**Using What You Have**

**Having gifts that differ**

**according to the grace given to us,**

**Let us use them.**

***(Romans 12:6)***

**Spend the afternoon; you can’t take it with you. *(Annie Dillard)***

**Faced with a surplus of aluminum and a staff of skilled metalworkers after World War II, Henry Neils of Flour City Ornamental Iron Company in Minneapolis began building aluminum boats, a revolutionary idea in an age when boats were made of wood. The first Alumacraft boat rolled off the assembly line in 1946. The company today is located in St. Peter, Minnesota, and Arkadelphia, Arkansas. *(American Profile magazine)***

**When Eratosthenes, a Greek scholar and astronomer credited with measuring the circumference and the tilt of the Earth and the size and distance away of the sun and moon, needed to know merely the distance from Alexandria to Syene, men were engaged who were trained to walk in uniform steps and count them. (The distance was about 500 miles.) *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, po. 170)***

**One of the first western items the Japanese copied was a baseball. The game was introduced there in 1873 with an imported ball. Eventually, that ball wore out. They took apart the remains and made something similar – with a boot sole for the core and unraveled socks for the yarn. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Talent is only a starting point. *(Irving Berlin)***

**When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, “I used everything you gave me.” *(Erma Bombeck, Syndicated columnist) 6189812***

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**A wealthy man lay critically ill. “There’s only one thing that will save you,” the doctor said. “A brain transplant. It’s experimental and very expensive.” “Money is no object,” the man said. “Can you get a brain?” “There are three available. The first was from a college professor, but it’ll cost $10,000.” “Don’t worry, I can pay. What about the second?” “It was from a rocket scientist. It’ll cost you $100,000.” “I have the money. And I’d be a lot smarter too. But what about the third?” “The third was from a Washington bureaucrat. It will set you back half a million dollars.” “Why so much for the bureaucrat’s brain?” the patient asked. “Never been used.” *(Herman Toran, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Virtue, goes the old saying, is its own reward. But a new study has found that self-disciplined, highly organized people get a bonus: They’re less susceptible to Alzheimer’s disease. The study which looked at how personality and behavior may affect the incidence of Alzheimer’s, began with a personality survey of 997 healthy but elderly Catholic nuns and priests in the Chicago area. Researchers then tracked their mental states between the years 1994 and 2006. Nuns and priests who received a high score for “consciousness” were 89 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer’s-type dementia than their less-meticulous peers. “These are people who control impulses, and tend to follow norms and rules,” study author Robert Wilson tells New Scientist. Curiously, autopsies on the subjects who died during the study found no reduced incidence of Alzheimer’s brain plaques among those with conscientious personalities; in fact, researchers found that the brains of the various personality types showed equal rates of tangled proteins associated with the disease. Wilson suggests that the difference may be in the way that disciplined people use their brains – they’re more likely to think with their frontal lobes. Using this part of the brain, which is responsible for decision-making and planning, may make one less vulnerable to impaired thinking caused by lesions in other areas, he says. *(The Week magazine, October 19, 2007)***

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**The British ran so short of beef in 1951 that they ate 53,000 horses. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Caesar Salad has nothing to do with Julius Caesar. It was invented in 1924 by Caesar Cardini, an Italian-American chef working in Tijuana, Mexico. During the Fourth of July weekend that year, food supplies were short, so Cardini made do with what he had – Romaine lettuce, Parmesan cheese, anchovies, eggs, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, croutons and spices. To cover for the lack of ingredients, he instructed his waitstaff to construct the salad tableside with a dramatic flair. *(Tidbits)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**My friend Mark and I work in a lawn-mower-parts warehouse. Somehow Mark got the idea that his wife did not want a card on Valentine’s Day, but when he spoke to her on the phone he discovered she was expecting one. Not having time to buy a card on his way home, Mark was in a quandary. Then he looked at the lawn-mower trade magazines scattered around the office -- and got an idea. Using scissors and glue, he created a card with pictures of mowers, next to which he wrote: “I lawn for you mower and mower each day.” Mark’s wife loved it. The card immediately graced their refrigerator door. *(Gene Hyde, in Reader’s Digest)***

