

The Gifts of Christ

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my Lord Jesus Christ, with gratitude.

Psalm 16:2

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Preface

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be a Christian? Does it mean following a certain set of doctrines? obeying the Bible? going to church? busily serving in ministries? All of these are good things and may be what we do because we are disciples of Jesus Christ. But ultimately, being a Christian is having a living, effectual relationship with a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Voices are crying out in the church today that Jesus Christ has become little more than a figurehead that believers rally around as a “cause” for their many activities. May this never be the case for you and me! We need to know Him, grow in Him, fellowship with Him, and maintain a genuine, practical, everyday walk of faith with Him. He is a real Person. He has gifts of grace that He longs to give you as you look to Him and abide in Him. As He promised, He will give us abundant life, life that flows from Him to us and then from us to others.

My prayer and hope is that as you work through this Bible study, you will grasp the fact that “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). May you understand all He is to you so that you will love and glorify Him more!

How to Use This Book

THIS STUDY ASKS YOU to dig into God's Word to find answers rather than have the author or a leader tell you the information. Each lesson asks you to read a considerable number of verses throughout the Bible. It also asks application questions. Unless you have a good hour or so to spend on any given lesson, you may not have time to read and respond in one sitting. So you may want to divide each lesson into smaller segments.

For example, one day you could read the passage listed under Prepare for His Word, meditate on it, and record anything that God speaks to you about through that passage. You may want to divide the Study His Word section by headings, taking one or two headings per day. Be sure to leave yourself time to respond to the Consider His Word, Act on His Word, and For Further Reflection sections.

L E S S O N 1

God, the Giver

“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).

ONE OF THE MOST well-known Bible verses, John 3:16, begins with these words: “For God so loved the world, that he gave.” God’s nature is to give. From the first verses of Genesis to the closing chapters of Revelation, the Scriptures catalog the vast and varied gifts of the Creator to His creatures. Yes, our God is a giving God; what a blessing for us!

Prepare for His Word

Read Psalm 104.

Study His Word

What and Why God Gives

Read Genesis 2:4–22.

1. From the verses below, state what God gave.

Genesis 2:4

Genesis 2:7

Genesis 2:8

Genesis 2:9, 16

Genesis 2:18, 21, 22

But why does God give? Is it because His creatures deserve it or earn it? Consider Abraham as a case study. He was born into a pagan culture, had little or no knowledge of God, and apparently was not seeking Him. “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him” (Joshua 24:2, 3).

2. Read each of the following selections and note what God promised to give Abraham.

Genesis 12:1–3

Genesis 13:14–17

Genesis 15:1–6

3. Abraham was not the only saint who received gifts from God. What did each of these people receive?

Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20, 24–27)

Solomon (1 Kings 3:5–13)

Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1–5)

Daniel (Daniel 2:1–3, 10–19)

Jonah (Jonah 2:1–10)

4. God gives! From the following passages, state the qualities of God that motivate His giving and acting on behalf of His creatures.

Psalm 34:8–10

Psalm 36:5–10

Psalm 111:4, 5

Psalm 145:9, 15–19

Psalm 147:5–11

What a God He is! As His creatures, we are totally dependent upon Him for all we need. He bestows life and breath. He grants health and strength. He provides food and shelter. Truly we ought to thank and praise Him for everything. But as human beings, the focus of our gratitude is often on our physical and material blessings; those are the needs we see. We ask for daily bread and clothing, and He graciously provides. But God the giver looks beyond the obvious and provides for the needs we don't even know we have!

What God Cares About

5. Read the following references: Psalms 53:2, 3; 130:3; Proverbs 20:9. What does God see as He looks down from Heaven upon mankind?

6. What do these verses say about the eternal destiny of sinful people?
Matthew 25:41, 46

Romans 2:8, 9

2 Thessalonians 1:9

In God's eyes, people's spiritual needs are His foremost concern. As sinners, we are separated from a holy God and under His just condemnation for the sins we have committed against Him.

But now recall the verses we read in Psalms that plainly tell us God is loving, merciful, gracious, compassionate, and willing to meet people's needs. Based on this fact, you might conclude that God also wants to meet the spiritual needs of sinful people. And you would be right!

7. What do these verses declare about God's attitude toward sinners?
1 Timothy 2:3, 4

2 Peter 3:8, 9

8. Because God does not want anyone to perish in Hell but to live eternally with Him, what did He give?

John 3:16

1 John 4:9, 14

God's greatest gift to mankind was not this amazing world with all its treasures but the amazing treasure of Heaven—His own Son, Jesus Christ. In the next lesson, we will begin to uncover the reasons Jesus is God's ultimate blessing to us.

Consider His Word

9. Explain why everything you have is ultimately a gift of God's goodness. (For help, read 1 Chronicles 29:14, Psalm 89:11, and John 3:27.)
10. Read James 1:17. List ten good gifts you have received from God.
11. In general, would you say that people acknowledge the Lord as the creator and the provider of their needs? Explain.
12. In contrast, if we believe that God is the One from Whom all blessings flow, how will we express our belief through our attitudes, words, and actions?

13. Do you think people perceive their spiritual needs as readily as their material and physical needs? Why or why not?
14. How will people come to realize that they have a spiritual need?
15. If a woman denies that she has a spiritual problem, what is she really claiming about God?
16. God gave Abraham so many wonderful but undeserved gifts. We have also been given wonderful, priceless gifts from the gracious hand of our God. Yet so often we grumble and complain! How do you think this habit can be broken?

Act on His Word

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). What will you do in response to what you have learned from God’s Word? As you read the following points, write down any thoughts you have, decisions you’ve made, or actions you should take as the Spirit directs you.

- I want to be faithful to acknowledge God as my creator and provider.

- I want to understand more about my spiritual needs.

- I want to value God's greatest gift, His Son, more than all other things I have.

For Further Reflection

The key verse of the lesson, James 1:17, states that every good gift comes from above. Jesus told us that God the Father sends His sunshine and rain on both the good and the evil (Matthew 5:45). Every human being—no matter how undeserving—has received good gifts from God. Yet we seem to do so much grumbling and complaining. We ought to remember daily that God doesn't owe us anything! As you focus your thoughts on God's many good gifts today and in days to come, how will that affect your attitudes, words, and actions?

