

THE PERFECT GIFT

A friend reminisced about her dad who worked many hours every day at hard, manual labor. There was never much money and there were many mouths to feed in their home.

When my friend was around six, all she could talk about was the new doll she wanted for Christmas. She did not fully understand the heart burden it must have put on her parents, knowing their little girl wanted something so terribly and there was no money to buy it. All she knew was she wanted a doll like her friends had.

Her father, though, was not only hard working but determined. His job took him to several area junk yards each week. And so, after completing his daily work, he would push through the smelly trash, looking for something he could turn into a treasure for his little girl.

He found a doll body with one leg here, another salvageable arm and leg there, and although it took several weeks of digging through reeking garbage, he finally had enough pieces to make a whole doll.

He spent hours cleaning it, wiring it together, painting on features worn off, and even washing and styling the blonde hair until it was shinier than the day it came out of the box. Her mom sewed a little outfit for it out of an old dish towel and finished it off with a small red ribbon in the hair.

When she opened her present Christmas morning, she was overcome with joy and was inseparable from her new doll. When school started back, she happily took her doll with her. Even though it did not look like other dolls and some of the other kids taunted her and made fun of it, she did not care. She loved it with all her heart.

Even now, over 50 years later, tears moisten her eyes as she talks of her gratitude for the many hours her dad spent to make sure his little girl had what she wanted.

We have a Heavenly Father who has promised to never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5)

We have a Heavenly Father who has promised to provide for us. (Matt7:7-11)

And this is truth. The money we spend today is rarely going to be remembered for long. But the sacrificial kindness and the goodness of God that we release into the world will not only last, but will multiply into eternity.

God gives each of us gifts, or talents, or abilities. It is the same Spirit that works within each of us and works through us in many different ways. When you are flowing or working in the abilities that God placed within you, not everyone will recognize them. You may not be appreciated or complimented. In fact, there are times you might even be mocked!

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Write out Col. 3:23. Discuss what this means in your group.
2. Write out Romans 12:11 Discuss what this means in your group.
3. Knowing that all we do should be done as unto the Lord, and not to man, think back on a time when someone belittled you or criticized the work you were doing or the way you planned something. Jot down your honest feelings.
4. Were your feelings based in the new man or the old man?
5. If you feelings were based in the old man, did the comments of the one belittling or criticizing you cause you to want to quit or give up on the abilities that God placed within you?
6. When we allow ourselves the pricey luxury of living out of the old man, we can see that it is very costly when it causes us to run away from our purpose in the earth. Think of Elijah and Jezebel. (I Kings 19) The intimidation that came through Jezebel to silence the voice of God through Elijah caused him to run and hide and vacate his place and wish to be dead.

Are there times you have allowed intimidation or the opinions of others to bring you down or halt your forward motion?

How can you help yourself recognize this going forward?

7. You are so special to God. He placed within you what is needed to come together as the end time army for this time. Guard the gifts and don't allow anything to snuff out your voice. Your community needs you. Your Aglow family needs you. Purpose now in a quiet time to be all that God is calling you to be. This is the time of your arising.
8. As each of you come together in the beauty of who God has gifted you to be, you will find a beautiful, powerful 'gift' – like the pieced together doll, coming together for your community. Now is not the time to shrink back. Now is the time to join hands in your group and put your corporate hand in His hand and walk forward into the future with Him. Expect to be delighted! Expect to be the help God has sent to your community. Will you do this together?

___ YES ___ No Sign _____ Date _____