

Fit or Misfit? (Part 9): The Gift of Giving

by Richard Siple

The sermon emphasizes the importance and joy of the motivational gift of giving in the Christian life.

Duration: 54:51

Scripture: John 12:3, Romans 12:8, 2 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Corinthians 9:11, 2 Corinthians 9:13, 2 Corinthians 9:15, James 4:14

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Generous Giving"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the motivational gift of giving, as mentioned in Romans 12:8. He shares a personal experience of encountering a church member with the gift of giving, who was wealthy and successful in his business. The preacher emphasizes the importance of giving with generosity, as instructed by God. He also references a parable told by Jesus about a man with the gift of giving, who showed compassion and took care of a wounded man. The sermon highlights the significance of recognizing and utilizing the gift of giving in serving others.

Transcript

Behold, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. For what is your life? It is a vapor.

Right? Scripture. The Word of God. I sat there while our sister was singing, and there came back into my mind a scene from 57 years ago.

I was a very, very young pastor in my first church, West Stewartstown, New Hampshire. And I was preaching on a Sunday night, a very strong salvation message, and there was a carload of young people who had come to the service, and they were sitting in the back row of the church, small church. There were two couples and, I think, another young person.

And one of the young men was son of a Christian mother. His father was not a Christian. And he was trying to listen.

And next to him sat a young lady who wanted his attention very badly. And she kept talking to him, poking him, making jokes to him, trying to get him to laugh. He was trying to get her to stop.

He would turn away. Then he would turn and listen. Then he would turn back and try to listen.

And when we finished the service, gave an invitation, and I think we were seeing the song, Come Home. And he stood, and I'll never forget it, because some things are imprinted in your mind by what happens. And everyone was standing and singing, and he had his hands on the pew in front of him, the back of the pew in front of him, and he was gripping it so tight that his knuckles turned white.

It was a small building. I could see his knuckles. They were white, and he was gritting his teeth, and God was speaking to him, and he should have come.

And she was still trying to talk to him and get his attention, and obviously didn't want him to respond. And after I went to bed that night, someone came and banged on the door. We didn't have a phone, and said, You better come to the hospital quick.

There's been an accident. And that young man had run into a road scraper that was parked on the side of the road at high speed. It took the top of the car off.

Young man sitting next to him, it took his head off, and it crushed this young man's chest and put him in the hospital, a small hospital in a small town where there wasn't a lot they could do. They had him strapped down to an emergency table with heavy leather straps, and I sat there that night by his bed with his mother and with that young lady who was weeping like her heart would break, and the mother shedding many tears. And twice that night, he was unconscious and very restless, and twice that night, he broke the leather straps.

Very strong young man, and they had to strap him down again. He was totally unconscious as far as we could tell. And in the morning, they had an ambulance ready to take him to a bigger city, to a bigger hospital where they could try to do something for him.

And on the way in the ambulance, he died. So don't say tomorrow. That happened to me right at the start of my ministry.

And it's not a game, you know. It's serious business. It's heaven or hell forever, for eternity.

You believe that? So it's not something to play with or make your own decisions about. We need to listen to God when he speaks, right? I've had many more experiences since then, but that's one that helped to start my ministry and impress on my heart the desperate certainty of responding to God when he speaks. Amen? So, couldn't help but do that after you sang tonight.

Thank you. I had to tell that. The motivational gift of giving.

We're four down, three to go. Next Sunday night will be ruling or administration, and then the final one, the gift of mercy. Tonight, the motivational gift of giving.

God says in Romans 12, verse 8, that he who gives should do it with generosity. So that launches us into this gift. I was in my first pastorate, that same pastorate, when I encountered my first example of a Christian in the church with a gift of giving.

I didn't recognize it then because I was quite ignorant about these particular truths, never had heard them preached, never thought about them particularly. This gentleman owned a successful sawmill and large holdings of timber in the northern United States. He had a beautiful home, drove a new car, and was one of the wealthiest men in that community, and was a member of the little church where I was a pastor.

