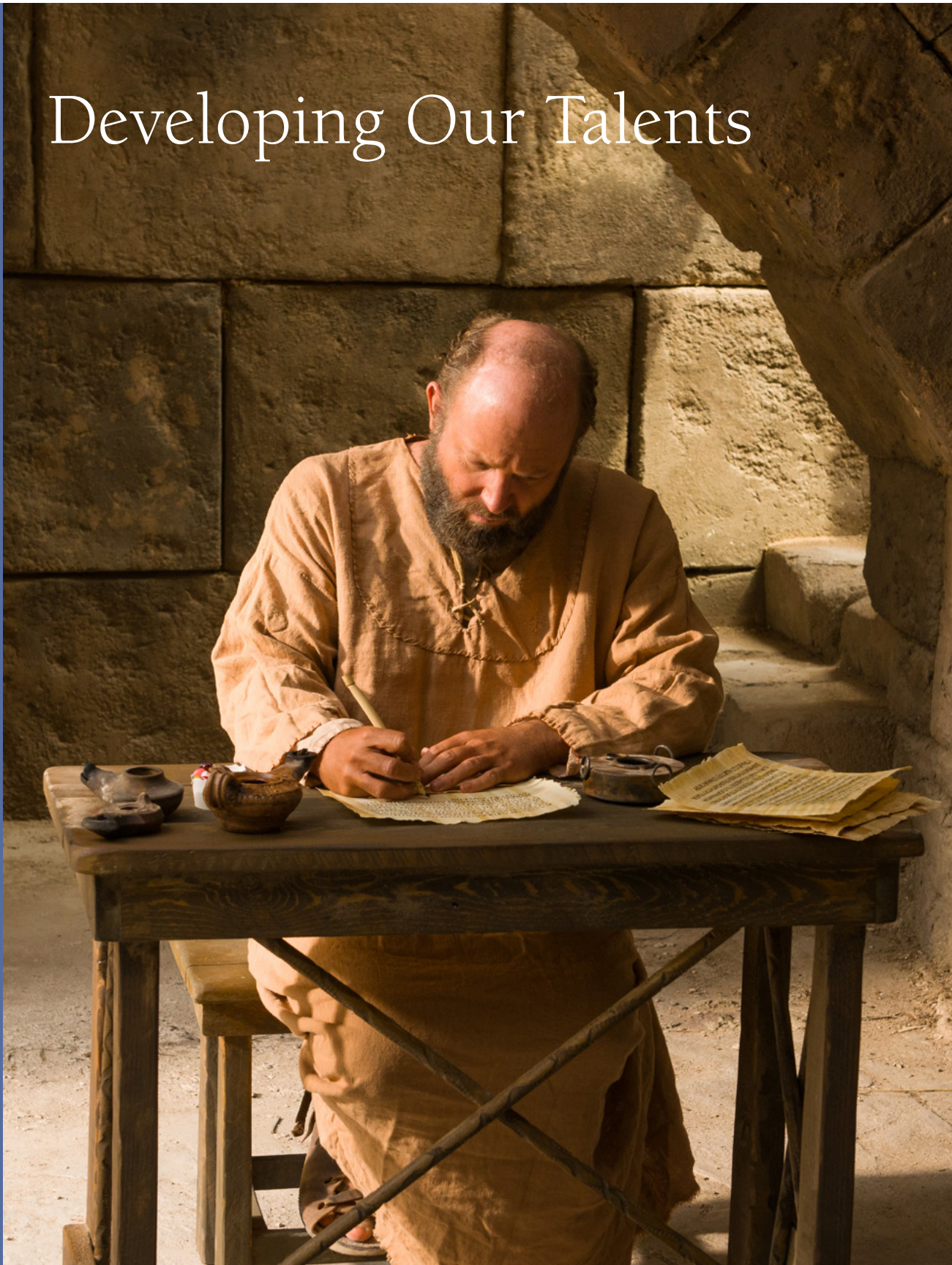


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GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

# Developing Our Talents



THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

# Developing Our Talents

## We All Have Talents and Abilities

We all have special gifts, talents, and abilities given to us by our Heavenly Father. When we were born, we brought these gifts, talents, and abilities with us.

The prophet Moses was a great leader, but he needed Aaron, his brother, to help him communicate with people. Some of us are leaders like Moses or good speakers like Aaron. Some of us can sing well or play an instrument. Others of us may be good in sports or able to work well with our hands. Not all talents are easy to recognize. Some people may have gifts like an understanding heart, patience, wisdom, cheerfulness, or the ability to teach others.

