

## Gifted



Anyone who has a talent or ability that is beyond what is common, much better than average, is often called “gifted.” Thus someone who excels at sports could be spoken of as a “gifted” athlete, and a superb guitar player might be called a “gifted” musician.



People also often say, without even thinking about what they are confessing, that our various talents and abilities are “God given.” Which is quite true, of course. We are all “gifted” in many ways.

The Bible has this to say: *“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.”* (James 1:17 ESV) There may be other sources of gifts, but God’s word says that all of the good ones come from Him.

Let’s look at some of the gifts God has given you and me.



First, **Life** is God’s gift to each of us. If your life is hard; if it has gotten messed up; even if you have struggles and burdens to bear that are not of your own making, your life is still God’s gift to you. It becomes a “good and perfect” gift when you are living it according to God’s plan—when you accept and make use of His further gifts. Keep reading, and you will see what I mean.

**Good behavior** is a gift from God. Every motivation, every ability to do what is right and good, is a gift. We are never able to do anything that is truly good without His help. On the other hand, every impulse to do what is destructive, sinful, or selfish comes either from within our own

rebellious mind and heart (“the flesh”), from our increasingly corrupt and godless society (“the world”), or from demonic spiritual influences (“the devil”). The desire to do what is right is itself a gift from God.

**Salvation** means becoming part of God’s family, destined to live forever with Him in Heaven. It cannot be earned; it is a gift. God *“desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Timothy 2:4) and *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9) Nobody can earn his or her salvation; all we can do is accept it or refuse it. Of course, there is more to it than that—you have to understand what salvation is, and receive it willingly, on God’s terms. For example, you might think, “I do want to go to Heaven, but I’m not going to let God run my life!” That doesn’t work. God is God, and you and I are not. That is reality, and no amount of stubbornness or wishful thinking can change it.

**Prayer** is a special gift. When He invites (and commands) us to pray, God is saying to us, “Come, spend a little while with me. Tell me what’s on your heart, and I’ll tell you what’s on my heart.” Too often we pray as if we’re handing God a “To Do” list. That’s not what prayer is for. Instead, God is inviting us to be part of what He wants to do and is doing. Sometimes, for His reasons, God waits to do something that He already intends to do, until we get around to asking Him.

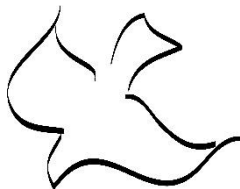


The real benefit of prayer, though, is what happens when we listen. When we get quiet in His presence, and wait patiently, He will tell us something that He wants us to know—

sometimes with words; more often with an idea or a desire to move in a direction we had not thought of until then.

If you want to know how to pray, I recommend studying the prayer Jesus taught us. (I may reprint the “Good News Guide” lesson about that prayer pattern.)

The **Holy Spirit** is a gift; in fact, the greatest of all gifts—the real presence of the Risen Christ, living in you and with you, guiding you, helping you, giving you a foretaste of the life you will live in intimate relationship with God in Eternity. The Holy Spirit’s presence in your life is the seal of your adoption into God’s family—*“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”* (Romans 8:14 NIV)



**The Fruit of the Spirit**—*“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Galatians 5:22-23) and much more—becomes evident in a committed believer’s life. Every action or attitude that displays such spiritual fruit is a gift from God.

I have seen this sometimes in men who were naturally competitive, argumentative, critical, even aggressive in their everyday behavior. Each one was changed by the Holy Spirit and became more pleasant, helpful, and willing to overlook or forgive many of the shortcomings of others. They were easy to like and a pleasure to be around.

In our society today, when so many people are so ready to notice and pounce on anything they can possibly criticize or complain about, it has become fairly easy to recognize those who are being guided by the Holy Spirit of our loving God.

There are also **gifts of the Spirit** that are supernatural abilities, given not to all believers indiscriminately, but to selected individuals for God’s purposes, “for the common good,” as it says in 1 Corinthians 12. The passage mentions words of wisdom and words of knowledge, extraordinary faith, gifts of healing, the ability to work miracles or prophesy or recognize spirits, the ability to speak in tongues or to interpret messages given in tongues. I won’t say more about these gifts here—that’s a subject for another lesson by itself.

**Wisdom** is obviously a very important gift from God; a gift that we are specifically urged to ask for. The book of Proverbs could even be said to have this single message: “Some people are wise, and some are fools. Don’t be a fool—get wisdom. You need it!” It’s very obvious, isn’t it, that foolish people do foolish things and often cause all kinds of difficulty or pain for themselves and others. People who have wisdom are much less likely to do stupid things.

**Courage**—especially the courage to do what is right, even when doing it is scary or dangerous—is another gift that we should desire and pray for. We see some who show this courage, and we rightly call them heroes. Typically they are not trying to be heroes; they are just ready and willing to do what needs to be done. And, with God-given courage, they do it.

Standing up to a bully (or a killer), or going against the wishes of our friends or the boss, can be scary, or costly, or even deadly dangerous. If we are being led by the Holy Spirit, He will provide enough courage to overcome all of our fears.

