

GOD GIVES YOU GIFTS, Part 1

GIFTS FROM THE FATHER

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God has given marvelous gifts to His people, so that they may accomplish great and godly things in His name. Ordinary people, acting according to the grace gifts of God, will do extraordinary things in their lives.

Yet, there is a great deal of confusion and dissension about His gifts, and where this is so, there is relational turmoil and spiritual fruitlessness. This ought not to be.

Above All Others

Without question, the greatest gift of all, the one without which all others remain FRUITLESS, is God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

This means more than seeing with your eyes; it means becoming acquainted with by experience, or making real in your life.

In other words, apart from a vital, daily relationship with God through Jesus Christ, all of God's gifts (and there are many for everyone!) lie generally dormant and unavailable to the Holy Spirit, and remain, therefore, spiritually ineffective.

Christ's saving power is the key that unlocks the treasure house of God's grace gifts in your life!

If you have been resisting Jesus Christ, or denying His lordship, or delaying your commitment to follow Him, then you are selling short the life you have been given.

If this is the way it is with you, you may have felt like a mouse in a wheel—running and running and getting nowhere — and no wonder! It's no wonder if you keep hitting the same stone walls or stumbling into the same potholes.

If there's a rut in your life, from which you cannot escape, you need more than intellectual appreciation of Christianity—you need the saving power of Jesus Christ to rescue and transform you.

As the hymnist wrote, "He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!"

If this is your case, run—don't walk—to Jesus Christ today. Open your heart wide to Him and ask Him for a miracle—your miracle of salvation. Trust Him to work effectively in you. Your case is NOT too hard for Him!

Our God is One

We do not worship several gods.

When you are sick, you don't have to wonder what is the name of the God who heals—His name is Jesus!

When you need guidance for life's decisions, you don't need to wonder what is the name of the God who gives wisdom—His name is Jesus!

There is not one god to control the weather and another to control the sea. There is not one god to grant victory in battle and another to grant success in business.

"There is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all." (Ephesians 4:6)

This one Almighty God reveals Himself as Father, and as Son, and as Holy Spirit. These are not three separate individuals who share equal godhood, but one true God who expresses Himself in three dimensions of relationship.

Each of His attributes is expressed in all three dimensions of relationship. He loves us as Father, and as Brother, and as Guiding Spirit. He speaks truth to us as Almighty God and as Lord and as Holy Spirit.

And in each of these roles He is a Giver. His gifts are plenteous. As many as the stars in the heavens and the grains of sand upon the beach, so numerous are His gifts for your life. We are going to explore some of the riches of His grace towards us in this series.

The Designer's Gifts

We begin today, with what I refer to as the Gifts of the Father. Everyone of you possesses gifts from the Father. It is the nature of your being; that is, you were born with them. The Gifts of the Father are what make you who you are. They impart personality, values, and motivations to your life. For this reason, I will refer to them as Motivational Gifts.

The reason that some people think that order and punctuality are what make the world go around and other people think that spontaneity and flexibility are what make eagles fly, is because God gave them that perception. One is not right and the other wrong because of such differing viewpoints.

In fact, what makes eagles fly is both order and flexibility, punctuality and spontaneity. Flight is the result of both precise science and variable art.

How dull and rigid our world would be if all were scientists and none were artists. How chaotic and primitive if all were artists and none were scientists.

So Paul reasoned, *"Suppose the whole body were an eye—then how would you hear? Or if your whole body were just one big ear, how could you smell anything?"* (1 Corinthians 12:17)

Diversity Is Good

Motivational Gifts establish our diversity, our individual uniqueness (like a snowflake).

Romans 12:4-8

⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.

⁶ *God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. ⁷ If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*

This passage teaches two important things:

- Each of us has a *special* function, a *different* work to do.
- We are mutually necessary.

Then, Paul describes the Father's gifts as personal motivations:

- The visionary sees things as they should be and urges change.
- The helper serves others.
- The teacher explains truth.
- The cheerleader encourages others.
- The supporter gives generously.
- The administrator leads diligently.
- The caregiver offers cheerful kindness.