Great. We've got this rich man in our church, and he's a Christian. Whoa.

Don't get excited. He was one of the principal builders and supporters of a beautiful Bible conference grounds in that area, right on a lake, where he owned a lovely cottage. He was a strong project supporter and giver to missions.

He also owned a private lake, the whole lake, and fishing cottage in the deep woods, where he took me on a fishing trip, and his daughter went to wanting to marry me, but that didn't work. I was committed to that lady right there. He liked to share with speaking guests.

I received a salary of \$25 a week, which wasn't too bad, because the next church I went to, it got worse. And I had been brought up that way, and I tithed my income into the church, which totaled \$2.50 a week. Ten percent.

Right off the top. I was having a conversation one day with the church treasurer, who was a lady in the church. Loved the Lord.

And I was talking about a conflict in the church, and I said we needed to be careful. By the way, it's the last time I ever even thought this way. I said we needed to be careful how we treated this man, because we needed his financial support.

She smiled and had that funny look on her face, and she said, oh, I don't know. He doesn't give as much to the church as you do. So I started to learn a few things.

Since that day, I've never tried to please anyone in regard to money. Amen? Absolutely. If you don't want to give your money to God, and God wants you to give it, and you don't, he'll get it.

Watch it. Since that time, I've known many people with this wonderful gift. In many ways, they are all unique.

I doubt I've ever known two exactly alike. Very interesting. However, many characteristics are the same, and mark them clearly as people with this wonderful gift from God of giving.

They do not necessarily have to be rich to have this gift. In fact, I've known some people who we would consider in the poverty area, that still had this gift and were blessed of God as they used it for his glory. When I was pastor of a very small church on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, I became acquainted with a German farmer with this gift.

What a wonderful gentleman. I became friends with his son later who was in the ministry. He was very godly and generous.

Even though he was a member of another church, he cared about us young kids starting out in the ministry. And he knew we didn't have an adequate income. I loved to meet him on the street.

For he would come toward me with his hand out shouting, Hello Brother Sibley! With a big generous smile on his face. And then he would shake hands with me and leave a \$20 bill in my hand. Which was four times my weekly salary.

A man with a great gift of giving. In another church of which I was pastor, there were two men with this gift of giving. They were as different as night and day in both personality and circumstances.

Yet in this gift, they were constantly engaged in projects involved in raising or saving money. The first one was a man that owned a very successful business in Akron, Ohio. Made good money.

He's the man that gave \$30,000 a year to the Lord. Generous, proud, project-oriented, impatient, even manipulative. And I'm sorry to say an easy mark for unscrupulous people who had ways of getting his money.

A poor board member. I know because I had him on the board for just one time and that was enough. But a man who really wanted to serve God with his gift.

Who just needed a lot of teaching and training. He called me over to his house one day and said, Pastor, I know you haven't been here very long, but if there's anything you ever need, just tell me and I'll get it for you. I said, well, I can't do that.

I said, if I need anything, I pray about it and tell God. He said, what do you think that God will look down from heaven and say, Now, George, hear this and tell me what you need. I said, I don't know how he'll do it, but if he wants you to take care of it, he'll find a way to do it.

Great guy. Carried a briefcase around in his trunk with \$70,000 cash in it. I know because he showed it to my son, who was just a young teen at the time.

But a man that was used of God and who worked and made money and gave a great amount of money to God. There's another man in that same church who was not rich, had a good job, a former Marine, but totally different. Penny pinching economizer.

I don't say that in a bad way. A wheeler dealer. But this gentleman happened to be carnal and disobedient to God about tithing.

I talked to him about it one day because he brought it up. I don't make a habit of going around asking people if they tithe and talk. It might be a good idea, but I've never gone that far.

But he brought it up and so we talked about it and I told him what God had to say about it. And he said, Well, he said, I think that I give more to God than many people who tithe. Because he said, I'm always trying to save the church money.

