

The Ultimate Gift

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As we approach Christmas I feel led to write about relationships and their importance to God. Christmas is also a time when we focus on gifts, especially when we were younger. Often we have to be reminded that “Jesus is the reason for the season” but this year I do want you to focus on gifts—spiritual gifts—and especially The Ultimate Gift. Christmas should be a time to focus upon relationships that we have with others—both in our own genetic families, our Christian family and the world. And this is an area where most of what we call the church does not know the Lord. This is clearly reflected in a materialistic way with the dominant idea being preached in most churches and on T.V. today being money and materialism—that God wants you to be wealthy. It’s difficult to watch anything on “christian” television today for more than 5 minutes and not have to listen to a fund raising spiel. Well, I want to show you how God views “wealth” and if you’ve thoroughly studied the Gospels you’ll remember all the things Jesus had to say about money and why it was one of His main areas—along with the Sabbath—of contention with the religious leaders. Jesus said, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” Although it’s not preached this way on all the Balaam Networks today, the fact is what you talk about the most and what you think about the most is your god.

I’ve written before in my books and in articles here what the Lord has revealed to me about prosperity over the years—that money “is the lowest form of prosperity” and that “being in the Presence of God” is the highest

form of prosperity. As we approach the advent at Christmas tomorrow I want to focus on [The Ultimate Gift](#).

In 2004 the Lord gave me a message for our church in Montana titled, *The Power of Relationship*. I briefly mentioned it in a few of my recent books because it is a very important concept to understand. The Holy Spirit instructed me to begin the message by asking our congregation a very simple question: “Would God do something for me that He won’t do for you?” And I might add that I’ve asked this question in other churches with the same results—they always respond, “No” and when I ask them why they answer with the verse of scripture from Acts, because “God is no respecter of persons.” In addition, like many verses of the Scriptures, I’ve heard this error spouted in many, many churches. But as the Holy Spirit showed me and I prove in the CD message, that is the incorrect answer. God does do things for some people that He won’t do for others.

The reason has to do with relationship and you really need to understand the heart of God in this area or you’ll have trouble throughout your life and when you get to Heaven you’ll lose rewards because of the way you treated people in this life. Yes, the most important thing to God is not money but relationship and how we treat others—Jesus gave many teachings emphasizing this fact, especially in the area of forgiveness toward others for “trespasses against us.”

Relationship is so important to Father God that He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world so that He might once again have a relationship with His creation. Yes, Father God gave us The Ultimate Gift when He sent His Son Jesus to die for the sins of the world and open the door for us to have a relationship with the Father once again. This fact alone emphasizes the importance of relationship to God and so we need to understand this and practice the love walk toward others. If you’re conversant with the Greek language you’ll know that although there are four different words in Greek for *love*, the word for the God kind of love,

agape, dominates the New Testament to such a degree that this *type* love became synonymous for Christian love in the early Church.

And when you understand relationship and its importance you begin to see how sin—all sin—attacks relationship. When we understand the devil's attacks against marriage, families, churches, etc., we see that he is attacking relationship and he does it not only to hurt God and us but also because he knows that in the Body of Christ there is strength in unity and so he attacks our relationships with one another through offense, gossip, pride, and many other ways in order to stop unity. Jesus remarked, "Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." What an interesting statement! Especially when you meditate the Gospels and come to realize that it was this very thing—becoming offended at Jesus and the words He spoke—that kept most of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Lawyers out of Heaven.

Now I want to correct an error that is almost universally preached on the Balaam Networks and in many churches in an effort to entice people to give finances. This idea is that you can "give to get," i.e., if you sow finances you will reap finances. Now although this is true to some extent as scriptures we used to quote at Lakewood Church such as Luke 6:38 say, I've found that because of His wisdom and love as a parent God always wants to meet our *greatest* need first and normally this need is not financial; it's in the area of relationships. It seems that human beings have the most trouble in this life in the area of relationships—family, work, and life in general. Because of this problem people often need deliverance ministry in their lives because this problem area affects their children, friends and other people.

