

LOOKING UP!

By Matt Huddleston

You probably don't know her name, though she has won twelve Olympic swimming medals, eight gold, three silver, and one bronze. Jenny Thompson is the second most winning U.S. Olympian, second only to Michael Phelps (28 medals!). Except for one silver and one bronze, all Jenny's medals are from her part on several relay swim teams.

Some people have questioned whether Jenny's swimming record should rank her with the "great" Olympic champions. She asks that herself. "It's got to be very different to experience an individual gold versus a team gold," she says. I find Jenny's accomplishments in the U.S. ego-driven culture impressive. It is fantastic to see someone's genuine success and excellences come in the context of team play.

This is how the church should work. Our true "stardom" occurs when we participate as part of a winning team. To succeed on God's team, we cannot operate by ourselves.

Paul, in his letter to the church in Ephesus, wrote, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Eph. 4:11-14 & 16)

SERMON NOTES

God Rewards

March 27

God _____ to _____

REVIEW

_____ and _____ your talent

Four Generations of Faith _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Since you have been given _____ from _____, be a _____ and _____, and _____.

Appreciated, Leader, Opportunity, New, Energy

◇ **God _____ how you _____ your _____, _____, and _____.** HE will _____ those who faithfully _____.

◇ _____ your _____ to what _____ you to be -
- _____!

◇ **Times to use your talents** _____
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

◇ **The Real Reward is** _____

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1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

Next Week:

POWER IN THE BLOOD

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PERSONAL STUDY

It is rewarding to invest time each day in God's Word.

Mo James 2:18

Putting our talent into action to bless others is impactful. Along each of the remaining days, jot a note of one thing you will do to demonstrate your faithful use of your time, talent, and/or treasure.

Tu James 1:22

Throughout this TALENTS study, we have seen how God gives talent to everyone. Don't acknowledge this fact AND not do anything. Pray to God to help you not sit idly by. Take action on yesterday's list.

We James 1:17

God gives talent to everyone, and that gift is good, for God never changes. Write this message on a card and place it where you can read it every day, except replace 'everyone' with your name. Read it daily.

Th Matthew 25:21 & 23

If you know Jesus would return in 1 year, what would you do to ensure you hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Jesus knew he was going to die, and he washed the disciples' feet. Let's go!

Fr Matthew 25:37-40

Ask God to open your eyes today to see the needs of those who are hurting. Ask for an opportunity to bless someone in one of these life challenges. Remember James 1:22 and do it!

Sa Matthew 26:6-13

Seeing people who are hurting could be a chance for us to use our time, talent, and/or treasure to help them. When we are hurting, we can see this as an opportunity to come to Jesus. Be ready for either today.

STUDY & DISCUSS

- Read Matthew 25:31-46. Here are six examples of time, talent, and treasure being given or withheld.
 - ◇ List the six actions.
 - ◇ Are these all still viable actions of a faithful servant?
 - ◇ Which of these six do you find most challenging?
 - ◇ The sentiment of these six actions is similar to what James calls "pure religion" in James 1:27. How are they similar? How are they different?
 - ◇ Are you more inspired by the rewards Jesus talks about in this passage, or are you more afraid of the consequences?
- Reread the passage from last week, Matthew 25:14-30.
 - ◇ Both passages, Matthew 25:14-30 and 31-46, end with a strong punishment picture. Nowadays, many people are thrown off by this strong and seemingly unfair scene of eternal punishment. However, in Matthew 26:6-13, the sinful woman is drawn closer to Jesus. Could our understanding be leading us to untrue and unpleasant conclusions?
- Test yourself—which is true?
 - ◇ I treat people well even if I have nothing to gain.
 - ◇ I am concerned about what others will think if I'm seen with needy people.
 - ◇ I talk to people more than I talk about them.
 - ◇ Using my talent is generating new relationships with needy people.