Oh, I said, How do you do that? He said, Well, when the church needs something, the trustees let me know. And he said, I go out and I get the church a deal. Well, I put a stop to that.

I said, How do you do that? He said, Well, I tell him it's for the church and I bargain with him till I get it way down. And I save the church thousands of dollars. And thereby, he said, I don't think God expects me to tithe.

I'm giving to the church that way by my gifts. I said, Well, I have no doubt God's giving you gifts, but you're not using them the right way. And you're giving this church a bad reputation.

And I went to the men who were doing that and I said, Stop it. No more. And he got very angry with me.

So angry that when we had revival, he had to come on the platform and ask my forgiveness. We had some interesting disagreements. But he had the gift of giving, only he didn't know how to use it.

Jesus possibly had two followers with this gift. And I want to read some scripture about these two different men. One was Judas Iscariot, John 12.

Turn your Bibles to John 12 and I'll read the first eight verses. Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor.

Martha served, of course. We've already met Martha. She had the gift of service.

While Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him, then Mary, her sister, took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume. In fact, it would have cost a full year's wages for a worker of that day. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair.

And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was there to betray him, objected. Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.

He did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he, in that case, was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. And that is not to imply that people with this gift are necessarily dishonest.

This particular man was dishonest, but certainly that is not generally the case. Leave her alone, Jesus replied. It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.

You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. Let me give you another one. Joseph of Arimathea, John 19, verses 38-42.

Later, this is after Christ died on the cross. Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now, Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he feared the Jews, with Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

He was accompanied by Nicodemus, by the way, a man with a gift of teaching, a doctor of the law. In fact, he was called the teacher of Israel. The man who earlier had visited Jesus at night, Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds.

Both these men were wealthy men. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it with the spices in stripes of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. By the way, it was the tomb in which Joseph was to have been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

So here is this man who has a gift of giving, and right away, the first thing that comes to his heart is, I'll take care of his body. I'll put him in my own tomb. And so he was ready to give.

It was a very expensive gift to take care of the body of Jesus. When God finds, he can... Listen to this carefully. When God finds, he can trust someone with this gift.

Now, God is our creator, amen? He forms us in our mother's womb. He plans us before we're conceived. He forms us in the womb.

He gives us the motivational gift he wants for us to have. And he knows what he intends to do with our lives. And when God finds, he can trust someone to whom he's given this gift.

He often blesses them financially so that he can use them to distribute his riches to his children and his work. Not always, but often, that is the case. And I have seen this over and over through the years.

Proverbs 11.25 says, A generous man will prosper. He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

1 Timothy 6.17-19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

This is a wonderful, wonderful gift. Over the years, as a pastor, I've had the delight and joy of working with some people with this gift. And what's been interesting to me is that most people with this gift, unless they have some instruction, are not quite sure what to do with it.

They know that they want to do this. They know that there's a desire deep inside of them to give. But they're not quite sure how to handle it.

And so they need some help, they need some Bible instruction, and they need some direction to know how to give. And once they learn how, they have fun. Giving is fun, you know.

It really is. Giving is fun. And, you know, God didn't give me that gift.

He did put my heart to give, but that's for all Christians. And He's let me enjoy that and see how much fun it is. But the person that has the gift, what joy they have in giving to meet the needs of the work of God and the needs of people in the work of God.

What a marvelous thing. I've had the privilege of preaching in 11 countries of the world and on many mission fields. And so I've had the chance to watch people, sometimes even retired people, who've gone out there and who have the money and who are spending money and giving their last years, spending money and working, doing things that there isn't money to do on the mission field.

I mean, I've had the pleasure of meeting a man and his wife out there. He was 70 years old, and he was building a church for a thousand people in Libreville. And he was doing it just because he had the gift of giving.

That's wonderful. And so anybody here with a gift of giving, they would like to give one or two million dollars, I'll be glad to take it. And we'll get rid of this debt.

Oh, you say, now that's ridiculous. No, it is not ridiculous. Absolutely it is not.

