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**TO EACH ONE HIS GIFT**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"I can't do anything right! I can't!" Justin exclaimed, dropping the wrench onto the concrete floor and sitting down on one of the shop benches nearby. Why was he clumsy? he wondered, chiding himself for his error. It had happened again, he thought sadly. Would he ever be able to achieve even a measure of success? Would he?

He felt a hand come down gently on his shoulder. Lifting a crestfallen face with sad eyes, he met the eyes of his instructor. Kindness and understanding registered in those eyes. "I flubbed again," Justin declared sadly.

"This isn't the end of everything, my friend. So what if you 'flubbed,' as you say! We all make errors, Justin," the kind instructor replied.

"But I must be the worst, Mr. Waiters. It seems as if everything I touch either crashes and goes to pieces or doesn't fit where it should fit. I'm certainly not skilled or blessed with talent. If only I had one thing I could do well; but I don't."

Justin's countenance bore a look of total and utter dejection and frustration. Mr. Waiters scrutinized the teenager carefully.

"I want to have a talk with you, Justin," Mr. Waiters said. "I've been wanting to do this for a long time; now is as good a time as any."

"I try, Mr. Waiters. I really do try; but everything I try to do seems to either go wrong or be the wrong method. What's wrong with me? I can't do anything right. Nothing!"

"Justin," the instructor began, "the only way to avoid failure is to never strive for success -- to remain fixed where you are. But you can learn from failure -- figure out what's wrong and then correct it. You have the power within you to change what went wrong.

"Many a prominent man and prosperous business executive failed -- repeatedly -- before they became successful. One preeminent man in the business world once wrote that he 'felt at home with failure, having breathed deep of its vivifying air.' Those are his words.

"Scrutiny of defeat is critical. You have to confront your failure in order to avoid repeating it."

"But I've tried doing this, Mr. Walters, and it hasn't helped me. I guess I have no talent for anything."

"Don't say that, Justin. Never. God has endowed every one of us with talent. Some have more; some less. But each of us has something we are especially skilled and adept at doing."

"I honestly wish I knew what mine is, Mr. Walters. It makes me feel like a perfect dunce, when I see how easily the other fellows do what is expected and required of them."

Mr. Walters was silent for a while. Then he said, "Based on almost 200 interviews with people who survived major career defeats, I read that, basically, there are six common reasons for failure. Lack of social skills was one, and a wrong fit was another. It listed four others, but I want to elaborate on only the two which I mentioned; social skills and a wrong fit.

"You are an excellent student, Justin; your grades are right up there at the very top. You excel with books. As the word social connotes, you will recognize this as meaning a relationship with other people -- your peers and counterparts, in your case. You may get along on brilliance alone for awhile, but most other things you do involve other people. You can have great academic intelligence but lack social intelligence -- the ability to be a good listener, to be sensitive to others, and to take criticism well.

"People with poor interpersonal skills have trouble taking criticism. When confronted with a mistake, they want to give up. Some, not you, thank God! become moody, volatile and angry.

"I don't feel you fit into this category, Justin. I have observed you carefully for some time and I'm wondering if you don't fall into the second category; the wrong fit category.

"In my observation, you have not failed at all. I feel you are suffering from a case of mis-match. Success requires fitting one's abilities, interests, personality, style and values with one's work. You love books; anything dealing with or pertaining to books, figures, head knowledge. This, from my observation and my perspective, is your field.

"Since you have opted to take this course in mechanics and how to repair one's car, et cetera, my suggestion to you is, learn all you can from it. Someday, God willing, even though you aren't excelling in this area, you may find the knowledge extremely helpful. Our mind is a masterpiece of creation

by God. The brain is so much like a computer: it stores away that which it has heard and learned. Someday your 'recall' of knowledge and skills learned in here may serve you well, when or if your car has problems. Labor for car repairs and services can be quite costly, running into a high figure at times, Justin, as you well know."

"Yes, this is true, Mr. Waiters. And I am trying, honestly trying, to learn everything I can from this course. I do feel totally out of place in here, though. Clumsy, may be the word I should have used. When I watch B. J. and Cal and Matt, and some of the other fellows, I feel downright clumsy and ignorant. These fellows work like pros. Everything they do looks easy and natural and . . . and yes, enjoyable to them."

"That's because they're 'at home' in their field. They are working in an area of what I call a proper fit. Give them books, Justin -- books that require deep thinking and long hours of intense study -- and some of them are totally 'lost' in what is expected and required of them. God gives to every man his gifts; some one thing, some another. But from each man He expects his best in using and distributing the gifts or talents -which He has so freely given him. Since your 'proper fit' seems to be in the area of books, I feel that God has a calling for you in which these will be greatly needed."

"Thanks, Mr. Waiters. Thanks. Much!" Justin exclaimed brightly.

He felt like a heavy load was lifted off him. Now he understood. Yes, now he understood. And he would do all within his power to prepare himself for the field in which he felt God was calling him.

Mr. Walters slapped him congenially upon his broad shoulders, then walked away.

Tears swam in Justin's eyes. He hadn't told anybody about his calling, not even his parents. Not yet, that is. The day would come when he would tell them. But for now he would keep the little secret stored sacredly inside his heart. And meanwhile, he would utilize the book knowledge and book learning to its utmost possibilities and expectations. He wanted to be at his very best when the Lord would thrust him out into the harvest field, ripe and bending over with ripened grain.

With a new thrust of determination and a prayer to God for understanding and wisdom in the shop course, he picked up the dropped wrench and tried again. One needed mechanic skills on a mission field, didn't he? This was his real reason for signing up for the course.

With a new awareness, Justin began to work, and this time everything seemed to fall into place.

"Just like my life!" he said reverently, looking upward from where his strength and help had come.