The Best Gift

(Selected Passages)
12/25/03



What's so amazing about God's Gracious Gift?

1. ***This Gift was*** **PAID FOR AT A GREAT PRICE**

2. ***This Gift*** **CANNOT BE DESERVED**

3. ***This Gift is*** **OFFERED TO ALL**

4. ***This Gift is*** **NEEDED BY ALL**

5. ***This Gift must be*** **ACCEPTED BY FAITH**

6. ***This Gift*** **CANNOT BE LOST**

7. ***This Gift*** **APPRECIATES (GETS BETTER) WITH TIME**

8. ***This Gift*** **OPENS THE DOOR TO OTHER GIFTS**

9. ***This Gift*** **CAN BE SHARED**

10. ***This Gift*** **COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED**

(Points in outline adapted from Mart DeHaan's article, "Strings Attached," Times of Discovery, RBC, May, 1998)

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What is so amazing about God's grace?

Prayer Prelude Of Newton

Two or three years before the death of John Newton, when his sight was so dim that he was no longer able to read, a friend and brother in the ministry called to have breakfast with him. Their custom was to read the Word of God following mealtime, after which Newton would make a few short remarks on the Biblical passage, and then appropriate prayer would be offered. That day, however, there was silence after the words of Scripture "by the grace of God I am what I am" were read.

Finally, after several minutes, Newton spoke, "I am not what I ought to be! How imperfect and deficient I am! I am not what I wish to be, although I abhor that which is evil and would cleave to what is good! I am not what I hope to be, but soon I shall be out of mortality, and with it all sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor yet what I hope to be, I can truly say I am not what I once was: a slave to sin and Satan. I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge that by the grace of God I am what I am!" Then, after a pause, he said. "Now let us pray!"

—Daily Bread

It is amazing that god would give something of such <u>infinite</u> value to such <u>unworthy</u> humanity.

Note: God's view of man's condition:

Romans 3:10-19

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13] Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes.
[19] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

"Grace" – When someone extends <u>kindness</u> or <u>favor</u> toward someone who doesn't deserve it.

The word refers to a positive <u>giving</u> of something that is beneficial, desirable and needed.

The word “grace” is related o the word ”gift”.
Grace = charis Gift = charisma (the result of grace)

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God’s gift is eternal life
God’s gift of eternal life comes through Jesus Christ
1 John 5:11-12
And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [12] He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

What’s so amazing about God’s Gracious Gift?

1. *This Gift was* PAID FOR AT A GREAT PRICE

God’s gift of eternal life is free, but it was not cheap!
2 Cor. 8:9
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.

It was God’s grace that brought Jesus down to the depths of humiliation.
Hebrews 2:9
But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ." (Mt. 20:28)

The Lord of the universe put up with poverty, persecution, scorn, abandonment, and the cruelties of the cross.

He is called "the Lord from Heaven" (I Cor. 15:47).

--The Creator (Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:16) left His "drafting board" to enter the human race, and become part of creation by taking upon Himself a physical body.

--The Judge (Jn. 5) of Heaven and earth left His throne in the righteousness of Heaven, to come to a sin-cursed, unrighteous planet inhabited by wicked men and fallen angels.

--The King of kings (Rev. 19:16) left his realm in glory, where angels submitted to Him and obeyed His every word, to come to earth, where men spit on Him and opposed His words.

The humility of Christ is evidenced by the following changes He underwent in becoming man:

a. A change in His dwelling-place
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His possessions
(from riches to poverty - Luke 8:59; II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His reputation among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His position
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6,7)

e. A change in His form (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

2. *This Gift* CANNOT BE DESERVED

Romans 11:6a
And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.
Ephes. 2:8-9
For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.

ILLUS: The Indian's Testimony

Creeping In

When the father of Dr. Harry Ironside lay dying, the descending sheet which Peter saw in a vision was dominant in his mind. Over and over he mumbled, "A great sheet and wild beasts, and... and... and." Seemingly he could not recall the next words and would start over again. A friend whispered, "John, it says, 'creeping things.' " "Oh, yes, that is how I got in! Just a poor, good-for-nothing creeping thing! But I got in—saved by grace!"