If God is so interested in relationships that He sent His only Son to earth how much more should we understand the heart of the Father in this regard and refocus our attention in the Church on relationships, not on money. Although the Father gave The Ultimate Gift to the whole world He's also

given us in the Church The Ultimate Gift through Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit.

This Ultimate Gift is one we need to share not only with our fellow Christians by ministering our spiritual gifts to them but also with a sin-sick, crying, dying world. With that in mind I want to direct your attention to some verses of Scripture I'd like you to meditate on during this Christmas Season and ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a doer of the Word in this area in 2011. I can tell you that this is very much on the Heart of God. These verses of Scripture emphasize an important point that the Apostle Peter learned after Pentecost so open your Bible to Acts 3 and read and meditate on verses 1-9 before you continue reading this article.

THE ULTIMATE GIFT

While the Father gave The Ultimate Gift in His Son Jesus, Jesus Christ has also given us The Ultimate Gift by imparting the Holy Spirit to us. The Bible says, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." How much the world needs this River of Living Water! John the Baptist understood the vital importance and value of this Ultimate Gift which remarked him to say to Jesus when the Lord came for water baptism, "I have need to be baptized by you." John was not referring to water baptism but to the Spirit Baptism.

I find it interesting, though sad, that the church is following the ways of the world in the pursuit of finances instead of following the Great Commission and giving out The Ultimate Gift. Most of the wealthy people of the world are involved in different charities and philanthropy efforts. Although this may be good because it alleviates the suffering and benefits the physical needs of human beings, it does nothing for their spiritual needs. Many of these efforts are in the area of healthcare such as donating millions of dollars for a new hospital wing. I've often thought what a difference we, the Church, could make in the world if somebody were to use these millions not

to build wealth but to build a prayer center where people could come for prayer, healing and salvation—a place where The Ultimate Gift could be ministered to families free of charge! Then instead of a hospital home to make families more comfortable while they wait for their child to die of leukemia the child could be healed and the whole family could receive salvation.

Notice the words of the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:6, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.” Peter didn’t have any silver and gold to give the man but he did possess the Ultimate Gift in his spirit—the Gift of the Holy Ghost—and he allowed this Ultimate Gift to flow out of him to heal this man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Now let me ask you a question. Which do you think the man would rather have received—the gold or the spiritual gift of working of miracles? Do you think the man was prospering in his crippled condition? Why didn’t Jesus heal him? This was right at the Temple and I’m sure Jesus walked past him many times. There is a reason and if you ask the Spirit He will show you.

But sadly most of today’s Laodicean Church is acting just like the Bible says, “I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ...” (Rev. 3:17) not realizing that their spiritual condition is also as described in these verses by the Alpha and Omega—“... knowest thou not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ...”

Yes, Jesus is speaking about gold here but it’s a different type of gold than they preach about on The Balaam Network when they appeal for you to “Don’t forget to tuck your love gift into that envelope” so they can buy some more gold pianos. Which *type* gold would you rather have—the one the crippled man and the Balaam networks ask for or the one Jesus talks about?

I've shared a testimony in my books about Bishop Thomas Aquinas when he was touring one of the great cathedrals of Europe with a monk. While looking at the gold and stained glass the monk turned and said to the Bishop, "No more can they say of us, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" To which the good bishop wisely replied, "Yes, but neither can we say, 'In the Name of Jesus rise and walk.'"

I want to really encourage you to focus your attention this Christmas not just on the birth of Jesus. Yes, He's the reason for the season and we must never forget that but He didn't just come so that we might have salvation and a restored relationship with the Father. He also came to give us The Ultimate Gift—the Gift of the Holy Spirit. There are many verses of Scripture that refer to the fact that God will "pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." How do you think He is going to do that? Meditate on how you can be more active in giving and ministering this glorious, Ultimate Gift to a sin-sick, crying, dying world in the coming year. If we truly have the Heart of the Father we will know that He wants to meet the greatest need of people first and He wants to use you to do it! If you'll meditate on this and be sensitive to the Spirit He will pour His "living water" out through you to a greater extent than you ever thought possible in this coming new year.

All of us at CCI wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a truly prosperous 2011.

Maranatha