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Anaya's Victory By Teresa Hampton

Little Anaya Ellick was born without hands. Before you begin to feel sorry for her, you must know that she did not allow it to keep her from doing many things. At seven years old she beat fifty other participants in a national handwriting contest. How did she do this with no hands? She balanced a pencil between her wrists and wrote beautifully!

When she emerged from the womb, Anaya was faced with a lifelong challenge. Instead of surrendering to it, however, she used it, with the help of her parents, to the fullest. It likely took courage, wisdom, and persistence, but just look what she gained—the hardship turned into a win.

Anaya's victory reminds me of a parable Jesus told about talents (Matthew 25:14-30). He said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who was going to a far away country. To one man he gave five talents, to another two, and another one, according to each one's ability. Then he went on his journey. When he returned, he called the men to whom he had entrusted his talents. The first one traded the five and earned five more. Likewise, the second man took the two and gained two more talents. The lord of those servants said, *Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joys of your lord.* The third man returned his one talent to the lord. He explained that he was afraid and went and hid it. The lord was not pleased and cast the wicked, lazy, unprofitable servant into outer darkness, *where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Our Lord has given us talents, abilities, and gifts. Some of them come in the form of hardship, loss, or grief, but end up producing a treasure. Like raw gold refined in a fire, we come out glistening. What determines the outcome? It is how we react to it. Do we see the trial as a way to achieve spiritual, emotional, and physical growth? Hopefully we do. God *expects* us to use what He has given us, and when we do, He will award us a crown of righteousness!

Today's Verse: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience* (James 1:2-3).

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