
Spiritual Formation Part 24

Discipleship Tools www.discipleshiptools.org

What Can I Give God? Part 1

Real authentic Christianity is formed in the crucible of our Spiritual Formation. It is our response to who and what Christ has done. As we give back to Him, in so doing he gives us so much more. Consider giving Him the gift of your trust, obedience, and devotion. In addition, this is the gift that keeps giving because this gift will have incredible, immeasurable results that will swing back your way. It will be the gift to be a blessing to all those around you because you become a better child of God. By living a life of real authentic Christianity, you will be living a life filled with purpose and distinction, a life worth living, a life of contentment.

Need Some More Gift Ideas for God?

- **Be willing to give God the gift of your repentance.** To repent means to completely and utterly turn away from your desires and deeds and toward His love and plan. Repentance was the central pronouncement of Jesus' earthly ministry. Real, authentic repentance is sincere; we will regret our past behavior and be on guard in future relationships so that a moral and lifestyle change will result. It is God's desire that we repent of our sins and come to His way. Repentance is not just sorrow or regret for what we have done, or even to change our minds. Rather, it is the changing of all we are, our goals, aspirations, values, and behaviors so that we turn a complete 180 degrees from the way we were. Repentance is a life that has been changed! (Matt. 4:17; Acts 17:30; 24:14; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:6, 8; 2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:22-24)
- **Be willing to give God the gift of your faith.** This is the willingness to live out the Christian life we claim we are living. It is the actual implementation of His precepts into our daily life, because these precepts are better than anything we had planned. We must have a life that matches what we say we believe; faith is the quintessential tool to make this happen. This is where we take what we have learned and believe and put it into action in our relationships and opportunities. Our faith and our deeds must not operate independently of each other (Psalm 34:4-6; James 2:18).
- **Be willing to give God the gift of your Mind,** a mind that is focused, to the best of your ability, on His precepts and character. Instead of filling our minds with needless junk, let us fill it up with things that will help us grow in our faith. Instead of a romance novel or a cheap magazine, pick up a good book, a classic, a book to help you grow, and read the ultimate Book, His Word, the Bible. If you are willing to grow closer to God, then fill your mind with things and ideas that are pleasing to Him (Rom. 12:1-3; 1 Cor. 2:16; 1 Peter 2:1-2).

- **Be willing to give God the gift of your heart** that looks to how Christ lived and desires to have the same compassion for others that He had. See people as His children, as your brothers and sisters, as community and family. Love is the prototypical character we are called to emulate. Let us not be caught up in the ways of the world; rather, be caught up in the Way of Christ (Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 12; 1 John 3:17-20).
- **Be willing to give God the gift of your witness.** Real, authentic faith and a focused mind on His precepts equals a real and authentic witness. Be real, be authentic, and be poured out to Him. Have the courage to take your life into the lives of others by showing them the great news of what Jesus has done (Acts 20:24). We have a responsibility to live our lives as His ambassadors of truth with the great commandment (Mark 12:28-31; 2 Cor. 5:20), and see the hope we have to come! We have the call to fulfill the great commission by making disciples, not just converts and “pew-sitters” (Matt. 28: 18-20)!

So, which gift is the best one for you? Well actually all of them, because each one is essential for your Christian formation and your growth in Him. Why would we give all of these gifts? These are the gifts that bring Him the glory, and empower our lives so we can be stronger in Him and more effectual to others. We will be better connected with Christ so all of our relationships and activities will have His empowerment and blessings. And, do not forget the Fruit of the Spirit, God’s work in you!

The gifts are rather simple for us to take a look at. All we need to do is look at the list that is found in James 4:7-10. James gives us ten to look at, *submit, come near, wash, purify, grieve, mourn, wail, change, and humble ourselves*. Each one leads to a closer relationship with God, and to a life that is bearing fruit, building character, and becoming more mature and thus more valuable, capable, and influential to others around us. This is exhibited and practiced by maximizing our time with God through the disciplines of the faith, Bible reading, devotions, prayer, and godly fellowship. It comes from trusting our Lord and His plan, thereby taking the focus off us, the ways of Satan, and the world. We are to be vulnerable in confessing our sins and drawing to Him as LORD. When we are humble, God is glorified and He lifts us up. It is not about our way; it is all about HIS WAY (Prov. 24:3-4; Isa. 45:7; Jer. 29:11-14; Phil. 2:3-4)! When we chase the devil and/or our pride, we will sink below the tossing waves in a sea of despair, a life that boils over with trouble (James 1:6-8). The key to preventing that sinking is to allow God’s work in us, and for these commands to take root so our lives reflect righteousness. When we remove our sinful attitude of pride, He is glorified.

When we accept Christ in our life, He needs to be Lord of our life. We are to take responsibility for allowing His conviction to touch us deeply; then we can let go of our ways and surrender to His way (Matt. 11:28; Luke 11:9-10). We must stop trying to manipulate God to give us our desires and needs, and concentrate on what we are to give Him. This is about how we are to worship Him in all that we do—in total trust and total devotion. So, let us stop combating with God, stop fighting within ourselves, and stop the hostility with one another and concentrate our efforts toward God’s glorification and worship. This means we are to recognize sin and its destructive nature. It may look

good, but it will take us away from God and others and leave us bankrupt in our relationships and filling us with bitterness and despair.

Here are Some Thoughts and Questions to Consider:

Read John chapters 14:1-6 and 15:1-8; 11-14 and James 4:7-10, knowing you are Christ's friend and are called to abide in Him.

1. What does Christmas mean to you? Do you like to receive gifts? What should it mean? What can be learned from these passages in our gift giving?
2. Which of these gifts have you given God already? How is it going?
3. Look over each of these gifts and reflect on their size in you, how they are working and what you need to do to make them bigger in your life?
4. Which gifts do you need to work on?
5. What can you do to better give God these gifts?
6. Which gifts are the most problem for you to give and why?
7. What is in the way of your giving these gifts to God?
8. What will your life look like when these gifts are functioning more prevalently?
9. What can you do to live by faith as a verb (action)? Most Christians just “think” about living the Christian life and do not really apply their faith to the reality of their daily lives.
10. Jesus needs to be Lord of our life. So what do you need to do to take responsibility for allowing His conviction to touch you deeply?