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All good gifts around us

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When I was a child, a woman would stand up in our church nearly every week, give gratitude to God - "the Giver of all good gifts" - and then sit down.

I loved that. I actually looked forward to it. It seemed the service wasn't quite complete until that woman stood and said her few words

One time on the way home, I mentioned how much I enjoyed the woman's remark. My mother scoffed at the repetition and said she wished the woman would say something different. Maybe my mother had a valid point. But years later, I still remind myself to be grateful to God, "the Giver of all good gifts."

It's great to feel that good comes from God, rather than from a person. If we look to people for good gifts, we might be frequently disappointed. And those around us could feel burdened by our continual expectations. But when we realize that God is good, we can rest assured of infinite blessings.

The Holy Bible promises that "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" (James 1:17). God is not a capricious Being who blesses some while withholding good from others. Divine Love is invariable, unchangeable, and loves each aspect of its creation equally. God's fountain of blessings is unceasing. Love is truly universal, patient with each of us until we're willing to accept the blessing.

What are some of the gifts from God? Searching the Scriptures, I discovered that at first God was often seen as giving things such as land, flocks, and children. As the writers became less materially focused, they began to write of God giving gifts such as peace, strength, grace, glory, wisdom. These spiritual qualities are not less tangible than houses and

property, nor do they preclude them. It appeared to me that prosperity was being redefined as Bible writers discovered that qualities of thought have more impact on happiness and well-being than the acquisition of physical objects.

Perhaps they also began to realize that expressing wisdom, mercy, and humility brought them whatever material prosperity was necessary. When Solomon was given the opportunity to ask for a gift from God, he asked for spiritual wisdom. The result was that he got that wisdom - and also wealth. When King Nebuchadnezzar declared that his vast material wealth was the result of his own cunning, he lost it all; his position and prosperity were restored when he awoke to realize that God, not people, was the source of good. Faithful obedience to God frequently resulted in material increase, as when the Apostle Peter, at the command of Jesus, let down a net, which subsequently broke due to the volume of fish that filled it. From these and other examples, we learn that God's gifts are spiritual ideas, the source of the good we experience in daily living.

Suppose you're honestly seeking spiritual thoughts, and yet your desires are not fulfilled. Don't give up on God!

God wants to give us good. Divine Love isn't passive, waiting for a fortunate few to stumble onto its treasures. Love is active, delivering us from affliction, inspiring our motives and our thoughts, blessing us universally and impartially.

Instead of doubting the Giver, be alert to attitudes that impede the flow of spiritual ideas! Nebuchadnezzar obviously needed to relinquish pride before he could truly understand that God was the source of good. Perhaps Peter needed to put aside skepticism before he could catch all the good that God was providing. Doubt, discouragement, pride, tend to hinder even the hope of divine benevolence.

Jesus shared God's greatest gift to the world, the gift that keeps on blessing, keeps on saving and healing. His teachings illustrate the way to eternal salvation. They proclaim God's supremacy on earth. Mary Baker Eddy, the Monitor's founder, wrote, "Through this redemptive Christ, Truth, we are healed and saved, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; we are saved from the sins and sufferings of the flesh, and are the redeemed of the Lord" ("Message to The Mother Church for 1901," pg. 11).

There's no one season in which God gives gifts. Every week, we can find blessings in our lives - actually daily, and moment by moment.