



*Especially for Young People*

## Tools of the Trade Telephone Technician

Matthew 25:14-25 reads: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into

the joy of thy lord.

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

Each young person has different talents. Some are inherited from their parents, some are learned from school training, and some are learned on their own; but all talents come from God. A young person may want to learn to sing and enroll in a music school, but if he does not have a talent for singing, he will never learn. However, he might have a talent in another field.

Tools are an important part of realizing your talents. In my job as an electronic technician for the telephone company, I use many basic tools to help me complete my job. They are just what I need. I would like to illustrate the tools I use, and what they accomplish on the job.

I work in several different offices, each office representing the first three digits of exchange of a telephone number. Every time someone dials their telephone, it goes through one of my offices, if a person is calling to or from certain exchanges. Years ago, before the computer system was established, we used a mechanical system. Every

time someone picked up the receiver to make a telephone call, a "line finder" would complete the call. Each number dialed would be searched by a selector that absorbed each digit dialed until the line was connected to the number someone was calling.

After working on this mechanical system for about twenty-five years, I had everything memorized and could easily do my job. One day, however, this system was hit by lightning, and within thirty-six hours we had a new digital computer system. This was a different world than I had ever been involved in. I had no idea what was going on. The company sent me to several schools, and I had to learn my job over completely.

Now that we are in a digital system, I need to explain what the interiors of my offices look like. They contain several metal frames with thousands of feet of different colors of electrical wire attached by several small pins, plus several computers. One end of each wire goes to the computer system, and the other end of the wire goes through an underground cable system, out to a pole, and to people's homes.

The first tool I use often is a simple pair of needlenose pliers. I use them to get little pieces of wire out of tiny places. I thought of how I could liken those small pliers to

my spiritual life. When God spoke to me one day, there were lots of little things in my life that I could not reach, things I could not remove. When God reached down to me, He found all those little sins that I could not get out of my life and removed them. My literal pliers specialize in finding small things in hard-to-reach places and pulling them out. That is just the way it is when Christ finds us. You may say, "These are just small things." Yes, but the small things separate a person from God. Any small problem in an electrical circuit, such as a ground, will knock out a telephone line. The devil would like to knock out every one of us.

The next tool I want to tell you about looks just like a pencil; it is called a wire wrapper. Each wire is covered with plastic insulation and must be unwrapped to work with it. This tool really does a good job of unwrapping wire, but sometimes that little rascal can cause more trouble than you can believe. You can unwrap a wire and get called away from the job, and that little unwrapped wire blends in with the other wires; then you cannot find it until someone calls in having trouble with their phone. You can look and look for it, and it looks fine, but something is wrong. It is like the devil coming along and sneaking something into your life and saying,

"There's no problem here," but there is!

After I skin the wire back, I use a tool called a wrap gun to shoot the wire on a pin that holds it on the frame. It does a neat job and holds the wire so tight that you cannot unwrap it from the frame. (It is just like a good connection with God. You must have it to live for Him.) When one of the guys with whom I work comes in and says we have a dead wire somewhere, I will look, and sure enough, there is a loose wire. We must have a good connection with the electrical circuit; likewise, we must have a good connection with God.

I also use a simple pair of side-cut pliers every day. I use them to cut and trim wire to make the finished job look neat. As I listen to our pastor or an evangelist whittling on me, digging around me, and skinning me a few times, I realize that he is just trimming me back and making me look better spiritually. I appreciate this!

The last tool I want to mention is an ohmmeter. An ohmmeter tells me if there is trouble on a line and where that trouble is. It will tell me if the current is flowing through a certain line. I compare my ohmmeter to my Bible. My Bible shows me all my trouble spots, all my weak places, and where the current has stopped flowing. That is the

reason we each need to read the Word of God. If you study and eat it daily, you will save yourself much trouble.

The Bible is just like my tool belt. I just reach down and get whatever I need. I use some tools more than others, but my tools never get jealous of one another. They never say to me, "You use him more than you use me." None of us can do the same job equally. Some have talents greater than others. Some can sing, others play can the piano, and some can speak well; but we all have to do our part to utilize the talents that God has given us. God will help you with the talents He has given you.

Young person, if I could give you some advice, it would be not to neglect the good part of your life, which is serving God, to gain things from this world. One of these days you are going to leave this world, and then your earthly possessions will mean nothing to you. You will leave this earth completely to meet God, so why not work and use your talents for those things that will last eternally? You need to get as close to God as you can and use all your talents for Him.

*Brother Paul Chapman*