And I never know who I'm speaking to. Luke 6, 38. The word of God says, given it will be given to you, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with a measure you use it will be measured to you. Then the great passage, of course, in 2 Corinthians 9, 6-15, which not only refers to the person with the gift of giving, but to all of us as Christians,

but especially to the person with this gift. Fantastic scripture.

Remember this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. By the way, did you know that our fundraising is now over \$107,000? Did you know that? Some of you said... Yeah. Whoa.

Some of you thought, well, here we go again. They'll be lucky if they get \$50,000. Shame.

And if some of you still haven't done exactly what God told you to do, there's still time to do it, of course. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written, He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor.

His righteousness endures forever. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. Oh, what fun to be blessed by God.

Oh, what fun to be able to do something that's a blessing in the work of God. And to see... Oh, I get so excited about this. I just... I can't get it across to people.

I get so stingy. He said, You'll be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion. And through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

This service you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. That is, you give, you supply their need, the work of God goes ahead, people get saved, then the people that are blessed, then they give thanks to God. That's a wonderful circle.

And then God says, That's great, I'm going to bless him some more. If he's going to do that, I'm just going to keep pouring it on. Huh? Oh, yes.

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

That is a passage for all Christians, but brother or sister, if you have the gift of giving, it is especially a biblical description of your gift, of the blessing that God will pour into your life as you use this gift that God has given you. Some of the happiest men I've ever known, and women, have been those with this gift who learn how to use it for God. They just had more fun.

Well, let me give you some characteristics of the gift of giving now, if you want to write them down. The giver relates to the ear in the body of Christ. He has a spiritual stethoscope to church financial needs or the work of God and his financial needs.

They are good idea people. They are frugal in most ways. They believe it's important to save and to pay debts.

Now, what we always have to do in the church, because sometimes people with this gift will say, listen, we're not going to do anything else until we pay our debt. And I say, no way, because they want to pay the debts. I mean, that's the way they think and that's good.

That's good, right? I once said to my wife, but we have to eat. And she said, no, we don't. We have to pay our debts.

Yeah. So, yes, you got to pay your debts. I say, yes, but if you don't do something else along with it, you're not going to need to pay your debt.

You're not going to be here. Aren't you thrilled that in this entire fundraising that we have been able to pay every penny on principle and release money for ministry. That's the way to do it.

And God has blessed it because we're doing it the right way. Well, they're project people. They need to be taught to give regularly because sometimes they're so excited about projects like the man in my first church.

I mean, he gave. There's no problem about him giving. He probably gave, who knows, 20, 30 percent, whatever he gave to God.

He gave, but he was a project person and nobody had taught him that his first responsibility was to give in his home church then to the projects. Amen. That was a weak amen.

Absolutely. I remember having missionaries say to me, oh, listen, you know, your number one issue is to give to missions. And I said, brother, if we don't take care of the needs of this church, you're not going to have any missionaries or any money.

Amen. I love it when you just say amen, you know, and I don't have to ask you. I'll tell you the truth whether you say amen or not, but it helps.

People with this gift need to know where their money is going. They don't want to waste it. Amen, I'm with them.

They may appear to be stingy, but that is not true. They're just careful. We have a family that were very dear friends of ours in the city of Akron, still our friends.

He owned a restaurant there. He's retired now and his son runs the restaurant. But they had a home so big that we could put 100 people in it for a home Bible study in just one room.

I mean, they had a big house. He made lots of money. He got blue ribbons every year for his restaurant.

And I mean, he really made money. His wife shopped at garage sales in Value Village. It was so funny, you know, because she could go to the best stores and buy the highest price clothes and anything.

And she loved to tell you how she saved money at Value Village getting this outfit, which you thought she paid \$500 for, but she paid \$5 for it, you know. Interesting, fascinating. And I've run into a number of people like that.

And that's not a criticism. That's just an interesting mark of people with this gift who are careful about money. They don't want to waste it.

Good for them. Amen? All right. But they are easy marks for unscrupulous people sometimes.

