

God's Glorious Gifts and Grace # 7

James 1: 17-18

In our recent studies we have considered many of the difficulties that each of us deal with as we walk this road of life: *trials and burdens, the brevity and vanity of life, as well as, the temptations we all face*. No doubt we have all been discouraged and even felt defeated because of the various difficulties we endure. As with much we have considered, we must maintain a proper perspective regarding each of these burdens. There are times when God uses these difficulties to strengthen our faith, but they are ultimately a byproduct of sin. We live in a sin cursed world, and as long as we live upon this earth, we will face the difficulties brought about by sin.

In our text this evening we find a refreshing thought. After all of the exhortation and admonition regarding the difficulties of life, James takes a moment to reveal the abundance available through our Lord. He has already established that God is never responsible for the sinful tendencies and indulgence of humanity. He does not tempt us to live unrighteously. In fact, all that comes from God is holy and just; it is for our benefit. James speaks of the wonderful gifts of God and His abundant grace toward us.

I want to take a few moments to examine this uplifting passage as we consider the joys associated with: [God's Glorious Gifts and Grace](#).

I. The Gifts of God (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](#). Consider:

A. The Significance of these Gifts – On the surface it appears that we are speaking generally of “good” gifts and “perfect” gifts, of which either would be desirable. However, there is a distinction in the text. The words translated “gift” are not the same word.

➤ Let's consider the [good gifts](#). Here this has the idea of the “[act of giving the gift; a gift freely given](#).” This speaks of the gifts freely given from the Lord. These gifts are described as [good](#) gifts. In our estimation good can be separated into degrees or levels of goodness: good, better, and best. In God's economy, and His giving of gifts in particular, there are no degrees of goodness. His gifts possess His goodness and that goodness cannot be improved upon. If you have received anything from the Lord, you have received the best heaven has to offer, the very best that exists or could possibly be received.

➤ Also James speaks of [perfect gifts](#). This speaks of “[the result of the act, the gift itself](#).” He reveals that the actual gifts we receive from God are [perfect](#); they are “[finished, complete, wanting nothing](#).” God's gifts have purpose, an intended goal, to accomplish our maturity in Him.

- All of this should come as no surprise. Jesus conveyed this to us as well. [Mat.7:11 – If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?](#)

B. The Supply of these Gifts – [Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.](#) James does not speak of some of the good and perfect gifts, or even most of them; he reveals that [every](#) good and perfect gift is given of God. We can rest assured that every benefit and blessing we enjoy in this life, even if it is a trial that strengthened our faith, came from God above.

- At various times throughout our lives we have received a gift of kindness at just the right time, when it was desperately needed. Often those gifts are given from friends or loved ones, but even then we must give God the glory and the praise. It was then that He touched the heart of others to give of themselves in order to meet a need for us. Things do not happen in our lives through luck or chance. There is a sovereign God, that loves us more than we could possibly understand, who orchestrates the benefits we enjoy. Praise Him for your abundant blessings! [Ps.34:8 – O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.](#) [Ps.84:11 – For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.](#) [Rom.8:32 – He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?](#)
- Quickly I want to draw your attention to the phrase “[cometh down.](#)” This has the idea of “[perpetual giving.](#)” God never ceases to send His blessings our way. Even when we are unaware, or even unappreciative, God continues to bless us with His goodness. *Sir Walter Raleigh was continuously submitting requests to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of convicts. Once the Queen said to him: "Sir Walter, when will you stop being a beggar?" "When Your Majesty ceases to be a giver," was the wise answer.*¹

C. The Source of these Gifts (17b) – [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.](#) We know that these gifts come from God, but let’s consider a couple of His attributes. He is:

1. The Invincible God – James describes God as the [Father of Lights](#). Clearly this speaks of His creative power, His invincible nature. James reminds us that it was God who stood on nothing, and by nothing but the word of His mouth, created everything.

- This paints an awesome picture for us to contemplate. Take just a moment to consider the vastness of the universe. Consider the sun, moon, planets, and untold millions of stars that inhabit

the universe. It is so vast that our minds can't begin to comprehend it all. Then consider, the God who is responsible for all of that is responsible for the gifts that we receive. If He is God enough to create all that exists, and He is, then surely He is God enough to provide what we need and consistently, without fail meet our needs!

2. The Unchangeable God – [with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning](#). I want to believe that James had to pause and worship here as he penned these words. He realized the God he served, the One who was responsible for all the good and perfect gifts he received, was unchanging. He has no variableness or shadow of turning. Every time that James considered God, he remained the same. James had never experienced a time when God was unable or unwilling to meet His need.

