

Gifts from the Heart of God

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Today there is such a misunderstanding of God's holiness. The Lord said in 1 Peter 1:15-16 that we are to be holy as He, who has called us, is holy, "...in all manner of *conversation*,"—or, in all manner of living. Yet, according to Psalm 51:17, God does not despise any Christian who will be broken and humble before Him.

In a ministry that teaches the pure grace of God, and especially in the context of this message, during these last days it is essential for us to hear what the Lord Jesus Christ says about holiness: "Be ye holy; for I am holy...." Be holy in *all* manner of living. Regarding your habits, where you go, who your friends are: *Be ye holy*.

As we examine the story of the prodigal son and his journey home, we will most likely catch a glimpse of ourselves. Every believer who has a heart after God but who has failed can become an easy target for Satan's attack that he doesn't "measure up" to God's standard.

Without proper understanding, growing in holiness is overwhelming at best; however, we have a provision. The point is to recognize the gift, set our eyes upon the Giver, and become great receivers who sow bountifully and reap abundantly wherever we go.

Chapter One

HOW TO BE HOLY: RECOGNIZE THE GIFT

“And he said, A certain man had two sons:

“And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

“And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

“And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

“And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

“And when he came to himself, he said,

How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:11-24).

The Gift of Holiness

"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: *thou hast received gifts for men;*

yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them” (Psalm 68:18).

One of the great synonyms for “holiness” is “spirituality.” In 1 Peter 1:15, the Word of God could say, “Be spiritual, just as the Lord, who has called you, is spiritual; and practice spirituality in all manner of living.”

Holiness, the way it should be understood in the Word of God, is so valuable. It means that we sanctify our daily lives by faith, and then the Word of God is sanctified in us (John 17:17).

So, what does the Word of God mean when it says that He ascended on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, and also the rebellious, “that the Lord God might dwell among them”? It means that He overcame our rebellion by inhabiting our soul.

What Is a Good and Perfect Gift?

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

“*Every good and perfect gift....*” What is a good and perfect gift? It is subjective love, given to someone who is unworthy. It is something given without conditions. A good and perfect

gift is one that God will never take back. It is a gift given because of the nature of the Giver. And something else about a good and perfect Giver is this: He never stops giving His gifts.

Every single thing we have from God is a gift. When a baby is born, and the mother holds the baby in her arms, it is a precious, priceless gift.

Many have a place to sleep and something to eat because of a provision from God. And in a world where millions are starving, food and shelter are wonderful gifts.

The Primary Gift: Salvation

The Word of God says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

If you have never been saved, there is a wonderful gift that God is waiting to give you. It is a gift whereby you can live forever and ever. If you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that He shed His blood and died to pay for your sins, and was buried and rose again, then that gift is yours. It is a wonderful gift!

By the good and perfect gift of salvation, God saves us apart from the law, apart from our

own works, apart from human merit, but most of all, apart from being worthy.

The Backslider's Problem

The problem with the prodigal son, who was a type of a backslidden Christian, was revealed in Luke 15:19 when he said, "I am no more worthy."

He had taken his inheritance, which he wasn't supposed to have until his father died, yet his father gave it to him. Then the young man went away to a far country and spent it. After wasting his substance on riotous living, he went to work for a citizen of that country. This prodigal son—a Jewish boy, now taking care of pigs (which was a disgrace)—would have been glad to eat the husks that the pigs were fed.

Then he said, "I will arise, and I will go to my father, and I will say 'I have sinned against heaven, and sinned against thee.'"

For the second time, in verse 21, he said, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

When he was working for his dad, the son's problem was that he never understood this subject of worthiness. He didn't know that his father had a heart that would break for him at any time.

So, the Word of God says in verse 17, “He came to himself.” He was, in a sense, “insane”—beside himself—and he came to himself. “My father has hired servants, and yet, I am perishing without food, while they have plenty to eat.” And after living in a far country (verse 13), he is now on his way back home.

Chapter Two

FINDING GRACE IN
A FAR COUNTRY

A far country is a condition of the heart. For whatever reason that you might be living in a far country, it is a “heart condition,” more than a place. It often begins by secret rebellion, and it results in spiritual poverty, pain, and fear. But we all need to understand that through this wonderful Giver—the One who gives us perfect gifts all because of grace—we “receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness [and] shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17*b*).

How do we reign? We keep on receiving the inexhaustible gift of grace and the gift of righteousness. Then we need to understand that Jesus Christ is our righteousness. Jeremiah 23:6 says, “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD [JESUS

CHRIST] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Please remember, the Lord has given us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and “as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

God is saying, “Don’t you know that because of the gift of grace and the gift of righteousness, I have made you to be wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed? You have been totally and completely set apart for My use.”

