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"THE GIFT YOU CAN GIVE"

by Carol Gordon

"See that none of you repays another with evil for evil, but always aim to show kindness and seek to do good to one another and to everybody. Be happy [in your faith] and rejoice and be glad-hearted continually (always); Be unceasing in prayer [praying perseveringly]; Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus [the Revealer and Mediator of that will]". (1 Thess 5:15-18 AMP)

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My December message is almost always about Jesus being The Gift, or marriage being a gift to us. This year I want to focus on our BEING a gift to those around us, especially our family. We are to aim to be a grace gift in every relationship, and if we don't do it at home, it is fake other places. **"But to each one of us grace was given according to Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7)**. We are a gift, because we have been given this by Him.

One of the problems in our walking this out is our self-centeredness. We only see others' behaviors and not our own. We excuse ourselves and blame them when strife rears it's head. Taking responsibility for our own contribution to the event, even when we think we are right, is evidence of His grace working in us. **"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Col 4:6 NIV)**.

I know that there are times we have all wondered, "Did they know how selfish that sounded?" The better questions are, "Did I speak my heart with mercy and grace toward them? Did I cause their defensive reaction?" The Word is a mirror where we see ourselves reflected. We also see ourselves in the eyes and responses of our spouse and children. If there is a repeated pattern, we can humbly ask for input and also ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see ourselves clearly.

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10). Jesus said this to a lady by a well. She was speaking to the Master, yet had no idea who He was. We can be speaking to someone we don't know or someone we know very well, and not see who they are in God's eyes. Usually, we do not even think to ask Him. We can make it our practice to treat everyone as special to Him.

In the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control [Gal. 5:22-23]), we get some direct help. In this pattern of three threes, the first three describe our relationship with the Lord, the second three our relationships with others, and the third, character traits we should require of ourselves at all times. If we keep in mind, PATIENCE, KINDNESS AND GOODNESS, we will have more peaceful interactions.

If we practice patience, we will both speak and listen to others without pressure, and take time to let them choose their response to us. Kindness will prevent our talking down to people we are with, and not take them for granted. If we want good things for them, then we package our interactions in goodness. The abbreviation for "package" is PKG, and this will help us to remember to keep patience, kindness, and goodness ever active. Package is a verb as well as a noun, so let us activate it.

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Jesus even tells us that unresolved issues will hinder the effect of our worship in giving. "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matt 5:23-24) We certainly want the Lord to receive our offerings, and apparently He thinks the best packaging of our gift is a heart that has made peace with others first! What a challenge that is!

Another area that causes heartache is our expectations. We must clearly and patiently share our expectations, rather than assuming others know what we need. Unspoken expectations can cause serious disappointments. It is imperative that we learn to listen with our hearts to one another. Sometimes it takes really working at it to hear our spouse's or child's true heart in a matter. Playing back what we think we heard is a great tool. Press in to really hear, without needing to put in your "two cents." Tests have shown that most of us only half listen when someone is speaking to us. Then we wonder why communication breaks down.

Another word for gift is "present". Being PRESENT in a conversation is very important. It is a vital part of careful listening. This is also both a noun and a verb. It is a gift we give and an act we choose.

Let conversation with you be a safe place to share what they think or feel. This creates a safe atmosphere in your home. An open, loving heart is a great treasure in family life. It is amazing that we can react in vastly different ways depending on who we are listening to. We pay attention differently to our spouse, our child, a co-worker, or our boss! Watch how you respond in each of these situations. Make it a goal to be a safe place.

Our Father is the Master of communication and we need to learn from Him. If we practice listening to Him, it will be easier to listen to people with discernment. The Holy Spirit can help us really see and understand what another is trying to convey to us. To really listen is very honoring to the one speaking, and this works on all levels. If we are only trying to find an opening to speak ourselves, it is a sure sign we are not honoring them with our complete attention.

At this CHRISTmas Season, let us be a mobile gift everywhere we go! "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

(All Scripture references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted)



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NEWS AND NOTES

Dear Partners and Friends:

Best wishes to all for a very MERRY CHRISTMAS! Be sure to say that out loud every chance you get. Lift up the Name of Jesus! Celebrate the Birthday of our Lord!

I am believing for more opportunities to teach in wider venues, businesses and study groups. Please pray for me in this.

My November guests on HeartMenders.TV were Rev. Don Duncan, Tim Bence, Chip Brim, and Steve interviewed Bill Young. I am learning to do the teaching uploads without assistance. We will not do live streaming the 21st and 28th in December, nor will we meet on Tuesday evenings.

REMEMBER TO BE EVER FAITHFUL IN PRAYER! CHALLENGES ABOUND. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON THE LORD AND NOT ON THE NEGATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES. COVER YOUR FAMILY AND THE BODY OF CHRIST! Pray for A GREAT AWAKENING and for His people to move ever closer to Him. Again, I invite you to join any of our prayer teams, for HM Prayer Requests, HM Support Team, and Media Outreach. Do be part of a prayer group where you live. Always include your home church and Heart Menders, as well.

Thank you again to our financial partners. Your gifts of \$5 to \$10, \$20 to \$30, or \$50 or larger, are urgently needed to help us share the message of healing for the broken hearted and the restoration of families.

Please keep praying, "LORD, HELP CAROL FULFILL YOUR CALL ON HER LIFE!"

Your sister in Him,

Carol Gordon

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