Not all of them, but sometimes, who try to manipulate them and use them. And I've had to go to these men and say, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, wait a minute. Don't trust that person.

They're just trying to manipulate you. They want God to use them, but sometimes they like to be given appreciation by being asked directly. They like matching projects to get others to give with them.

In other words, they like to say, I'll give \$5,000 if somebody will match it, you know. Or I will match every gift of \$100, I'll match it with \$100. They say this to a whole church.

Anybody who wants to say that here, I'll be glad to hear it. No, really. And they love this kind of thing because they themselves love to give and they love to help other people to give.

Sometimes they get tired of multiple appeals because they feel responsible for every appeal and know they can't give to everything. The more spiritual they are, the more they like to give in secret. They don't talk in some situations because others won't understand their ideas, which are usually good.

Don't ask for their money, but just give them an opportunity to give. Some of these kind of people are very hospitable. I heard of one couple, a married couple, who were both givers.

When they went grocery shopping, they both took a walkie-talkie with them and went to two different major groceries and talked to each other and compared prices on all their items. You get the can of peas. It's 10 cents cheaper.

You get the bread. Interesting. That's a true story.

But, friends, this is a wonderful gift. It's one of God's great blessings to His people. Their greatest joy is seeing what they give bring results.

They love to see what God is doing through their gifts. And they should be able to. Amen? They should be able to know.

For instance, when I've had missionary conventions over the years, I always say to the missionaries, tell us what's happening. Don't get in my pulpit and preach. I can preach our missions better than you can.

I'm a better theologian than you are. Leave it alone. I'll preach the word about missions.

You tell us what's happening. Tell us. What is our money and our prayers doing? Tell us about the people getting saved.

Tell us about the churches being established. Tell us what's happening out there. Get us excited and thrilled with what we're doing.

Amen? Amen. So, that's their greatest joy, seeing God work. The dangers, well, there's always dangers because we're sinners.

Sometimes they have a danger of thinking they're right, and sometimes they are. Sometimes they have a tendency to cross people off their list who don't agree with them. They can sometimes have pride in giving, though as they grow spiritually, they'll get rid of that.

They can give unwisely. And they have a tendency to want to give to the outfit that makes the biggest splash. But that can be a big disappointment.

They can have the danger of using their money to manipulate and to be a power broker, but that is carnal, and God will rebuke that. They need to see what their money has bought, and I don't blame them. Sometimes they may go through a financial dry spell as God corrects their priorities or attitudes.

Let me give you now some Biblical examples of people with this gift, some more examples. The good Samaritan. You remember how Jesus was giving the parable, and he said a man, you know, was on a trip, and he was attacked by thieves, and they robbed him, they beat him, they left him half dead, naked in the ditch, and took everything and went.

And various people came by and didn't do anything for him, and then the Samaritan came. But a Samaritan as he traveled came, Luke 10, 33, where the man was, and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him, he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.

Now, I know Jesus told this parable in the question, who is my neighbor, answering that question. And he said, who was neighbor to this man? But the man he described was a man with a gift of giving. There were religious people went by, there were people went by that should have helped, that made big professions of their faith in God, did nothing, but along comes a man with a gift of giving, and this is just what he loves to do.

And so he took this man and took care of him and paid the bills and enjoyed it and had a wonderful time. You get the picture? Wonderful picture. Another one in the Old Testament that I like, this Unamite woman, 2 Kings 4, beginning with verse 8. One day Elisha, that's the great prophet Elisha of the Old Testament, there was Elijah and then Elisha was the man that came after him.

One day Elisha went to Shunam, a city, and a well-to-do woman, notice, a well-to-do woman, money, was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. I like that.

She said to her husband, I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table and a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay here whenever he comes to us, a prophet's chamber.

And we have friends in Abbotsford who have a prophet's chamber. We even have the numbers to punch in and just walk in. So, one day, when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there.

