

March 3, 2024

Your Heavenly Dad Gives Good Gifts (James 1:16-18)

Your heavenly dad gives GOOD Gifts.

Think back to one of the best gifts you received as a young person?

- Picture of 74 Caprice Classic

Intro: One good gift from my dad was the family car: a 1974 cream colored Caprice Classic. It was like a cruise ship! I could fit all my belongings into this monstrosity. It was a steady steed of steel and protection from Okla weather and city drivers. It wasn't what I chose, my friend had a cool car, two-door Malibu. On the other hand, more friends could fit in my Caprice! It wasn't my car of choice but it was a good gift from my dad.

- He sees you. You are His son. You are His daughter. He delights in you! He delights in giving you good gifts!

Know you're discouraged, fearful, had to leave your home to protect your family
Background - written by James, brother of Jesus, to Christians who have scattered, fled Jerusalem to escape persecution. James wants to protect them against discouragement and not to lose hope: God is the Giver of Good Gifts!

*James 1:16-18

16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. **17** Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. **18** He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. NLT

*Creation is a GOOD Gift (Sierras slide)

- God is the Father of heavenly lights. He is Creator. Everything He has made is good because He is the definition of GOOD.
- The ground you walk on, the mountains, the ocean, the oxygen you breathe; the gifts of creation are good gifts He gives for all to enjoy.
- I love to hike in the Sierras, go to Tioga Pass walk around all small lakes, see the beautiful wildflowers. Nature is amazing! But according to God – YOU ARE BETTER!
- ***but you are HIS PRIZED POSSESSION (animate timing)***
- Better than a classic car or his favorite leather recliner.

Maybe your dad rarely gave you a gift that you wanted. Maybe he wasn't at home to know what you watched on tv, what sports you played, or the names of your friends.

You may doubt that God has a good gift for you because your earthly dad didn't give you good gifts, or maybe they were given with selfish motives.

"To transform religious and irreligious people into Fully Devoted Followers of Christ."

So, receiving a GOOD gift from God seems strange . . . especially if you've spent years asking God for things that have never materialized.

It's easy to start making a mental list of the things missing in your life.

- **If God was the Giver of good gifts, wouldn't He give you the things missing from your life?**
 - A raise at work – overtime, closing the store every evening, training employees, instead of a raise, I get more tasks added to my job description
 - Praying for a family member to know Jesus – drifting further away from God
 - Asking God for better health
 - The gift of joy and peace – and you get sick

Your ability to call God the Giver of Good Gifts when your life goes from a 45 grade slope to climbing the face of El Capitan is a declaration of faith (slide)

*El Capitan picture

- That's a gift?! Gift of resilience -- bouncing back, moving forward after being knocked down

The author of this letter knew his friends could be tempted to think God didn't have good things in store for them as they when they were enduring hard times.

- V 16 "Don't be misled or deceived my dear brothers and sisters whatever is Good and Perfect is a gift coming down from God our Father."

- Every single good thing in your life is from God.

- God doesn't change when we go through trials, have doubts or become mad at him.
- God is unchanging, **nothing you do or say or feel will change cast a shadow on how He sees you or thinks about you.**

You are His prized possession!

- And God is the source of Everything Good.

*Your heavenly dad has a good gift for you.

- God has already given you natural talents, intellect and personality traits to be productive in life.

You may not think "making friends easily" as a skill because it's effortless. It is a talent.

*Examples of natural abilities

- Relational skill
- Communicator
- Problem solver
- Mechanical expertise: (since you were a kid, disassembled computers and put them back together)
 - cars, you can troubleshoot a failing starter or engine
- Math skill
- Artist

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- Writers of prose or poetry
- Green thumb
- Men you can bench-press 300 lbs.

These are NATURAL ABILITIES given to you by your heavenly dad.

Spiritual gifts are different than natural talent.

*Spiritual gifts:

- * Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit when you become a Christ follower.
- *Spiritual gifts come with power from the Holy Spirit.
- *Spiritual gifts are “supercharged” to fulfill God’s purpose – (in the Church and the community)

Ephesians 3:16 pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. NIV

*Your heavenly dad gives you the power to use your gift.

Story of Acacia: 3 worship services at church, going to Acacia to play and sing worship songs with residents for 7 years.

- Our heavenly dad gives good and the strength to fulfill His purpose.
- Basic list of gifts in this passage.

***Romans 12:6-8** In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to **prophecy**, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. **7** If your **gift is serving others**, serve them well. If you are a teacher, **teach well**. **8** If your gift is to **encourage others**, be encouraging. If it is giving, **give 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.

If taking notes:

- Prophecy: speak a word in faith, God-confidence
- Serve well
- Teach well
- Encouragement
- Generosity
- Leadership
- Kindness

***1 Corinthians 12:4** There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. **5** There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. **6** God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

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Some ideas of how God may have gifted you: 2-3 examples

1. Service
2. Artist natural ability as follower Christ gift supercharged – love for art and for God’s Kingdom you teach 45 women how to paint a seascape
3. Young Adult who has gift of hospitality, food prep food presentation, he’s serving on the hospitality team about 3x a month
4. Administrating and organizing a mess becomes functional, beautiful not only for an entire office but even a bathroom

***Your heavenly dad wants you to use your gift to help others.**

- **Don’t hoard your gift and keep it to yourself – be generous**

Story: One of our members has the gift of hospitality.

- welcoming, delicious food she gives friends and neighbors
- on fire for God, last year she resurrendered to Jesus, and she’s joined a team, joined a Life Group, whether she is at the gym or with neighbors, she is telling people about Jesus whenever she has a chance.
- Her gift of relational gift of making friends, is paired with hospitality
- Last year while visiting a friends, she told them about what Jesus was doing in her life, the husband had questions, and after a while, our sister just stopped, looked straight at her friend and asked him, “Do you want to know Jesus?” In that moment our sister prayed with the friend’s husband to receive Jesus as Savior, 4 months later the husband passed away.

This is God’s good and perfect gift operating through our sister.

- As she extends her gift of friendship and hospitality, God is opening doors for her to tell others about Jesus.
- **Your heavenly dad is the giver of good gifts.**
- Using your gift enables you to help others.
- **God gave her wisdom to not miss opportunity**

Your heavenly dad gives you wisdom to use your gift.

***James 1:5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.**

James, Jesus' brother. He probably knows something about wisdom and Jesus' ability to freely give wisdom.

Compare with Paul’s words in . . .

“To transform religious and irreligious people into Fully Devoted Followers of Christ.”

***Eph 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

Teacher's story: God used the gift of teaching to reach a cold loveless young man over a span of 5 years . . . This teacher helped prevent a suicide. Last week his former student was baptized.

Teacher's quote: Riley's teacher: "In ministry we never know what decision people will make in the future, but I celebrate every behavior that comes as the result of eyes that see and ears that hear. The rest I leave to the leading of the Spirit and the grace of God."

God Gives Good and Perfect Gifts

***Using your gift leads people to Jesus.**

(present) If a friend gave you a gift, black and white wrapping paper, no shiny bow, how many days would it take you to open it?

Example: Christian radio station that was giving away a prize, but it took a long time to find a recipient. Every day they called their listeners to give away the prize. It took a while for the radio station to find a winner -- no one would answer their phone!

- God gives the BEST gifts and He gives wisdom to those who ask.

God is the Giver of Good Gifts.

He has a gift for you!

How will you use your gift to help others know Jesus?

PRAYER

Benediction –

"To transform religious and irreligious people into Fully Devoted Followers of Christ."



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