

Productivity

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

With a new year comes new goals, new aspirations. One common goal for the new year is being organized or being more productive. While typically we think about cleaning a closet or garage or finally digging out of our email inbox, productivity dwells much deeper than earthly treasures. How can we be productive with our heavenly gifts?

Think about the Parable of the Talents from Matthew 25. Jesus tells us that we need to use our gifts wisely and for the Kingdom, lest we squander the spiritual treasures He has given to us. In our schools and classrooms, we sow the seeds of God’s love and grace daily. We plant the Word and pray that it takes root in the hearts of our children. What a productive calling God has given us!

There are those times, however, when all our productivity seems futile. Children misbehave, families get upset and we see all the hours of productive planning and teaching seemingly wither away. How can we remain hope-filled and productive amid the murky times of life?

Whether you are a teacher, an administrator or another school staff member, you are a leader in God’s mission field. You are planting and sowing for the eternal harvest. You are a shepherd of God’s sheep here on earth! In Leman and Pentak’s (2004) *The Way of the Shepherd*, the heart of the shepherd is defined by this important characteristic: have a heart for your sheep.

The most productive thing we can do for 2018 is to have a heart for the sheep we serve each day. God has already put that desire in our hearts: That’s why we have been called into the ministry! Even in the murky days, He has given us the gifts we need to serve His Kingdom. As stewards of His grace (1 Peter 4:10) and recipients of His salvation, we have everything we need to be productive in our vocation and service to others, because of the great sacrifice Jesus gave on the cross.