I’ll mention one more gift. **Generosity** is giving to others because you enjoy helping and blessing others by sharing what God has given to you. When you give generously, God will make sure you have something to give. But be careful! Giving in order to get more is selfishness, not generosity. Generous giving is an act of love, not selfishness. And having a spirit of generosity is truly a gift.

May each of you receive every “good and perfect gift” that our giving LORD intends for you to have, and be blessed by it. I hope these thoughts will be helpful to you, and perhaps to others as you speak with them about the array of gifts God pours forth into our lives.

Peace, in Jesus—

*Brother Roland*

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**Ask Me ...** Send your Bible questions to me and I’ll try to answer them in the “Good News Guide.” Your question may be one that will help someone else.

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## All of the Names of Jesus

(adapted from <https://godiswithus67.blogspot.com>)

An inmate asked if I could send him a document that lists all of the names of Jesus. I didn't have one, so I went to the Internet and found the following list of all of the names and titles given specifically to our Lord Jesus in the referenced Scripture passages from the King James Version of the Bible, and now I'm sharing the list with all of you.

**ADVOCATE** (1 John 2:1)  
**ALMIGHTY** (Revelation 1:8)  
**ALPHA AND OMEGA** (Revelation 1:8)  
**AMEN** (Revelation 3:14)  
**APOSTLE OF OUR PROFESSION** (Hebrews 3:1)  
**ARM OF THE LORD** (Isaiah 51:9, Isaiah 53:1)  
**AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH** (Heb 12:2)  
**AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION** (Hebrews 5:9)  
**BEGINNING OF CREATION OF GOD** (Revelation 3:14)  
**BELOVED SON** (Matthew 12:18)  
**BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE** (1 Timothy 6:15)  
**BRANCH** (Isaiah 4:2)  
**BREAD OF LIFE** (John 6:32)  
**CAPTAIN OF SALVATION** (Hebrews 2:10)  
**CHIEF SHEPHERD** (1 Peter 5:4)  
**CHRIST OF GOD** (Luke 9:20)  
**CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL** (Luke 2:25)  
**CORNERSTONE** (Psalm 118:22)  
**COUNSELLOR** (Isaiah 9:6)  
**CREATOR** (John 1:3)  
**DAYSPRING** (Luke 1:78)  
**DELIVERER** (Romans 11:26)  
**DESIRE OF THE NATIONS** (Haggai 2:7)  
**DOOR** (John 10:7)  
**ELECT OF GOD** (Isaiah 42:1)  
**EVERLASTING FATHER** (Isaiah 9:6)  
**FAITHFUL WITNESS** (Revelation 1:5)  
**FIRST AND LAST** (Revelation 1:17)  
**FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD** (Revelation 1:5)  
**FORERUNNER** (Hebrews 6:20)  
**GLORY OF THE LORD** (Isaiah 40:5)  
**GOD** (Isaiah 40:3)  
**GOD BLESSED** (Romans 9:5)  
**GOOD SHEPHERD** (John 10:11)  
**GOVERNOR** (Matthew 2:6)  
**GREAT HIGH PRIEST** (Hebrews 4:14)  
**HEAD OF THE CHURCH** (Ephesians 1:22)  
**HEIR OF ALL THINGS** (Hebrews 1:2)  
**HOLY CHILD** (Acts 4:27)  
**HOLY ONE** (Acts 3:14)  
**HOLY ONE OF GOD** (Mark 1:24)  
**HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL** (Isaiah 41:14)  
**HORN OF SALVATION** (Luke 1:69)  
**I AM** (John 8:58)  
**IMAGE OF GOD** (2 Corinthians 4:4)  
**IMMANUEL** (Isaiah 7:14)  
**JEHOVAH** (Isaiah 26:4)  
**JESUS** (Matthew 1:21)  
**JESUS OF NAZARETH** (Matthew 21:11)  
**JUDGE OF ISRAEL** (Micah 5:1)  
**THE JUST ONE** (Acts 7:52)  
**KING** (Zechariah 9:9)  
**KING OF THE AGES** (1 Timothy 1:17)  
**KING OF THE JEWS** (Matthew 2:2)  
**KING OF KINGS** (1 Timothy 6:15)  
**KING OF SAINTS** (Revelation 15:3)  
**LAWGIVER** (Isaiah 33:22)  
**LAMB** (Revelation 13:8)  
**LAMB OF GOD** (John 1:29)  
**LAST ADAM** (1 Corinthians 15:45)  
**LEADER AND COMMANDER** (Isaiah 55:4)  
**LIGHT OF THE WORLD** (John 8:12)  
**LION OF JUDAH** (Revelation 5:5)  
**LORD OF ALL** (Acts 10:36)  
**LORD OF GLORY** (1 Corinthians 2:8)  
**LORD OF LORDS** (1 Timothy 6:15)  
**LORD OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Jeremiah 23:6)  
**MAN OF SORROWS** (Isaiah 53:3)  
**MEDIATOR** (1 Timothy 2:5)  
**MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT** (Malachi 3:1)  
**MESSIAH** (Daniel 9:25, John 1:41)  
**MIGHTY GOD** (Isaiah 9:6)  
**MIGHTY ONE** (Isaiah 60:16)  
**MORNING STAR** (Revelation 22:16)  
**NAZARENE** (Matthew 2:23)  
**ONLY BEGOTTEN SON** (John 1:18)  
**OUR PASSOVER** (1 Corinthians 5:7)  
**PRINCE OF LIFE** (Acts 3:15)  
**PRINCE OF KINGS** (Revelation 1:5)  
**PRINCE OF PEACE** (Isaiah 9:6)  
**PROPHET** (Luke 24:19, Acts 3:22)  
**REDEEMER** (Job 19:25)  
**RESURRECTION AND LIFE** (John 11:25)  
**ROCK** (1 Corinthians 10:4)  
**ROOT OF DAVID** (Revelation 22:16)  
**ROSE OF SHARON** (Song of Songs 2:1)  
**SAVIOR** (Luke 2:11)  
**SEED OF WOMAN** (Genesis 3:15)  
**SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF SOULS** (1 Peter 2:25)  
**SHILOH** (Genesis 49:10)  
**SON OF THE BLESSED** (Mark 14:61)  
**SON OF DAVID** (Matthew 1:1)  
**SON OF GOD** (Matthew 2:15)  
**SON OF THE HIGHEST** (Luke 1:32)  
**SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Malachi 4:2)  
**TRUE LIGHT** (John 1:9)  
**TRUE VINE** (John 15:1)  
**TRUTH** (John 1:14)  
**THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE** (John 14:6)  
**WITNESS** (Isaiah 55:4)  
**WORD** (John 1:1)  
**WORD OF GOD** (Revelation 19:13)

