



# THE PASTOR'S PEN

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## The Greatest General

If you were to ask me, "What is the one question that people come to you wanting answered the most?" you might be surprised by the answer. While it is true I do get a fair amount of questions dealing with the scriptures and their interpretations, there is one question that is asked more than any other. That question is: "What does God expect out of me?"

To answer that question, let me begin with an old parable that is told about a man who died and met Saint Peter at the pearly gates. Realizing Saint Peter was a wise and knowledgeable person, he said, "Saint Peter, I have been interested in military history for many years. Tell me, who was the greatest military general of all times?"

Saint Peter quickly responded, "Oh, that's an easy question. It is that man right over there," as he pointed to a very common looking fellow walking up to the gate.

The questioner was a bit puzzled by the answer and said, "You must be mistaken, Saint Peter. I knew that man on earth. He was just a common laborer. He was never in the military, much less a general."

"That's right, my friend," replied Saint Peter. "But he would have been the greatest general of all time -- if he had only joined the military and been a general."

The point of the story is simple enough. We have all been created with natural abilities and gifted by God with talents. Some of us have been blessed with many, others with a few and still others with only one or two. The number is not important, that is only a starting point. What is important is that the next step is ours. We have an obligation to use our gifts and expand that potential that is within us, but God is not going to make us. Because of His love for us, we have been given free will and we are given the choice of doing what we want to do with our gifts.

We can choose to bury our talents and save them just like the steward in parable of the pound.

Of course, the Master was not happy with that steward when it came time to give an accounting of what he had done with what he was entrusted with during his life. Or we can choose use our gifts and develop our talents in service to God.

So what is it going to be? Are you going to use your gifts and talents for God or are you going to hide them? Michelangelo said, "It is only well with me when I have a chisel in my hand." He knew what he was best at doing and he did it. In the process, he found peace and contentment in life. Perhaps that is the secret to a happy and fulfilling life: discover what you are gifted and equipped by God to do in this life and then and do it! That is what God expects of all of us, but He gives us the choice to do it or not.

Work hard at making the right choice,

*James*