—Walter B. Knight

3. *This Gift is* OFFERED TO ALL

Titus 2:11
For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
Acts 15:11

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

4. *This Gift is* NEEDED BY ALL

You may have received many gifts that you don't need (they get returned for a refund or stuffed in the closet to collect dust). But God's gift is needed by everyone!

You will not get out of this world without it!

5. *This Gift must be* ACCEPTED BY FAITH

Romans 5:2

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Ephes. 2:8

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

6. *This Gift* CANNOT BE LOST

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Thes. 2:16

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

7. *This Gift* APPRECIATES (GETS BETTER) WITH TIME

Many gifts deteriorate with time and lose their value.

However, as we become "seasoned citizens," we come to appreciate God's grace even more, because its value becomes more apparent. As we get older and grayer. . . as mortality encroaches and heaven becomes more real, the value of God's eternal life becomes more real (Romans 13:11 - And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.)

8. *This Gift* OPENS THE DOOR TO OTHER GIFTS

"The gift of salvation is not the last gift God offers us. It's the first. And it sets the pattern for all that follow" (DeHaan).

Other than forgiveness of sin, a permanent relationship with God, and an eternal home in heaven, what else comes with God's Gift?

What practical blessings come with God's Gift of Eternal Life?

The Gift of "Living Water" (Spiritual Refreshment)
Joh 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

"...The Gift of the Holy Spirit"
Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"...The Gift of Righteousness"
Ro 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

"Power, Love, and a Sound Mind"
2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Spiritual "Understanding"
1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

"All things that pertain unto life and godliness"
2Pe 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

9. *This Gift* CAN BE SHARED

"Many gifts can be received merely for one's own enjoyment and enrichment. But this particular gift is of such value and accessibility that to withhold information about where others can find it is an insult not only tot he gift itself but to the Giver. In fact, offering this gift to others is life's great thrill. While many things are important, nothing is more so than pointing fellow travelers to the only place they can find rest, peace, and hope for their souls." (DeHaan)

Acts 20:24

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

10. *This Gift* COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

Why would anyone reject God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ?

Because deep down inside, you know that by receiving God's gift, you cannot walk away from the giver without obligation.

When God's gift is thoughtfully assessed, we realize that we now have an obligation to the giver. An obligation to be thankful, an obligation to express appreciation.

"We've become moral and spiritual debtors to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us." (Mart DeHaan).

When you receive Christ, He comes to live in your life. He now owns you (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We have no choice but to submit to His lordship in our lives.

The Touch of the Master's Hand

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought is scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folk?" he cried,
"Who'll start the bidden for me?
"A dollar-a dollar-then two, only two-
"Two dollars, and who'll make it three?
"Going for three"- but no-
From the room far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow,
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosened strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "NOW what am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars-and who'll make it two?
"Two thousand- and who'll make it three?
"Three thousand one- three thousand twice-
"And going and gone," cried he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,

"We do not understand.
"What changed it's worth?" Quick came the reply,
"The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred by sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage" – a glass of wine,
A game- and he travels on:
He's going once- and going twice-
He's going and almost gone!
But the master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought
By the touch of the Master's Hand.
By Myra Brooks

(Points in outline adapted from Mart DeHaan's article, "Strings Attached," Times of Discovery, RBC, May, 1998)