▪ Can't we claim the same promise? Doesn't that create an attitude of worship within you? Our God never changes! [Mal.3:6a – For I am the Lord, I change not](#). [Heb.13:8 – Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever](#).

I. The Gifts of God (17)

II. The Grace of God (18) – [Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures](#). This is an important verse in James. Some would argue that James' writings are contrary to the writings of Paul in regard to conversion. They claim that he offers sound instruction for practical, moral living, but there is no mention of the new birth or God's dealing with the heart of man in regeneration. Apparently they overlooked this verse. Let's consider the abundant grace of God revealed in this powerful verse. In it we see:

A. The Choice of God – [Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth](#). It doesn't get much simpler or plainer than that! James reveals that God begat us by His own will, His own choosing. He is God and can't be forced to do anything. All that God does is consistent with His divine will. God chose to redeem sinful men, providing a means of righteousness through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. God knew humanity would fall in sin; He knew we would need redemption, and He chose to redeem us to Himself! If you are saved, rejoice that God chose to save you! [John 1:12-13 – But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: \[13\] Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God](#).

- The word **will** in the text carries the idea of “*a counsel, or parliament.*” It reveals the plan of God before the foundation of the world. The Godhead consented together in redemption! The Trinity was active in redemption’s plan and they are active in the salvation process.

B. The Compassion of God – *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.* As I read these words I was moved by the compassion of God toward those who were undeserving. Within our sinful nature we could accomplish nothing to merit the grace or favor of God. He is holy and righteous; we are sinful and defiled. He could have left us to wallow in our sin and face the just reward of our sin and nothing would have changed concerning His divine nature. God is not dependent upon our accepting the grace He provides, and His grace is an unspeakable miracle, but we are dependent upon Him if we are to be forgiven of sin and inherit eternal life.

- I rejoice for the love and compassion of God lavished upon sinful men. Where would any of us be without the loving favor of God? We would yet be in our sin, condemned, and headed toward divine judgment and eternal punishment. We were guilty and deserved to reap the wages we had earned, but God in His compassionate grace and infinite mercy provided a means of reconciliation to Him. We cannot consider the saving of our souls apart from the compassion of God toward us! *Rom.6:23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom.5:8 – But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 1 John 4:10 – Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

C. The Conversion in God – *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.* James speaks of the saved being begotten of God through the word of truth. This deals with the conversion of the sinner. It reveals the new birth, being born again in Christ. We were lost and undone, hopelessly condemned, but God made a way for us to be born again, placed into the family of God with all the rights and privileges of children. Isn’t that amazing and wonderful? We were loved so of God that He purposed to save us, adopting us into His family, and promising eternal life!

- We also discover the importance of God’s Word in salvation. The modern church has drifted away from this fundamental truth. Many place more emphasis on feelings and emotion than they do hearing and responding to the Word. God’s Word is not optional to the salvation experience; it is imperative that the Word be shared, understood, and embraced. How can we receive something we have not heard or understand? *Rom.10:13-14, 17 – For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. [14] How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? [17] So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

D. The Consecration to God (18b) – Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. As we close out this study, we must keep in mind that every perfect gift comes from God above. They are given for a purpose with an intended result. James has spoken of the abundance the saved receive from the Lord, and he concludes with the results of God's gifts and grace. The firstfruits of the Old Testament were set apart unto the Lord and belonged unto Him. They were entirely His possession.

- So it is with each of the saved. We were created of God in the physical womb and we were recreated through the spiritual womb, born again and resurrected a new creature in Christ. We are no longer our own. We have been bought with a price, set apart and consecrated to God. [Titus 3:5 – Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.](#) As we ponder all we have received of the Lord, it ought to compel us to offer our lives a living sacrifice unto Him, seeking to serve and honor Him in all we do!

Take just a moment and try to consider all the goodness of God. Surely we would all have to say that He has been good in our lives, blessing us beyond measure, well beyond anything we could ever deserve. I pray that we will be mindful of His goodness and be careful to offer the praise and thanksgiving He deserves as we receive His precious gifts.

Even if you have never trusted Christ, you have enjoyed the abundance of God as well. He has spared your life and allowed you to hear of His saving grace. It saddens me to know that some will never experience the true abundance of God's blessing. Only those who know Christ as their personal Savior experience the fullness of God. If you have never been saved, God desires that you be saved. Christ does as well; He died for your sin and wants to save you. Will you come to Him by faith believing in His ability to pardon and save?

¹ Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James.