The gift of grace is given to the unworthy. Just think of it! When his father ran to meet him (in verse 20), the son’s worthiness had absolutely nothing to do with anything. Gifts are given for the rebellious that God might work His way in their heart and have fellowship with them (Psalm 68:18).

Not Just Any Robe

Consider this great principle as you fellowship with the Holy Spirit: The father said in Luke 15: 22, “Give him the *best* robe.”

When you were saved, you received the “best” robe. Instead of rebuking His child, the Father said, “Give him the *best* robe. Give him the ring. Give him shoes. Kill the fatted calf. We are going to have a great meal and a great cele-

bration, because my son was dead, and now he is alive. He was lost but now he is found.”

In this passage is another tremendous principle: All the time the prodigal son was with his dad, he had no idea of what his father’s heart was like. His prayer of repentance was interrupted; the father did not want to hear about his sins.

“My son is back! He is alive. He came home.” He didn’t want to hear about the prodigal’s sins because our Father’s Son, Jesus Christ, paid for them all.

Unworthy?

As we think of this gift of grace, consider this illustration: A couple came to our church; the woman was saved, but her husband did not receive Christ. After one visit, he stopped coming to church, but she came consistently. Then, she was killed suddenly in a head-on collision.

When I visited his home and offered to pray with him, he broke down and cried, and said, “I am not worthy.” He said, “I’m going to be honest with you. Since my wife died, I’ve gone to pieces. I was not a good husband, and now I look at pornography.” And again he said, “I am not worthy!”

So I said to him, “Jesus didn’t die for people who are worthy. He died for people who are *unworthy*.”

And I said, “Try to see that all of your sins were placed upon His body. Now He wants to give you a gift of forgiveness, then He wants to cleanse your soul. He wants to seal you with the Holy Spirit and regenerate you, then He wants to seat you in heavenly places. He wants to give you the pure Word of God.”

The Word Was Sent to Deliver

“He sent his word, and healed them, *and delivered them* from their destructions” (Psalm 107:20). Many people quote the first part of this verse but not the second part. What is that deliverance? It is a gift of grace, a gift from God.

“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Psalm 34:15). Can you see what this is leading up to? God wants to heal people and deliver them through a gift of grace.

You don’t have to be “worthy.” Your spirituality isn’t the issue. The sick man in John 5 had been unsaved for thirty-eight years, and he was healed in a moment. The blind man in John 9 was unsaved, but his eyes were opened. Though

he was unsaved, God healed him so He could dwell with him (Psalm 68:18). The Lord touched him, not just physically but also spiritually, so He might come into his heart to live.

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Psalm 34:19). Oh, it is easy to quote that, but I am going to grab that verse, live in that verse, and believe that God will give me the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness for every situation. He will deliver me from any destruction. He will hear my cry! His eyes are upon me, and His ears are open. Why? Because I have His Son’s righteousness, and so do you if you are saved and washed in His blood.

The Heart of the Giver

We have God’s righteousness. His eyes are upon those who have the righteousness of the Son, and He’s looking out for them; His ears are open to their cry. So, instead of being preoccupied with our own thoughts, be preoccupied with the amazing gifts of God. Everything is a gift, and there are gifts He is just waiting to bestow upon us.

The Word of God says in Psalm 34:17 that God delivers us out of all of our troubles—*all* of

them. And if He doesn't deliver us immediately, He will give us grace to glorify Him in the angelic contest and bring us through so we can identify with others and be promoted in the Kingdom. But, He will deliver!

Take these promises. Embrace them. Kiss them. Love them. Know that your heavenly Father will give you the *best* robe. Your heavenly Father will give you the ring to show that you have the authority of a son. He will give you the shoes that you may walk in the Spirit. He will give you the fatted calf that you may eat the Lamb of God.

Chapter Three
LEARN HOW TO RECEIVE
GOD'S GIFTS

Jesus Christ is not only waiting to be gracious to us, but He also wants us to learn how to receive His gifts. *Healing* is a gift. *Cleansing* is a gift. *Friends* that God gives us, they are our gifts. All of these things are gifts.

And when we enter in to the spirit of the law of life, we will begin to understand that the gift of a spiritual healing is mystical yet it is so simple. When God delivers us from our troubles and our destructions, He comes in and moves in our lives so He can say, "I want to give them more. I want to bless them with more gifts—the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness."

And what an amazing thing this is, to have this kind of God who loves you in every situation and never could do anything *but* love you. He has established you in His royal family so

that you can keep receiving His gifts. And still, it is a mystery that many Christians settle for second best because they do not feel worthy.

The father of twin girls was a very popular businessman, but he drank excessively. His wife went to our church—a beautiful woman of God. While one daughter came with her mother to church, the other daughter went along with her father, attended a liberal college, and followed in her dad's footsteps. Then, she came down with a very sudden and serious cancer, and she was only twenty-three years old.