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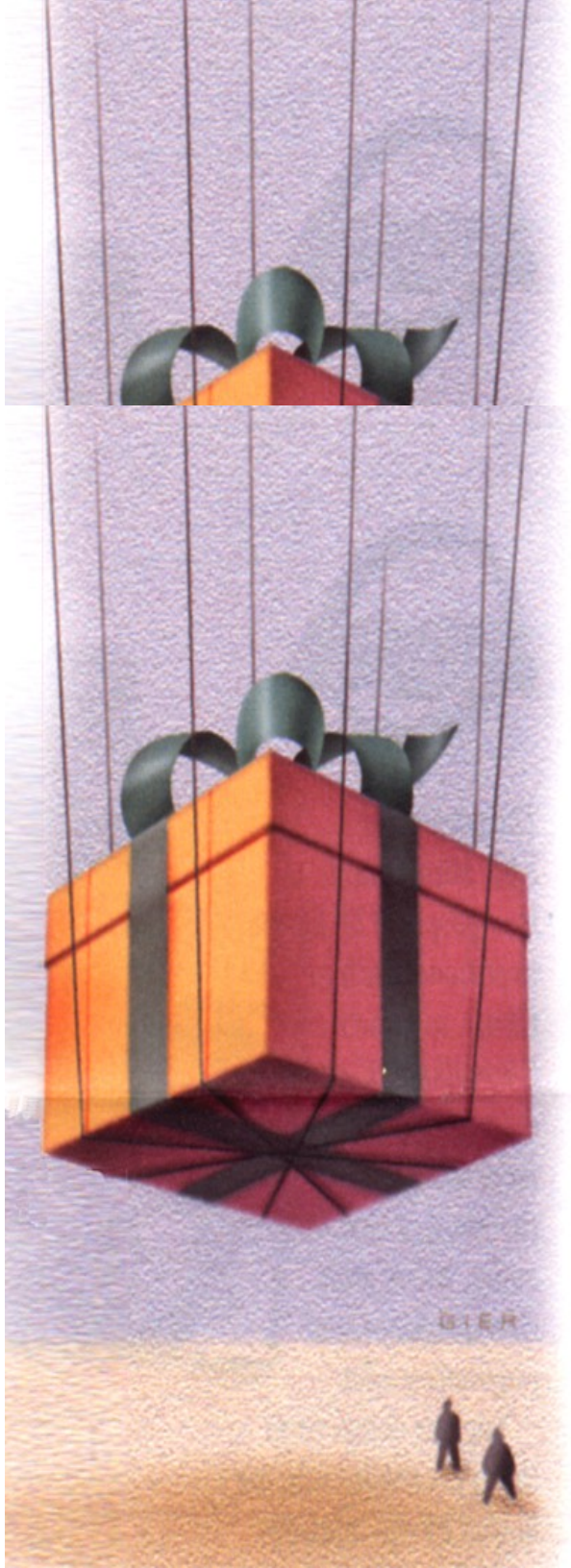


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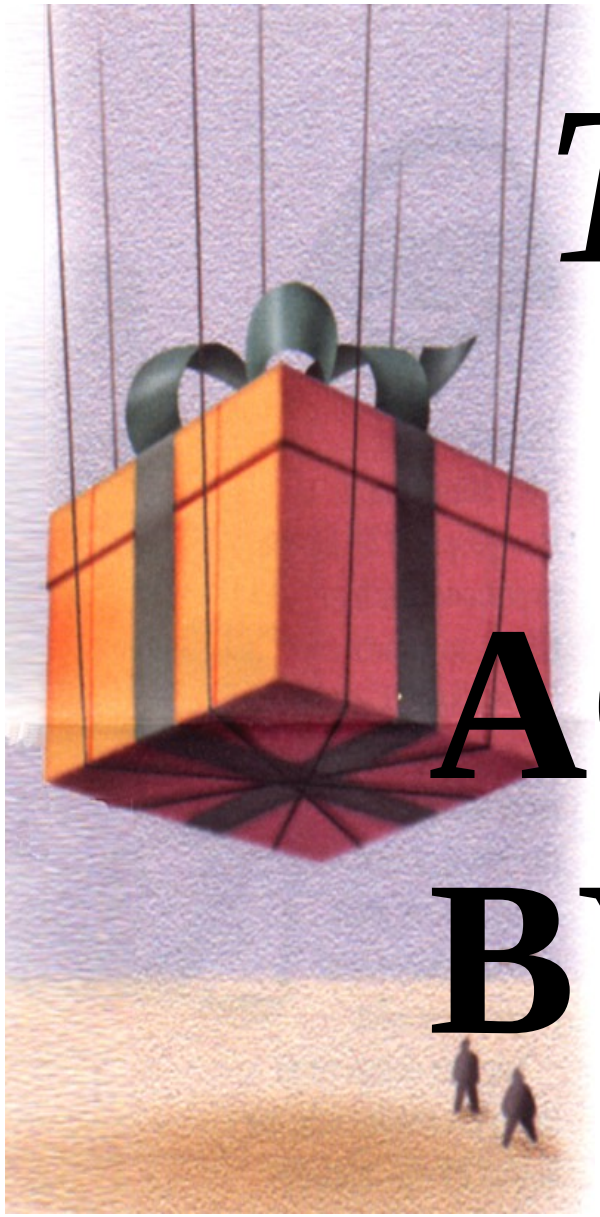
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