Unique Perspectives

These seven Motivational Gifts represent the variety of perspectives each of us may have about what is most important in life.

Your Motivational Gift indicates what is most important to you—what motivates you, what interests you, what floats your boat, what turns you on, what makes life exciting for you—it is what you are passionate about.

For the Visionary, it is all about speaking God's truth. Life is very "black and white" to them—truth or error; Their view of the world is that people are prone to error and need to be told the truth.

For the Helper, it is all about serving others. They see life as full of opportunities. Their view is that people can't do it all alone, they need willing assistants.

For the Teacher, it is all about carefully explaining things to people. To them, life requires understanding. In their view, people are confused and need someone to explain things clearly.

For the Cheerleader, it is all about championing a cause. They believe life requires cheerleaders. They often see people as listless and in need of lots of encouragement.

For the Supporter, it is all about financing success. As they see it, life requires money. In their minds, people need help to reach their dreams.

For the Administrator, it is all about organizing the work. To them, all of life requires good organization. Their viewpoint suggests that people are slovenly and need someone to guide them.

For the Caregiver, it is all about showing kindness. It appears to them that people are hurting and they need someone to care.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of personality traits, but if you think of these as general categories, you will find that the motivations you have felt or witnessed in others will fit pretty well under one of these seven headings.

God Loves Variety

The first thing that should be evident to us is that God loves variety.

Do you remember that I said to you when I began that “the one gift without which all others remain fruitless, is God’s gift of salvation through Jesus Christ”?

That means that without a faith-relationship with God through Jesus Christ, your gifts are ineffective in accomplishing their purpose in your life. Instead of producing blessing, they will produce struggle and frustration.

Variety Breeds Conflict

The second thing that should appear is that variety inevitably breeds conflict in the world as we now know it.

The Visionary says, “No one follows the truth!”

The Helper says, “No one is willing to help!”

The Teacher says, “No one understands!”

The Cheerleader says, “No one listens!”

The Supporter says, “No one shares!”

The Administrator says, “No one follows through!”

The Caregiver says, “No one cares!”

Everyone has a different view of the cause and its solution. Often, instead of resolving issues, they resort to arguing about purpose and methodology.

Since God is the God of peace, it is plain that such conflict was not part of His master design; it is part of the corruption resulting from the fall; it is the result of sin in our world.

Jesus Is the Answer

The third thing that should surface in your minds is that the establishment of God’s Kingdom in the saving power of Jesus Christ—one person at a time—reduces the resultant conflicts and releases the glorious beauty of the Gifts of the Father to the world.

All seven gift categories, taken together, provide for the wide variety of needs that people, including ourselves, encounter in the world. When they operate together graciously, life, with all its bitterness, becomes sweet.

Troubles are not eliminated—that will require the renovation of the entire earth system, as when Jesus Christ returns—but troubles are met with grace, hurts are soothed and healed, weaknesses are overcome by cooperation, and we make it through... together.

We Need Each Other

We need the Visionary's preaching, so we may know the truth that sets us free.

We need the Helper's hand, for two are better than one.

We need the Teacher's patient explanation, for understanding is worth more than silver.

We need the Cheerleader, because discouraging voices are so prevalent.

We need the Supporter's generosity, for the work is great and costly.

We need the Administrator's skill, lest we be overwhelmed by the task.

We need the Caregiver, for we all stumble in many ways.

We all need each other. Not only those who are "like you." Also (and especially) those who are different from you, who may tend to grate on your nerves, because their perspective reveals the gaps in your own personality.

When another's weaknesses are exposed, don't take advantage of them or manipulate them. Remember, "love covers a multitude of sins." Meet their need with your gift, if it's appropriate. Or, with grace share their burdens and lighten their load.

When your weaknesses are exposed, don't run, don't hide, don't fight back defensively. Call on the Lord, whose strength is made complete in your weakness. Give Him the chance to show Himself strong on your behalf.

The Father knows what He is doing. He has given you gifts for a purpose. And He has placed other gifted people in your life for a purpose.

Mutual appreciation and cooperation are the keys to enjoying them fully and giving a full witness of Christ.