He said to his servant Gehazi, Call Shunamite. So he called her and she stood before him. Elisha said to her, Tell her, you've gone to all this trouble for us, now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army? I mean, this is a preacher with some influence.

She replied, I have a home among my own people. What can be done for her? Elisha asked Gehazi, I said, Well, she has no son and her husband is old. Then Elisha said, Call her.

So he called her and she stood in the doorway. About this time next year, Elisha said, You will hold a son in your arms. No, my lord.

She objected, Don't mislead your servant, O man of God. But the woman became pregnant and the next year, about that time, she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her. Now notice this woman, very fascinating.

She's wealthy. She's very practical. Very practical.

She sees a need. Here's this man of God. He's going back and forth, traveling through this city.

I've started to feed him, but he needs more than that. He needs a place to stay overnight. So what can we do? Well, we have a big home.

Why don't we make a room for him? And we'll fit it all up for him so whenever he comes this way, he can stay in that room. He can have a place to sleep and study and we'll feed him and all very practical. And then when Elisha said, What can we do for you? Well, she was hard to help.

She said, I don't need anything. I'm fine, independent. She could take care of herself.

But of course, she did have a deep need about which she was saying nothing. Also, she was not the type to believe in miracles. And often people with this gift who are in the habit of making things happen have a little hard time believing in miracles.

So her husband was old and she had been barren all these years and he said, By this time next year, you'll have a child. She says, Yeah, you're a fine man, but don't tease me. I don't believe it.

But God meant to give her a child which was the deep longing of her heart. So here's this wonderful woman who has a gift of giving and she is used of God to be a great blessing to the greatest man of God on earth at that time. And God says, Honey, I'm going to bless you.

I'm going to bless you and I'm going to give you the desires of your heart. And so he did. A wonderful person with this gift.

In secular vocations, well, there's all kinds of things. It's hard to get them all here. They're mostly some form of independent work or business.

Professions carried on in a very business-like way, such as farming or building or developing or manufacturing, sometimes in the medical field, financial field, law, technical stuff, entertainment, inventions, entrepreneurs, those kind of people. And I could add many more things, but there is almost an endless line of ways that these people can function in the secular world and God can bless them and God can use them for his glory. Christian ministries.

Really, these people are the very best when they're not serving on committees. People with this gift are at their very best when they're given a job to do and they can go do it. They can serve on committees.

The more spiritual they get, the better they can do it. But I'll tell you what happens sometimes, especially if they're on a church board or a large committee, they get impatient with the rest of us. They say, that's no big deal.

I'll take care of it. And you say, no, you can't do that. The board has to discuss this for two years yet.

Sorry, sorry, sorry. I was going to say I'm sorry, but I'm not. But they say, what? I can take care of that.

Just give me that project. I'll run with it. And sometimes that would be the thing to do.

So generally, these wonderful people, this great gift, are entrepreneurial people. They are people that get things done. They are people who are hard workers.

And they function beautifully in the church when they're given things to do and given freedom to do it. And so we need to keep that in mind. A friend of mine with this gift.

Wonderful guy. Had lots of wonderful times with him. I don't know what kind of money he's making now.

He's semi-retired, but at the time that I'm thinking about, he was making \$150,000 a year as an oil consultant in the city of Calgary, which isn't bad, right? I've also known farmers that were making that much in Saskatchewan, too. Anyway, that's what he was doing. He heard that I was coming to Calgary to attend a seminar in church management.

And he liked me and was committed to my ministry. I'm not quite sure why, but some of these people do have some weak areas. Anyway, what he did was he flew my wife and me there and took care of all our expenses.

So there were a number of people at that time who were saying to me because I had been involved in the Canadian revival and I was doing a huge amount of preaching in the Canadian revival movement. I was out usually twice a month at least and going all over the country and preaching in the revival ministry. And they were saying to me, you should resign your church and go full-time into this kind of ministry.

And I was praying and thought about it. So anyway, I was staying at his house and I said to him, you know, I know that God has blessed you as a consultant. And so here's my problem.