**You don’t have a right to the cards you believe you should have been dealt. You have an obligation to play the hell out of the ones you’re holding. *(Cheryl Strayed, memoirist)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Trappist monks at the New Melleray Abbey in Peosta, Iowa, are well known for their high-quality handcrafted wooden caskets, made from timber harvested from their own forest. *(American Profile magazine)***

**Walter E. Diemer worked as an accountant for the Fleer Chewing Gum Company, but he liked to play with new gum recipes in his spare time. He accidentally invented bubble gum while tinkering in 1928, which Fleer marketed under the name Dubble Bubble. Why did he decide to make it pink? As it turned out, that was the only food coloring he had handy at the time. *(Tidbits of Denver)***

**In 1926, when a Los Angeles restaurant owner with the all-American name of Bob Cobb was looking for a way to use up leftovers, he threw together some avocado, celery, tomato, chives, watercress, hard-boiled eggs, chicken, bacon, and Roquefort cheese, and named it after himself: a Cobb salad. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 164)***

**Here’s to a lady named Merlitta Bentz who in 1909 made a filter out of her son’s notebook paper and invented the world’s first drip coffee maker. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Researchers at Johns Hopkins University are hoping to use the blood of patients who've recovered from the coronavirus to treat severe infections. They hope "convalescent serum" containing antibodies harvested from the recovered patients' blood might be used to slow or treat the disease. Doctors using similar transfusions during the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918 reported a 50 percent drop in deaths. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 27, 2020)***

**Adolph Coors came to America from Germany in 1868 at age 21. Five years later, he opened his brewery along the banks of Clear Creek in Golden, Colorado. Using Rocky Mountain spring water, Coors built an empire that became America’s third largest brewer. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The roads on the island of Guam are made of coral. This is because the ground coral sand of the beaches is used to mix concrete instead of importing regular sand from thousands of miles away. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 162)***

**Creativeness often consists of merely turning up what is already there. Did you know that right and left shoes were thought up only a little more than a century ago? *(Bernice Fitz-Gibbon)***

**This is one of the hardest lessons to grasp because some people make it all look so easy. We see them enjoying the fruit and have no idea what it takes to plant and water the tree. Jimmy Cagney recalled being backstage at Soldier Field in Chicago during World War II, while Bing Crosby, the epitome of the relaxed performer, effortlessly chatted with the audience and sang a few songs. When the singer came off the stage he was soaked with sweat. “The perspiration on him was an absolute revelation,” said Cagney. “He was giving everything he had in every note he sang, and the apparent effortlessness was a part of his very hard work.” *(Ralph Kinney Bennett, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Lacking flowers, the Chukche tribesmen of Siberia, decorate the graves of their dead with reindeer antlers. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Lucky people take second looks at things others barely see the first time. A young disc jockey in Oakland, California, found his on-air humor didn’t impress the station’s general manager. Musing on what to do, he pulled a discarded magazine out of a studio wastebasket. It contained biographies and record-sales statistics on pop singers and musicians. That night, before playing a record, the D.J. teased listeners with some obscure fact from the magazine about a singer. After a record or two, he identified the singer and played one of that artist’s songs. Listeners loved it, and Casey Kasem was launched toward his nationally syndicated “American Top 40” radio career. *(Ralph Kinney Bennett, in Reader’s Digest)***

**It all began when Chester Greenwood’s ears got cold. Allergic to the woolen scarves that others tied around their heads, the industrious teenager wanted a better way to warm his ears in Maine’s chilly winter weather. So, using wire, beaver fur, cloth and a pair of pliers, he fashioned the first set of earmuffs in 1873. Only 15 at the time, he hardly could have imagined that, a century later, his hometown would dedicate a day in his honor, complete with a parade, speeches from local dignitaries, and the raising of a Chester Greenwood Flag at the Franklin Country Courthouse. However, that’s exactly what the town of Farmington, Maine, has done each year since 1977 when the state Legislature designated Chester Greenwood Day, celebrated on the first Saturday in December. (Richard Matthews, in American Profile magazine)**

