

James 1:17, "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."

The month of December is a time when more gifts are given than any other time. Department stores prepare for this time of the year months ahead. Shoppers will go through the merchandise of stores looking for the perfect gift to give to their friends and loved ones. In their minds, I'm sure they are thinking, 'What would be something they need, or want?' or 'What could I give to show my love and care?' The characteristics of a good and perfect gift is a difficult task to attain, but the Lord has accomplished this in His gifts to us. 'What would you consider to be the qualities of the perfect gift, you ask?' I would consider the characteristics of a perfect gift to require:

(1) Afore thought. Would anyone consider a gift to be perfect, if it was a spur of the moment, last ditch effort, to give the gift. How many times have you witnessed people at Wal-mart the day before Christmas laboring to purchase what's left on the shelf. And even though that gift may be appreciated, I doubt it would be considered a perfect gift. But what about a gift that someone has meditated upon several months ahead of time. Maybe some questions were asked and information attained that would help the giver to know what the person really needed or wanted. When we consider the gift of Eternal Salvation (Romans 6:23), there was afore thought (Eph 1:4-5). The God-Head, in covenant before the world began purposed salvation. Even before sin entered into the world by the transgression of Adam, God thought on you and the gift that He has given you in the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord.

(2) Effort, or time and energy spent to give the gift. Even though we all have spent time and effort to purchase gifts for our friends and loved ones, all of this pales in comparison to the Lord descending from heaven, taking upon Himself perfect humanity, to die on the Cross of Calvary for the sins of His people. The Lord, who made all things and owns all things, became man that you would have the gift of eternal life. Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9 said, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty, might be rich." The Lord suffered more than any man has suffered, that His people would never suffer the torment of the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:10).

(3) Sacrifice, when a person would give up something that they could give to another. Years ago I was working with a company that employed a man who was very skilled in mechanics and woodworking. One year, the week before Christmas, that man came to me with a wooden vase that he had made from several types of wood. He talked to me about where the different types of wood came from and how he had acquired those woods. It was a beautiful vase and I knew that this man had sacrificed much of his time and a great part of his life to give this beautiful gift to me. I was humbled by the gift. But in comparison to the Lord's sacrifice for His people, it fades quickly. Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice when He gave His perfect life on the Cross that we would have this precious gift of everlasting life in Him (John 10:18).

(4) A sense of unworthiness on the part of the recipient. In Genesis 32:10 it was Jacob who said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;..." In Luke 7:6 we read of a Centurion who said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:" If this man felt unworthy for the Lord to be in his house, how much less worthy did he feel for the Lord to be in his heart. In Luke 5:8, it was Peter who felt unworthy to be in the Lord's presence when he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man..." In all of these, and many more accounts, we see the children of God with an understanding mind, express their unworthiness of the blessings of the Lord. But thanks be to God, the grace that we have in Him is not in accordance to

our worthiness, but according to His lovingkindness and grace which He had for us, even before the sun ever shined on the earth.

Now then, what is a godly response to such a gift? What if you gave a gift to a friend or relative and saw the gift cast into the trash, in a giveaway box, or even for sale on Ebay? How would you feel?

Would you feel grieved in your heart about the gift that you had given? In a similar manner, the Bible teaches that we can grieve the Lord. Paul said in Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." So then, let us not grieve God, but labor in thanksgiving, praise, and worship to glorify Him that has given us such good and perfect gifts. Amen!

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