And I laid it out before him. And I said, before the seminar was over, one night I want you to give me some advice about this. Well, I didn't realize what he would do.

I went to the seminar early the next morning. He called his office, didn't come in and spent the entire day in fasting and prayer. Now here's a man with this gift who's seeking God.

Right? Amen. And that night I come home from the seminar and he said, now before you go to bed I have your answer. And I found out later what he had done.

And he said to me, now I understand what they're saying, but here's what I think God has said to me today. If you leave the pastorate, for the first six months or a year, you'll be all over the place preaching constantly and have a great ministry. But, he said, one of the things that makes you so effective in pastor's conferences and all those kind of things is the fact that you are a pastor and they know that and they know what's happening in your church and therefore they listen to you.

And by the time you've been out of the pastorate for a year you will lose that particular quality. And I was flabbergasted. And it was like the Holy Spirit said, there, there's your answer.

I said, thank you, Gary. That's it. That's the answer.

Praise the Lord. And I had wonderful peace about it. And I am so thankful to God that I had a man of God who had those kind of gifts who would take the time to fast and pray an entire day and get the mind of God and give me godly advice.

And I have thanked the Lord ever since. So this is a man with this gift. He bought equipment.

Well, he bought taping and tape producing equipment for our church, not his church. He lived in a different city because he was interested in that project and my ministry. That's exactly like somebody with this gift.

He paid bills for Bible college students secretly through another student. He kept a special investment portfolio for that purpose. And the time when he shared it with me because we were close friends, he had half a million dollars in it earning interest.

And he said, that money I've already given to God for Bible college students and it's in there and every penny will be used for them. And when he heard about Bible college students that had needs, then he would get the money to them secretly through another Bible college student and never let them know that it was him. Great.

Wonderful. He supported an evangelist for a year because these people can be manipulated if they don't get the right advice. He supported an evangelist for a year.

An evangelist who I said to those in authority, you should not have him on the list. I instinctively knew he was wrong. Anyway, he didn't know that.

He was talked into it by others that he respected and loved. He fully supported this man and paid for him totally for a year. Then instinctively, he sensed that something was wrong and just cut him off.

Six months later, we discovered this man was involved in an immoral lifestyle. But that's the kind of thing he would do. He built a large house with seven bedrooms so as to be able to be hospitable with God's children.

Well, a man with a gift of giving. There's so much to be said, but I don't want to wear you with it tonight. Many who have this gift do not realize it.

They may be Christians, but are not aware in using what God has given them to the best possible advantage. This gift is a great responsibility but holds the possibility of great blessing and great joy. Think about it.

Pray about it. If God has given you this gift, ask Him to show you how He wants you to use it for His glory. Ask Him to teach you, to train you, to protect you from mistakes and to help you to be a great blessing in the kingdom of God.

And He will do that very thing. Let's bow in prayer. Father, we thank you that you are so wise and that you have put in this world, especially for the sake of your body, the church, people that you have created with different gifts like the members of a body that we might serve together under our head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to thank you tonight for the many people you have created with this gift. I pray for those who have heard my voice tonight. Some of them already know it and are learning how to use it.

Others will find it new. Help them to see it clearly and to go to you in humility and sincerity and let you guide them as to how to use this gift. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Are you learning anything? Good. Let's stand and sing.

As we sing tonight, remember the greatest gift of all, the gift that God gave us in Jesus Christ, the gift that we can receive and then continue to give. God forgave my sin in Jesus' name. I've been born again in Jesus' name.

And in Jesus' name I come to you to share His love as He told me to. He said freely, freely you have received. Freely, freely give.

Go in my name and because you believe others will know that I live. All power is given in Jesus' name. In earth and heaven in Jesus' name.

And in Jesus' name I come to you to share His power as He told me to. He said freely, freely you have received. Freely, freely give.

Go in my name and because you believe others will know that I live. Wonderful. A beautiful close to our service tonight.

There's coffee and fellowship. Enjoy it before you go home. Good night.

God bless you.

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