**The value of an idea lies in the using of it. *(Thomas Edison)***

**Hide not your Talents, they for Use were made: What’s a Sun-dial in the Shade! *(Benjamin Franklin)***

**I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. *(Galileo Galilei)***

**Ernest Gallo grew up on a vineyard owned by his father, an immigrant from the wine-rich region of Piedmont, Italy. After their parents died, Ernest and his younger brother Julio began E. & J. Gallo Winery in 1933 with $5,900 and a wine recipe from a public library. With Ernest directing the company’s innovative marketing campaigns, the duo turned the distinctly American family business into one of the world’s largest wine-making empires. *(Time magazine)***

**Before the Spanish conquests in South America, the Indians (Incas) had no iron. They had gold in comparatively large quantities, using it not only for decoration but also for everyday objects such as nails, eating utensils, combs, and eyebrow tweezers. (Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 19)**

**Byron Nelson, who owned two of golf’s oldest and prestigious records, grew up on a cotton farm in Waxahachie, Texas. He was 10 years old when he entered the world of golf, working as a caddie in a country club in Fort Worth. When no golfers were using the links, Nelson stole out to play the course alone. At night, he would place a white handkerchief next to the hole so he could putt in the dark. *(The Week magazine, October 13, 2006)***

**A man had bought a new gadget--unassembled, of course--and after reading and rereading the instructions he couldn't figure out how it went together. Finally, he sought the help of an old handyman who was working in the backyard. The old fellow picked up the pieces, studied them, then began assembling the gadget. In a short time, he had it put together. “That's amazing,” said the man. “And you did it without even looking at the instructions!” “Fact is,” said the old man, “I can't read, and when a fellow can't read, he's got to think.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The greatest waste of natural resources is that most (men) go to their graves with their best song still in them. *(Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Don Briggs, a 57-year-old physical-education teacher, has always wanted to scale mountains. But in his pancake-flat hometown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, mountains are mighty scarce – so Briggs has begun creating them. On many frozen winter mornings, he sprays water on several 70-foot-high grain silos at a friend’s farm. The resulting ice, 4 foot thick in spots, offers an exhilarating challenge for frustrated climbers, some of whom have come from Ohio, Minnesota, and even China. More than a dozen Midwestern farmers have asked Briggs how they can turn their silos into climbing walls. “Once you get to the top, the view is amazing,” Briggs says. “It feels like you can see the entire world.” *(The Week magazine, January 26, 2007)***

**You know ocean-going freighters of the 19th century sailed south out of Boston with ice blocks cut from New England’s lakes. But did you know ice then accounted for more tonnage so shipped than anything else but cotton? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**During World War II, construction of ice-ships was considered. Unlike crude icebergs, these ships would be engineered and metal-clad, enormously strong and especially buoyant. According to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, “Had not the atomic bomb been dropped on Japan and the war come to an end, ice-ships would almost certainly have appeared certainly have appeared on the oceans of the world.” *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 258)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**What toy are people least likely to use after they buy it? Could be the kite. The International Kite Fliers Association reported that the kites sold outnumbered the kites flown by about 40 to 1. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**There’s a new type of alarm clock on the market. It makes no noise. It uses lights and gets brighter and brighter until you wake up. I already have one of these. It’s called a window. *(Jay Leno)***

**As a young editor struggling to start a pocket-size journal that would condense and present the most interesting articles of the day, DeWitt Wallace, co-founder of Reader’s Digest, was eager to read every magazine he could lay his hands on. But he could scarcely afford subscriptions. Instead, he went each day to the library’s periodicals room. When, nearly 60 years later, Wallace’s magazine had become the most widely read publication in the world, he gave a lasting thank-you to the New York Public Library. It was a debt of gratitude happily paid to an institution that gave him and countless others easy access to a world of knowledge. *(Reader’s Digest)***

**People were making music over 20,000 years ago. They played flutes made of reindeer antlers and bear bones. They made whistles from hollow bird bones and the toe bones of deer. *(The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 84)***

