

Leaky Gaskets

July 1996

In the few weeks since sister Winona Knowles has lived with Hobert and Sue, her house has been unoccupied. In that short time, the washers in a couple of faucets dried out and cracked. When the new owners came in and turned the faucets on, *voilà!* A home with one bath and three showers.

This story illustrates one of the most readily observable principles of our world: *Disuse leads to ruin*. It is true with rubber gaskets, automobile engines, appliances, tools, clothes – you name it. There is a creeping corruption that deteriorates things which stand still: dust, rust, rot, mildew, evaporation and other natural pollutants attack inanimate objects and render them useless over time.

But this principle also acts upon humans, both in body and mind. The muscles which are not exercised shrivel and weaken. Joints which are not used stiffen and ache. Inactivity hinders circulation and allows greater buildup of toxins in the bloodstream. But most damaging of all is the spiritual inactivity which empties our minds of rich and deep thought and ties our tongues in knots when the door opens to speak to someone about the Bible.

God expects every Christian to be useful to the extent of his or her abilities. It is the very activity of serving that hones our skills, refreshes our spirits and enables us to develop new talents for the Lord's use.

In reference to His use of parables, Jesus said, *“For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him”* (Mt 13:12). This was so true of the Jews; not only did they forfeit the abundant blessings in their Messiah, they had only a weak and shallow concept of Mosaic Law and enjoyed none of the great riches which God had promised them through faithful compliance to it.

Jesus teaches the same truth in the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30, esp. v 29). The man who had hidden his one talent was called a *“wicked and lazy servant”* and his talent was taken from him.

Some things can be learned only by doing them. We can have “personal work” classes all day long, but the only way to become an effective teacher is to do it. We can make all kinds of excuses to sit back and do nothing and in so doing we run the risk of losing all meaningful ability to serve God.

Look back at the past week or month. Ask yourself, “How have I used myself to the glory of God?” What skill are you currently trying to improve? Are you shiny with use, or rusty with neglect?