

What has God 'Set' in You?

☒ On one of my lunch hours, I went out and bought a new cell phone. I was ecstatic about the great offer a co-worker had clued me into—more minutes for literally the same amount of money I had been paying for my previous service, and no roaming charges! What a deal!

But I had no idea when I walked out of the cellular store reveling in my purchase, bag full of manuals, brochures and terms of contract in tote, that this new phone had many more capabilities than the ones that had first attracted me to it.

Back at work, I set the phone on my desk, unable to take time at that point to go over the extensive directions. I figured I would just leave it there and wait until the weekend—or some other convenient time—to delve into them.

When I finally activated the phone three days later and set up my voice mail and ring tone, I found myself at a crossroads. Should I brave the textbook-sized user manual? After all, my phone was turned on and functioning. I knew how to send and receive calls. What more did I need? I was good to go.

But the salesman's pitch about the numerous features my phone had still rang in my ears: "You've got caller ID, call waiting, free phone calls to other people in our network..." So, I peeled back the shrink-wrap from the owner's manual and began to skim it.

At first I was in awe. "Wow," I thought. "I can send an e-mail from my phone! And would you look at that, I can access the Internet...hmmm, it even has voice-activated dialing. I wonder what else this compact wonder can do?"

Soon, however, I was overwhelmed by the thought of trying to implement all the special functions. "Where would I begin?" I wondered. "I don't have a lot of time to fool around with all

these settings, and I'm not very good at high-tech stuff."

Eventually, I gave up. "I'm not going to be able to figure this out. I can just use the phone for normal calls and not worry about all this other stuff. Or maybe I'll get to it later."

For several days I walked around in cell-phone ignorance, just moving my phone in and out of my purse, hooking it into the wall to recharge, answering and initiating calls. One day, on my 40-minute commute home from work, I realized that the way I was handling my cell phone is the way many Christians handle the gifts and talents God has given them. He invests so many "features" in us—yet, like me with my cell phone, we don't take the time out to find out what they are and cultivate what He has placed in us.

Instead, we go on in blind ignorance, using only the features that are more obvious and easy to access. We fail to delve into all the "settings" that God has programmed into us not only to bless Him but also to bless others.

In my case, I saw that I had left areas untapped at times because of fear of failure or busyness or just plain laziness. Like the man Jesus described who hid the talent his master gave him (see Matt. 25:18), I too, had buried His investment in me rather than using it wisely so that it would bring Him a return.

Needless to say, this little epiphany changed my way of thinking. I don't want to receive the same response from God that the servant received from his master. The master called the man a "'wicked and lazy servant'" and took away the one talent he had given him (vv. 26,28, NKJV).

Shortly thereafter I sat down at my kitchen table with my mound of cell phone instructions and plodded through them. I read a good portion of the manual, and you know what? I'm still finding new features available to me! May it be so in

all our lives as we hunger after the Lord and truly seek to develop the gifts He has placed in us!

What has He set in you?