# Gifts from God

All goodness, all blessing, everything that is light and warm and lovely, comes to us from the loving generosity of our Heavenly Father. It is all meant to bless us, and to be used by us to bless others. Let's thank God today and always for His wonderful gifts.

## Puzzle:

S R N L E A B Z I U W F K B O N S X H U H X T O O A Z C F C U N  
S X E D A V A T E O P C H J I J K H L J E S J W U F G Y I G K J  
E P I M H U O A R M F J Q K L V I R R C E V E S H B C S E A M Y  
N F I N C A G L T I O G N I D N A T S R E D N U L G U R H N H L  
L Q I T G E J H L D R H Q N F O O Z G C Z U S F J M W S U O M U  
U V P A K K K G T A W C G I H J T K H E P M D N R T P P N L V U  
F Y A L P K T Y U E N M R F S T X E C L N A Z M O I M E R X X N  
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T V G F B K G R O C L R I V H T I V X Q Q M L L V T I A K O N N  
I D Q G I X H L X D P Q S T F K H E D B Q V V E Y I Q M Z O R J  
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Y J S N U I C N T N C T L D C U E O M Y L X T N R A E S U Z I E  
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P O J S C D F E P B H S J G W N F E O D U D O S A L V A T I O N  
V A R T Z A N S C I K T Y E E M R N T X R C T K H I I U B W F P  
R Z T T M I T I G L F W E B U C D E K V J Z S Z I R G V D F L Q  
Q K O I N R W G K I M O K M L P L Y T X G W E A X H R G C E M L  
X E L O E O M M N T I R I P S Y L O H E H T R I D X O I X L S K  
U Y F N R N C Y Y Y P T F U C M I N T E G R I T Y V F G A L S W  
D Y G K Y J C F T C W H Q R U B A R Y H P W D C D N G S I O Z S  
G T U K W J E E L V S I W D L R E T P T I R T V I C Q Y J W Q U  
H Y T I S O R E N E G N Z J D N L A J Q C N A U V L H X Q S M U  
Z Z D H F O M Y G L S E G K E A P P U O Q A G Y U U T H S H T G  
J G S I D J H X A S Z S L W Y E M A D T Y K H W E U H P V I T Q  
K N O W L E D G E I V S A O A F N S P M Y K E D P R H Y V P B K  
E O D M L C S T F J G L L C A M P X K P B L J W P O K B P V J T  
H H W K P B Y A S U P T E R N Y B Y N J H J I C X K K U V G Z O

## Words and Phrases:

BEAUTY  
CLOTHING  
COMPASSION  
COURAGE  
DEPENDABILITY  
ETERNAL LIFE  
FAITHFULNESS  
FAMILY  
FELLOWSHIP  
FOOD  
FORGIVENESS  
FRIENDSHIP  
GENEROSITY  
GENTLENESS

GOODNESS  
HOME  
HONESTY  
INTEGRITY  
JOY  
KINDNESS  
KNOWLEDGE  
LAUGHTER  
LIFE  
LOYALTY  
MUSIC  
PATIENCE  
PEACE  
PLAY

PRAYER  
RENEWAL  
REST  
RESTORATION  
SALVATION  
SELF CONTROL  
SHELTER  
STRENGTH  
THE HOLY SPIRIT  
TRUSTWORTHINESS  
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE  
UNDERSTANDING  
WISDOM  
WORK