

Jesus confused the woman at the well by asking her to give him a drink. Jesus added shock to the confusion by saying, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. (John 4:10)"

She was confused and resistant but only because she didn't know the gift of God. If she had known she would have been the one asking him for a drink.

Oh, how different life can be when we know the gift of God!

The gift of God is better, and larger than we have imagined. Paul described it as an "unspeakable" gift (2 Corinthians 9:15). God is more willing to give than we realize (Matthew 7:11). Do you know the gift of God?

Like a little child staring at the boxes under the Christmas tree, trying to imagine what might be inside, let your mind explore the limitless possibilities of the gifts God has for you. What is the gift of God?

Frist, a general answer. Then, 12 specific gifts God gives us.

### **General Answer: God gives every good thing!**

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

If it is good, it is a gift from God!

Paul asked the Corinthians "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)" He told the Athenians, "He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:25)"

Paul made a masterful fundraising pitch to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 9) to benefit his collection for the poor in Jerusalem. He told them that he was boasting about their giving and didn't want it to be in vain (v.3). Not wanting to disappoint motivates giving! He told them to prepare in advanced so that the gift would be given willingly (v.5). Preparation helps! He told them that God love a cheerful giver (v.7). He was appealing hard to their generosity. How do you suppose he closed the letter? Did he clinch the pitch by appealing to their wealth? Their generosity? The great need in Jerusalem? How close they were to the goal? Or did he thank them for their gift? No. He ended the fundraiser pitch by saying "Thanks be to God for his incredible gift." The generosity of the Corinthians was based on the generosity of God. They were able to give because God gives. In verse 11 he said, "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God."

What is the ultimate reason we give? Because God has given to us! We are only able to put presents under a tree because we have a generous God. We are only able to make charitable contributions because every good thing is a gift from God.

## 12 Specific (and incredibly valuable) Gifts from God

1. **Eternal Life-** The ultimate reward of living forever is a free gift from God!

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God

**Luke 12:32** Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

2. **Repentance-** Repentance is a Biblical command but it is not something we do without the gracious initiative of God. Our turning toward God is a gift from God.

**John 6:44** No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

**Acts 5:31** God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

**Acts 11:18** God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.

**2 Timothy 2:25** ...if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth

**Romans 2:4** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

3. **Faith-** Faith is both a fruit and a gift. We can nurture it and put it into practice but we can't create it.

**Luke 17:5** The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

**Romans 12:3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

4. **New Heart-** Self-help might give us a new perspective but only a miracle can give us a new heart.

**Ezekiel 36:26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

**Psalms 51:10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

5. **Righteousness-** Righteousness doesn't come from anywhere else but him.

There is no one righteous (Romans 3:10, Isaiah 64:6). When I do right, it is a gift.

**Romans 5:17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

6. **Victory Over Sin and Death-** Sin and death are natural for humanity. Victory is a gift.

**1 Corinthians 15:56-57** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**7. Holy Spirit-** God has given us the Holy Spirit and all the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

**Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**2 Timothy 1:6-7** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

**8. Ministry-** The ability to serve others and contribute in meaningful ways is a gift, not from us but from God.

**1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

**Ephesians 3:7** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

**1 Timothy 4:14** Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

See teaching about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4.

**9. Enjoyment of Life-** If we decided to do nothing else but enjoy life without God, we would fail. It is more than a choice we make; it is a gift we receive.

**Ecclesiastes 3:12-13** I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

**Ecclesiastes 5:19** Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God.

**10. Wisdom-** We can study to gain knowledge but only God can give wisdom.

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

**1 Corinthians 1:20-** Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

**11. Rest-** We can take time off, get a massage, or sleep in, but only God can give the rest we need.

**Matthew 11:28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**Psalms 127:2** It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

**Psalms 4:8** In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety

**12. Himself-** God's generosity is not complete with the gift of every good thing; he gives himself.

**Galatians 1:3-4** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

**Ephesians 5:1-2** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**1 John 3:16** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

While working on this sermon an online news headline caught my attention. I wasn't searching for it. It just popped up on my browser. A gift. Here is how the December 14 CBS News article began.<sup>1</sup>

"Last week, two servers at a Bentonville, Arkansas restaurant got a shocking gift from their customer. Grant Wise, a business owner dining at Oven and Tap, tipped his two servers a whopping \$4,400 – way over the standard 20%.

Ryan Brandt thought she would take home \$2,200 in cash after splitting it with her coworker. "I was definitely like just in shock and overwhelmed with joy and gratitude in that moment as soon as I realized what he was saying," Brandt told CBS affiliate KFSM."

What a gift! The story went on to tell how the store management required the servers split the tip among the staff. The generous tipper claims that he asked restaurant management about their policy ahead of time because he specifically wanted the tip to go to his servers.

The gift was not used the way the giver intended it. When he heard what had happened, he returned to the restaurant and took his money back. Then he gave it to his servers after their shift. The server who told him how his gift was used lost her job.

My preacher mind got all kinds of ideas of how this story might illustrate the gift of God. I thought, if it is not used the way he intended, he might take it back. And, with God, tip sharing doesn't matter, he has unlimited supply. The woman at the well wasn't afraid to share. She brought the whole town. And the world, like the restaurant management will seek to distort and steal the gift. Or maybe to note that the gift was received in the act of serving. None of these are the point I want to make.

What we need to hear is that ***the giver knows the intention of the gift***. Things get messed up when we don't receive the gift the way the giver intended. I don't know the gift of God, the intentions, or possibilities. But he does. He knows why he gave someone an outgoing personality and someone else an artistic eye. He knows what he wants to teach us in our suffering and what he wants to surprise us with in our journey. If I want to know the gift of God, I must seek the heart of the giver. I should pray, "Lord, what do you want to give me? How can I receive it?"

When a child begins to open a gift, the parent already knows what is inside. The child has the excitement of not knowing but the parent has the excitement of knowing. They bit their tongue until it is opened then they rush in to tell why they thought that would be a good gift for them and how they thought it could be used. The giver knows the intention of the gift.

Seek to know the gift of God! Experience God's gifts in the full glory of the way he intends them to be received.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/oven-and-tap-tip-ryan-brandt-fired/>