## We Should Use and Improve Our Talents

We have a responsibility to develop the talents we have been given. Sometimes we think we do not have many talents or that other people have been blessed with more abilities than we possess. Sometimes we do not use our talents because we are afraid that we might fail or be criticized by others. But we should not hide our talents. We should use them to bless others, even if that means doing small things that are not readily recognized or appreciated. When we use our talents to do good, others can see our good works and come closer to our Heavenly Father (see Matthew 5:16, page 1193).

There are certain things we must do to develop our talents. First, we must discover our talents. One way we can do this is by thinking about what we enjoy doing and what we are good at. Our family and friends can help us figure out our talents. We should also ask our Heavenly Father to help us learn about and use our talents.

Second, we must be willing to spend the time and effort to develop the talent we are seeking.

Third, we must have faith that our Heavenly Father will help us, and we must have faith in ourselves.

Fourth, we must learn the skills necessary for us to develop our talents. We might do this by taking a class, asking a friend to teach us, or reading a book.





Fifth, we must practice using our talent. Every talent takes effort and work to develop. The mastery of a talent must be earned.

Sixth, we must share our talent with others. It is by using our talents that we improve.

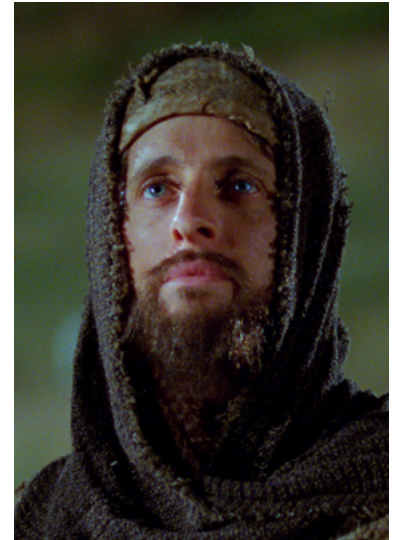
All of these steps are easier if we pray and seek the Lord's help. He wants us to develop our talents, and He will help us.

## The Lord Will Bless Us for Using Our Talents

Elder Mervyn B. Arnold of the Quorum of the Seventy taught: "God's gifts and powers are available to all of us. It is our right and responsibility to accept our spiritual gifts, multiply our talents, and share them" ("Where Am I? How to Discover and Develop Your Spiritual Gifts and Talents," *New Era*, Dec. 2014, 37).

A talent is one kind of stewardship (responsibility in the kingdom of God). Jesus Christ taught the parable of the talents, which tells us that when we serve well in our stewardship, we will be given greater responsibilities. If we do not serve well, our stewardship will eventually be taken from us. (See Matthew 25:14-30, pages 1232-33.)

Even as an inmate, you have many opportunities to develop your talents and to use those talents to bless the lives of others, including other inmates and your friends and family.



"For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby."

D&C 46:11-12, page 86

LOOK  
THEM  
UP

### Additional Scriptures

- **2 Corinthians 12:9, pages 1471-72** (weak things can be made strong)
- **James 1:17, page 1538** (gifts come from God)
- **D&C 46:8-11, pages 85-86** (we should seek and develop gifts)



# Personal Experience

When I first arrived in prison, I was at the lowest point of my life. I felt beaten down and wondered if I would ever be able to rebuild my life. Could I even go back to my profession? Or would I be doomed for failure in the future?

Fortunately I met some great men who inspired me to take every opportunity to gain and develop skills and talents that would improve my life. I will never forget when I was in an institute class, and the teacher said, "Change is constant. Growth is optional." This helped me realize that I would change no matter what—for the better or worse. There was no escaping change, but I could choose to be on the side of growth.

I signed up for religion classes, education classes, sports events, and even piano lessons. I found out that I was good at computers, which I had had little experience with before. Soon I was writing new computer literacy lessons, taking college classes, and progressing on the piano.

Did developing my talents in prison pay off? Absolutely! I have a business now where I use the art and computer skills I learned in prison. I wrote my business plan during my incarceration. I also recently arranged two songs for our choir at church, and my cooking is great—thanks to culinary arts classes.

Remember: Change is constant, and it's going to happen. But growth is optional.

"Remember: Change is constant, and it's going to happen. But growth is optional."

# Developing Our Talents

## RESPONSE FORM

What are some talents that you feel that the Lord has given you?

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How can you use your talents to bless others?

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What can you do to continue developing and improving your talents while you are an inmate?

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What are some obstacles to using your talents and how can you overcome these obstacles?

Handwriting lines for the first question.

How have you been blessed by the talents of others?

Handwriting lines for the second question.

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Handwriting lines for the third question.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Offender # \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the questions on this response form, detach, and return to the address below:

Correctional Services
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150
1-801-240-2644

Please request the next lesson you would like to study: \_\_\_\_\_