People from our church went to visit her, but she did not understand that she could receive Christ and the gift of grace. She said, "I am not worthy. I've been going to bars and parties and nightclubs, and I am not worthy."

Fading in and out of consciousness, she woke up and said, "Tell them, Daddy! Tell them that I'm not worthy." Then she went unconscious.

When she did wake up, her mother called me, and I went to her bedside at two in the morning. Again she said, "I am unworthy."

We gave her the Gospel. We told her it was free, that she could be saved and forgiven in a moment. But in her heart, she didn't understand

the grace of God or the gift of righteousness. This girl died within forty-eight hours after the last time we spoke to her. Do you see what her biggest problem was? Unsaved and in desperate need, she thought she was unworthy of the gift of the Gospel. She would not receive it, yet all she had to do was accept it.

Brokenness: God's Way to Receive

When we launch out on the ship of grace and go deep into the ocean of love, we can see the beauty of God always waiting to take us into that vast, indescribable, inexhaustible, unchanging ocean of grace. It is waiting for every child of God: To save them. To meet their financial needs. To bless their businesses. To bless their marriage. He heals their souls, and in many cases, He heals their bodies.

Because Jesus Christ so loved the world, He came; and the Father so loved us, He *gave*. It is always that way with God—always giving! That is why James 4:6 says, “He giveth [greater] grace to the humble.” And He keeps giving *greater* grace to the humble who receive all the grace they need in life. How? They humble themselves before God so they are able to receive the gift of grace and the abundance of righteousness

when they don't deserve it. Their walk before men is broken and anointed. They walk before God in humility and meekness.

We don't hear much from the prodigal once he comes home. He has the best robe; he has the ring (signifying authority over his father's wealth); he has the shoes to walk in the Spirit; and, in principle, he can feast on the Lamb of God in the Spirit (John 6:53). He is a very quiet, humble person. Back at home, for the first time he looks into his father's eyes and says, "I was the one who left, but look at you! You ran to meet me, and you did not stop kissing my neck. You ran to meet me, which means that you were watching, waiting to see me coming. You knew I would come when I became desperate enough."

No Strings

In Acts 11:17, *faith* is a gift. It comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). But faith is a gift. It isn't something I work up. It isn't something I manufacture. When I simply receive the Word and believe it, that faith is a gift from God.

Another gift from God is *patience*. He is the God of patience (Romans 15:5). Think of it! He paid for all we have done wrong, and now He

doesn't impute sin. He will lovingly chastise when we fail, but only to get us back into fellowship with Him (Hebrews 12:11). And, if we will not surrender to His wonderful grace and love, He will take us home early so we can go to heaven rather than live out our life in sin here below.

Think of how wonderful God is. Consider the splendor and beauty of His holiness! It is vital that we learn not to worry about being worthy enough. That was the prodigal's problem. We must learn that our heavenly Father will give us far more than we would ever give our own children. Personally, I would give my children anything I could. But God will give us far more. He is rich, He has all knowledge, He has all wisdom, He is everywhere present, and He has all power. This is our giving God.

Chapter Four

GET CONNECTED TO THE GIVER, AND LIVE!

Now, what we need to learn in a practical way is to be connected to God. Sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs in your soul whenever you can. If possible, do it throughout the day. Learn to have a continuous attitude of praise and an expectation of faith. Live that way. Have fellowship with Christ by drinking His blood, which is to remember His sacrifice that cleansed us and gave us new life, and eating the Word of God, which is His flesh (John 6:53-58)—and live!

When you do these things, you are building yourself up in the most holy faith and keeping yourself in the love of God (Jude 20, 21). Keep fellowshiping with these gifts, especially the gift of grace. And when you fail—even if it's seven times in a day, God forbid—get up, name your sin, isolate it (Proverbs 24:16), and go on re-

ceiving the gift of grace, the gift of love, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of the Word, and the gift of healing, to be delivered from afflictions, from destructions, and from all your troubles.

Some people seem to flourish living in their troubles, and they need to be delivered from them. They need to get to know the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10). First Peter 4:10 says that as we have received grace, so minister that grace to one another as a free gift, “as good stewards of the manifold [(many-sided)] grace of God.”

God said, “When I give you grace, I will give you grace upon grace upon grace (John 1:16), with the desire that you will live in Me, dwell in Me, abide in Me, and that you will live a pure life by faith. But I will forgive you seven times in a day if you will name your sin, isolate it, and go on until you become stronger in Me and weaker in yourself.”

God wants us to be good stewards of grace, to minister every side of grace to the people around us. That keeps music going in our soul. It keeps the psalms going and the hymns going, because we are ministering grace, getting grace, giving grace—continuously receiving, giving, and ministering with the rivers of living water.