**When Broadway star Mary Martin was 12 she went to Sunday school and heard something from the minister teaching the class that stuck with her to this day: “He read us something from the Bible about the gift of talent, any talent – for cooking, whatever – and how if you don’t use it and work at it all your life, you lose it. Well, this made a tremendous impression on me. I finished school at 16 and I started to teach dancing. I had 300 pupils by the time I was 19, and three schools of dance.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The Mayflower was dismantled by the Pilgrims and turned into a barn. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 275)***

**Mayonnaise is said to be the invention of the French chef of the Duke de Richelieu in 1756. While the duke was defeating the British at Port Mahon, his chef was creating a victory feast that included a sauce made of cream and eggs. When the chef realized that there was no cream in the kitchen, he improvised, substituting olive oil for the cream. A new culinary masterpiece was born and the chef named it Mahonnaise in honor the duke’s victory. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 165)***

**Unlike other Nobel Peace Prize winners, Mother Teresa was not a polished speaker, but her charm, humor and single-minded devotion shone whenever she spoke and wherever she traveled. *(The Pantagraph)***

**While away on business, a colleague and I decided to catch a movie. As we approached the theater, we read the marquee. It bore the name of the feature film followed by the numbers “7,” “5,” and “9”. Assuming these were the show times, we were somewhat perplexed by their order. I went inside to ask about it. “Our next show is at eight o’clock,” the woman in the box office announced. “Eight o’clock?” I said surprised. “But the marquee says seven, five and nine.” “Right,” she agreed. “That’s 7:59. We lost our number eight.” *(Diane Clancy, in Reader’s Digest)***

**With its soft meaty body, the octopus is an attractive target for predators. So it constructs a protective den in the rocks, sometimes with a peephole for it keen eyes to peer out from. If good rocky crevices aren’t available, it will learn to use whatever is around it – a shell, an old crate, or the champagne bottle tossed decades ago from my adviser’s shipboard wedding just offshore from the Hopkins Marine Laboratory in Pacific Grove, California. An amazing video making the rounds on the Internet shows octopuses in Indonesia that have learned to forage the increased numbers of coconut shell discarded from tourist boats and pull together two halves to make a spherical suit of armor. (Rafe Sagarin, in Learning From the Octopus, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 23, 2012)**

**An opossum eats just about anything. Including your shoes, it you leave them out. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Have you ever wondered why the little red schoolhouse was painted red? The custom originated in the Northeastern United States, where red paint was cheaper than any other color. *(Denver P. Tarle, in A Treasury of Trivia)***

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**A panda’s diet consists almost entirely of bamboo stalks, shoots, leaves and roots. When given a chance, they will also eat many other foods including fish, flowers, mushrooms, carrion and small mammals. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Pandas eat bamboo shoots because they can get them. They’ll eat meat, too, when they can catch it, if ever. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**The peanut butter and jelly sandwich was invented during World War II, when GIs combined the two from what they had in their rations. *(Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 240)***

**Gary Dahl dug up some rocks from his backyard in Santa Cruz, California, and decided to take a chance on a joke. A lot of people thought he was crazy, but Dahl put his rocks in a box, wrote a funny pamphlet, and became a millionaire. People bought Pet Rocks like crazy and Dahl is still laughing. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 94)***

**In his early days, Picasso kept warm by burning some of his drawings. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts)***

**So plentiful was platinum in some areas of Siberia where iron was scarce that stovepipes were made from it. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**It is not sufficient to have great qualities; we must be able to make proper use of them. *(Francois de La Rochefoucauld)***

**Do what you can, with what you have, where you are. *(Theodore Roosevelt)***

**Mary Anning collected fossil shells on beaches near Lyme Regis in southern England and peddled them to tourists. To support her widowed mother. If you’ve never heard of her, maybe you’ve heard the line about her: “She sold seashells by the seashore.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A doctor who had devoted his life to helping the poor lived over a liquor store in the ghetto section of a large city. In front of the liquor store was a sign reading Dr. Williams Is Upstairs. When he died, he had no relatives and he left no money for his burial. He had never asked for payment from anyone he had ever treated.  Friends and patients scraped enough money together to bury the good doctor, but they had no money for a tombstone. If appeared that his grave was going to be unmarked until someone came up with a wonderful suggestion. They took the sign from in front of the liquor store and nailed it to a post over his grave. It made a lovely epitaph: Dr. Williams Is Upstairs*. (Bits & Pieces)***

