2. John C. Pingree Jr., Oct. 2017 general conference.
3. See John C. Pingree Jr., Oct. 2017 general conference.
4. Ronald A. Rasband, “You’ve Got Talent,” 5.
5. See Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 1992 general conference.