As we begin to live like this, the Word heals

our bone marrow, our bones, and our body, because it is flowing inside of us like streams through our conscience, cleansing and purging. The Word is a gift, and God gives greater gifts to His children than we give to our own (Luke 11:11-13).

Whose Miracle Is It?

Deuteronomy 18:11 refers to *teratoskopos*, demons that are allowed to perform miracles but they are not redemptive miracles. Let me illustrate.

During healing meetings, Satan can take away symptoms of disease or sickness that *he* is causing. He cannot take away natural causes, but he can take away what he started in the first place. In Revelation 16:14, Satan does that by performing miracles through specific demons.

On the other hand, in Luke 13, a woman had a back problem for eighteen years, and Jesus healed her on the Sabbath. The religious men in the synagogue hated what He did and were angry: in their eyes, He had broken the law. But Jesus said, "You hypocrites! Satan has bound her for eighteen years. Don't you want her healed?"

When you are tuned in to God, and the Word abides in you, and you abide in God's Word,

then your soul will be built up more and more. And just as God saved you, forgives you, and gives you power in your daily life, He will give you the power to be delivered from troubles, destructions, afflictions, and infirmities whether they are by the devil or by natural causes.

God Is the Greatest Giver

We need to understand that God will give the abundance of grace in our need. He will give us gifts—gifts to make us happy, gifts to make us extremely edified in the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

We need to learn that God is forever the greatest Giver! He takes unworthy people, saves them, and makes them princes (1 Samuel 2:6-8). And when you understand the heart of the Father, you will have no problem receiving gifts from the Son.

He ascended on high, and in Ephesians 4:7-11, it is Jesus Christ who led captivity captive. Now, because He is ascended, Jesus Christ is receiving gifts from the Father to give to men.

Do you see that? He received gifts to give to men. These gifts have been multiplied to go into so many areas. Meanwhile, the god of this world will use circumstances, sight, need, and people

to make us see our needs instead of God's gifts.

The prodigal spent all that he had on riotous living, and he was in want of something he needed. When a person is "in want" of something, he doesn't think about the provision at hand. He may think about earning it, but he won't think about receiving something from God as a gift. So, like the prodigal who was in want, our wants keep us from getting what God desires to give us in the abundant grace program through His gifts.

All Things Are New

There is not a reason in the world for any born-again believer to be going around without a provision from God (Psalm 37:25). Whatever church we are in, God has given us a Body of believers. For us, many years later, church is as full as it always has been. Years later, we are still together singing the good old-fashioned hymns we hear in the song service.

The difference now is that we have been in more than 140 countries. The difference now is that we are on over one hundred TV stations. The difference now is that we are on international radio, and we were the first Christian radio program to be broadcast live on the inter-

net. The difference now is that we are growing, with 130 different outreaches that we do in this city as part of a heavenly vision. The difference now is that we keep sending out fantastic teams of people go into all the world with the Gospel, and there they go! The difference now is that as a corporate body, we are one new man.

We have a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26). We have a new mind (1 Corinthians 2:16). We serve in the newness of the spirit (Romans 7:6) and not the oldness of the law.

We have a brand-new beginning every moment. Every week we have the first day. Every month, the first day. Every year, the first day. God loves these first days that take us into new adventures.

In Lamentations 3:22-23, His mercies are new every single morning, lest we be consumed. His compassions fail not; they come to us *daily*—and the Holy Spirit always sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5).

I love God more today than at any time in my life. I keep growing more and more in love with Him, because He is so amazing! He is the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, and I cannot comprehend what it means to have His abundant grace flowing, coming into my soul.

He is a God of love, of mercy, of patience, of grace, of comfort, of forgiveness, of peace, and of joy—the Lord and Giver of life!

CONCLUSION

This God is just waiting to bless you again, and again, and again (Isaiah 30:18) He wants to keep right on blessing you because you are an heir and a joint heir (Romans 8:17).

You are a king, a queen. You are a child of God. God takes care of His family, and you get the *best* robe. This message is the Glorious Gospel—apart from law, apart from works, apart from being worthy. It will make us worthy. It will bring us from sinners into sainthood.

As we grow together in fields of faith, the more that we hear and believe, the more belief we will have, based upon what we have heard. Then, we will keep getting built up until the supernatural overcomes the natural. This is not accomplished by worthiness or works. It is a gift of grace. That is how we get a new mind, a new heart, and new mercies each morning. Remember, we want to crack the maturity barrier and grow into the place where the supernatural gifts

of life just come, and all because we are abiding and fellowshiping with the living God.

Second Corinthians 9:6 says it, and let's receive this as a spiritual principle: "...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Is God lying about that? No. That doesn't say a specific amount, does it? It says, "bountifully," and not sparingly. Receive God's unlimited gifts, and you will have no problem giving out of His immeasurable supply.