

How To Thank God For His Gifts

"All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair." (Exodus 35:26, ESV)

Ethan Bortnick is a piano prodigy. At age seven, he has memorized two hundred melodies and has composed a handful of his own. After hearing him play a piece on TV, I researched his work on YouTube. I recommend hearing one video where, at age six, he plays Mozart's "Rondo Alla Turca." It's a familiar piece, but he brings out a certain subtle character of the piece, even at a young age. A fact about this prodigy: Ethan's parents noticed his desire to practice when he was playing with a toy piano. They quickly honored his request to match his desire with opportunity by hiring a music teacher to help further sculpt his ability.

What if Christians were on the lookout for opportunities in a similar manner? What if we actively, as congregations and as individuals, looked among our brethren for young men who might become great preachers, song leaders, writers, speakers, or leaders given a little encouragement and guidance?

Here is a three-step approach to sculpting Christian abilities:

1. Be observant. Be on the lookout for those who express interest in trying certain roles. Try new roles yourself so you may know what each is like.
2. Be diligent. Actively work with brethren and help them develop skills in new roles. Have them start with leading prayers, then devotionals, Bible classes, and perhaps deliver sermons.
3. Be a practitioner. Recognize that improved skill means continual practice on a regular basis.

Let us not simply hope that those who have skill will announce themselves to their brethren. There is also much talent to be discovered among all Christians, isn't there? Though, it takes a different approach, let us also seek to help them find their skill. Paul mentions women helping young women detect, discover, and practice their skills at home with their families. (Tit. 2:34)

We recall that the Law said to Israel, in addition the Priests and Levites, "And with you in all the work will be every willing man who has skill for any kind of service." (1 Chron. 28:21) If God gave Israel those with skill as a matter of law, how much more should we expect? Let us help match desire and ability of eager minds with opportunities to practice. Let us also gently encourage those who may doubt their skill. Let us thank God for his gifts by being on the look out for them, patiently discovering them, and putting them to use by practice. Realize, of course, that Christian skills are not only used in worship but daily good-deed-doing. Let us speak of all these gifts alongside the Psalmist, who spoke of his talent with the lyre: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!" (Psa. 137:5) As we think of our heavenly Jerusalem, let us strive in this way to become better servants.