

Gifts, Rewards and Promises
3 sources of blessing in the life of the believer

James 1:17 TPT (The Passion Translation) - *Every gift God freely gives us is good and perfect, streaming down from the Father of lights, who shines from the heavens with no hidden shadow or darkness and is never subject to change.*

Christmas it is a celebration of the undeniable generosity of God. The Father of Lights (not 'father Christmas'), demonstrated His great generosity towards us by giving us the best and most perfect gift of all: His Son.

Today I want us all, with grateful hearts, to take some time to unwrap the concept of the generosity of God and allow that revelation to sink in.

I want us to discover afresh today, three channels of blessing in the life of the believer: three sources through each God pours out His generosity. I want to talk about Gifts, Rewards and Promises.

Hebrews 11: 6b says, "*he who come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder*"...

God defines His nature in this passage: He is a Giver of gifts, He is a Rewarder and a Maker of promises.

1. Gifts

The Bible speaks of a number of gifts:

a) John 4: 10, speaks of Jesus as the gift of God

*"Jesus answered and said to her, "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."*

b) The Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38 – *"Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"*

Acts 8:20 – *"But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that **the gift of God** could be purchased with money!"*

Acts 10:45: *"And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the **gift of the Holy Spirit** had been poured out on the Gentiles also."*

c) Righteousness

Romans 5:17 – “For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)”

d) Eternal life

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but **the gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

e) Salvation

Ephesians 2:8 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”

f) Healing from God

Luke 7:1-10

- **V.4** – “*he was deserving*” – They failed to see that healing isn't a reward, it is a gift. It can't be earned. It is appropriated by faith. We don't get healed because we 'deserve' – in the sense that the people in this passage understood. Even good, faithful Christians wholly devoted to God have to receive in the same way as everyone else: by faith.
- Even the centurion acknowledged that he was not deserving in **verse 7**: “*I do not even think myself worthy of coming to you. But say the word and my servant will be healed*”.
- The centurion received healing for his servant not because of good works, not because he had built a synagogue or because he was a friend of the Jewish nation. He received because of his faith! Jesus marveled at such faith!

James 1: 17 – “**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**

2. Rewards

The Bible speaks much about Gifts but also much about Rewards:

Reward is different from gift: God's gifts are free and undeserved. They come to us because of the grace of God. Grace, however, does not exclude rewards and work. In fact, **Ephesians 2:10** says

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

The Bible describes Rewards for a number of things:

a) For good deeds

Matthew 6:4 – “*that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your*

*Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly” -*

Luke 6:35 – *“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and **your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil”.*

b) For prayer

Hebrews 11:6b – *“He is a **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him”*

Matthew 6:5-6 – *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will **reward you** openly.”*

c) Prophet’s reward

Matthew 10:41-42 – *“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's **reward**. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's **reward**. **42** And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his **reward**.”*

d) For being persecuted

Matthew 5:11-12 – *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. **12** Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, **for great is your reward in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”.*

e) For faith

Hebrews 10:35 – *“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has **great reward**.”*

Hebrews 11:6 says that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him in faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God but with faith there is a reward.

f) For giving

Luke 6:38 - *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

The Bible speaks so much about rewards: rewards in Heaven and also rewards on earth. In **Revelation 22:12** Jesus said that He would be coming with His reward.

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

The Bible also speaks about a crown waiting for us in heaven.

We have so much going for us as followers of Jesus: Gifts, Rewards and Promises (about 8000 of them in the Bible).

2 Peter 1:4 - *by which have been given to us **exceedingly great and precious promises**, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

The generosity of God is amazing!

With so much going for us, Christians should live on a totally different level from the world. We shouldn't have to worry like the world, live stressed out etc. We have a different type of life to live: "The just shall live by his faith".

Don't let this Christmas be a stress for you!

Let us live generously like our Father, do good to others expecting nothing in return, trusting God in every area of life with the simplicity we trusted Him for salvation.

Let us live grateful to God for these three channels of blessing into our lives: God's gifts, rewards and promises.