**In 1873, Fred Hatch built the nation’s first upright silo on his father’s farm near Spring Grove, Illinois. He dug an 8-foot-deep hole, lined it with rock and mortar, and extended the wooden tower 16 feet above ground to store corn silage. *(American Profile magazine)***

**In Philadelphia in 1929, Charles Darrow lost his job as an engineer. He found himself with plenty of spare time, so he spent hours inventing a board game on his kitchen table to keep himself busy. For the game, he used street names from Atlantic City, New Jersey, where he used to visit. The name of the game was Monopoly, which became one of America's most popular games, and Charles Darrow became rich -- all because he had lost his job. (Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 123)**

**Famed director Steven Spielberg got an early start in filmmaking; when he was still a kid, he used his father’s Super-8 camera to make several movies. One of his youthful films was about a UFO invasion, and – acting out what were surely many young boys’ fantasies about annoying siblings – he cast his sisters as victims of the extraterrestrials. Special effects evidently were important to him even then: Spielberg got some cherry tomatoes from his mother, which he smashed up to use as blood. *(Samantha Weaver, in Tidbits)***

**Before the Civil War, Edmund McIlhenny operated a sugar plantation and a saltworks on Avery Island, Louisiana. Yankee troops invaded the area in 1863 and McIlhennty had to flee. When he returned in 1865, he found the sugar fields and saltworks ruined. One of the few things left were some hot Mexican peppers that had reseeded themselves in the kitchen garden. McIlhenny, who was living hand to mouth, started experimenting with ground peppers to make a sauce that would liven up his dull diet. He succeeded so well he began selling it to friends. His first bottles were discarded ladies’ cologne bottles reclaimed from local trash heaps. You’ve probably tried McIlhenny’s product yourself. It’s the famous Tabasco sauce. Dozens of big companies keep trying to buy the McIlhenny Co. and its Tabasco business, but it remains a family enterprise, one of the oldest and most successful still around. (Bits & Pieces)**

**You must use your talent, whatever it may be, in order to increase it.  
*(Charles Fillmore, in Prosperity)***

**Junk box: The first television was made by John Logie Baird, a Scottish engineer, in 1924. He used cardboard, scrap wood, needles, and string for some of the parts. *(The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 174)***

**It is better to take what does not belong to you than to let it lie around neglected. *(Mark Twain)***

**The Twinkee Defense: 75, the age of the sweet treat that James A. Dewar came up with as a Hostess bakery manager in Chicago. Dewar wanted to use the shortcake pans that sat idle all year except during a short strawberry season. So in 1930 he came up with a little golden cake injected with a banana cream filling, changed to vanilla during a World War II banana shortage. Say what you will about the springy food, but it’s an American icon. *(Rocky Mountain News, April 20, 2005)***

**Use what talents you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best. *(Henry Van Dyke)***

**Violinist Nicolo Paganini had willed his violin to Genoa – the city of his birth, on condition that it never be played. Our information was that after a century and a half, the violin was disintegrating. We were led to believe that a peculiarity of fine wood is that as long as it is used and handled, it shows little wear, and that as soon as it is discarded, it begins to decay. We are happy to report that we were wrong. Paganini’s violin is alive and well. Ronald Stein, a London advertising consultant and Bits & Pieces reader, sent us two magazine features from the 1950s and 60s that tell us the violin is taken from its sealed glass case once a year to be played at a special concert. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A group of birds called “megapodes” do not sit on their eggs like other birds. Instead, they incubate their eggs using volcanic heat or the heat of decaying plants. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**The wok began as a Bronze-Age Mongolian helmet that doubled as a cooking pan. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 65)***

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