

GOD LIKES TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS

If you are new to this blog, welcome to the adventure! In this exploration section of the blog, we dig into God's word to discover truths about certain topics. In several related posts, we explored what the Bible has to say about guarding your heart as well as filtering the desires of your heart.

Keeping the heart in check requires daily self-examination...daily surrender to God...daily repentance.

We learned from Moses in Deuteronomy 30:16 that we are called to keep God's commandments, and if we do that, there are promises of blessing. The blessings that God promises are gifts to us.

So I ask you, does God love for His children to receive gifts? Of course He does!

God, The Perfect Gift Giver

The Bible tells us in James 1:17 that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." God gives perfect gifts.

I don't know about you, but I don't always give perfect gifts! Much of what I've given has either collected dust or ended up in the Goodwill pile! Maybe it's just not my gift...pun intended!

But God isn't that way. He is far more observant than I could ever hope to be, and even better, He knows the inner depths of your heart and desires. He knows what you need, and He knows what you want too.

Jesus asks an interesting question in Matthew 7:11 that is thought worthy of camping on for a little while. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?"

Maybe you are a good gift giver...kudos to you! Maybe you're not...good, come over to my camp! Either way, we all can probably name at least one person that can wrap a present so that it looks like it came straight from the gift shop. I can name several, so I'm a little envious that my DNA wasn't given the crafty bow-tying gene. I just can't tie a decent bow to save my life! And I admit it. Nevertheless, God doesn't have that issue of giving imperfect gifts. He gives *perfect* gifts.

While we are camping on the idea of His perfect gifts, is it fair to ask you if you recognize the gifts He's given you as *perfect*...or perfectly timed? Can you think of some gifts he's given you that you've not always classified as perfect?

Getting What You Don't Want

What if our camp allowed us to use the words *gift* and *blessing* interchangeably? Maybe that would help us think about blessings in a broader sense. I present this exercise to you because when God promised His people blessings for obedience, He didn't necessarily mean that it would be material things.

What if Israel's wanderings in the desert were a gift, an opportunity, to *know* the Living God like no other people on earth? What if we began to see the stinky situations of life as blessings instead of burdens?

One song that has really spoken to me over the years is Laura Story's *Blessings*. What if...the hard things in your life, your greatest disappointments, perhaps...are a blessing in disguise...a perfectly timed gift from God?

That's a really hard thought! There was a day when I would've fought someone for telling me that my divorce was a blessing, but as the years have rolled past, I can look back and see how close He drew me near in that time of need, and I see the lessons learned that I *never* would have learned otherwise. I don't wish that pain on anyone, but if that's what it takes to have an authentic, intimate relationship with Christ, then His will be done!

I can give you another example where God's fingerprints are permanently etched into my story. I have a beautiful daughter with special-needs. The doctors suggested I abort while I was pregnant and told me that the birth defect was so severe that she would have no quality of life. She would never walk or talk. The news was devastating, but God intervened and rewarded my decision to keep her.

I can tell you from experience, friend, that God has ABSOLUTELY blessed me with a GIFT straight from Heaven! She is my joy...a walking, talking miracle...and a blessing. In fact, as I type this, we just celebrated her sweet-sixteenth birthday! There are challenges that come with disabilities, for sure, but no question in my mind that He has blessed me infinitely by her life!

Getting What You Do Want

God's primary concern will always be for purity in the motives of your heart. When you ask Him for material goods, His primary concern will always take precedence over haphazardly granting any of your personal wish lists. He *does* grant your personal wishes too, but first, He wants your heart to be right with Him.

All throughout Scripture you will see how God pursues you to have a relationship with Him and instructs you to keep His commandments. You are reminded in Deuteronomy 30:17-18 that "if" your heart turns away from Him you are deserving of death. This applies to everyone...we all have a choice.

If you read through Romans 1:18-32, Paul writes in verse 25 that the people "exchanged the truth of God for the lie." In this example you will see that their hearts had turned from God and they were pursuing unrighteous things.

What do you think God's response was to these people in verses 26 and 28? Yes, God *is* patient and wants everyone to have a personal relationship with Him, but eventually He gave them over to the unclean things they pursued. He let them go! He *knew* their hearts. And they were wicked. In this case, He let them have exactly what they wanted even though there were much bigger eternal consequences at stake.

I toss that example into our camp of thought just to prove that you can't compare yourselves to others. Just because you know someone with a shiny red car and a seemingly perfect life, it doesn't mean that their hearts are right with God. They can even sit in the pew next to you at church every single Sunday! The matters of the heart are between them and the Lord...it's not our place to judge...and it's not our place to compare. Stay focused on who God wants *you* to be.

Being Who He's Called You to Be

Some of the wicked people's traits from the passage above are covetousness, envy, and pride. How easily can we identify those same traits in ourselves? How does the passage affect you as you self-examine your own life? Just because your salvation is secure doesn't mean you're exempt from these temptations.

Romans 3:23 says that everyone sins...you and me. Our sins may include envy of others (i.e. My thinking, "Grrr...I wish I could tie a fantastic bow like *those* people!) or pride (i.e. Those people thinking, "I can tie the best bow on the planet!"). Most of us wrestle with these in some capacity if we are honest. I do!

Our daily choices and behaviors may not always honor God, but there is always hope! And His name is Jesus!

Romans 6:23 re-emphasizes that the penalty of sin is death, but it doesn't stop there. It continues by giving you hope and redemption through your belief in Jesus. That is a promise. An opportunity for blessing!

The Greatest Gift

The ultimate gift to ever be received is the gift of Christ. Your decision to follow Him is the one choice you must approach most carefully. When it comes to salvation there are only two options: accept or reject Him.

It's a matter of the heart that was never designed to be complicated. Romans 10:13 assures you that if you call on the name of Jesus, you *will* be saved.

Keeping it simple, you will see that there are two basic elements commanded in Mark 1:15 which help you to understand the simplicity of salvation in Christ: repent and believe. You can read more about what this belief looks like in my other post *Follow Jesus*.

Yes, Christ is the greatest gift you will ever receive from God.

As for all the other things we ask for, remember that it delights Him to give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4), as long as it's in the right place!

You can leave a gift below by posting your comments! I would love to read and see what good gifts have been given to you; perhaps you can even share with others one of those blessings in disguise?

Please do share my post if you have enjoyed reading it! I would love to have you subscribe to my list and let me keep you informed of new posts!

I recognize that time is a gift, so thank you for spending your time with me reading this post!

Blessings,

Andrea GEHRETT