

THE GIFT OF TODAY

Are any of you like me and roll out of bed with your 'to-do list' on your mind? How many times in those first few moments of the new day do we open our eyes and immediately think of all we have to accomplish in the next twenty four hours? So often we mentally go through that list before our feet ever hit the floor and the things we tend to focus on are the things that are burdensome. Holy Spirit, in His very creative way, pointed this out to me not long ago.

I awakened one morning and the first thing I saw in my mind was a giant gift box. The box was about the size of a washing machine box and had a big red bow on it. The Lord spoke to me and said, "Each morning you receive a gift from Me. It is the gift of a brand new day. It's a day of new beginnings; a day full of surprises; a day of new adventure; a day of new opportunities." We all love gifts but I have to confess that I had not been looking at my days in that way. Like many of you, my day usually started by having to get up earlier than I want, go to work while wishing I could stay home, go through the list of things to do at work, come home and take care of the household chores, eat supper, check email, go to bed and start the routine again the next morning. That certainly did not resemble the gift box I saw. Mind you, not every morning was like this. There were a few mornings a week that I would wake up and think, "Today is Sunday. Its church night." or "The kids are coming in today". Even then, I would tolerate the majority of the day until I could get to the 'good stuff'. Those mornings of anticipation were the exception and not the rule for me. Oh, how the enemy wants to capture our thoughts before we ever get out of bed. When I saw the gift box it grieved me that for 40 some odd years I had participated in that and had allowed him to steal time and joy from me. He is a thief, you know!

Ok, back to the gift box! As I opened the big box I saw other smaller gift boxes inside that were also beautifully wrapped. Those were the gifts within the gift. As I unwrapped one box I saw a person...no one in particular...just a person. The Lord was showing me that I come in contact with people each day that truly are gifts from Him. It was easy to see how some people were gifts. However, there were those that had not been seen in that light to say the least! Next, He revealed to me that inside each of those 'people gifts' were other gift boxes. They were filled with the gifts of opportunity; opportunities to show love...to smile...to call them by name...to listen to their heart...and yes, many times the opportunity to identify what hurts them and what wounds they carry. Instead of seeing them as a fussy, grouchy person that I'd rather avoid, I began to see them as an adventure. "Lord, what's at work in them? Open my spiritual ears to hear what flows out of their mouths directly from their heart." (That's in the Bible!!) "Open my spiritual eyes to see through their eyes as to what has caused so much hurt. Speak to me the mysteries of heaven that will flow through me to them and bring life and not death." Do you see how that shifts the attitude from drudgery to adventure? No matter how unpleasant people may seem, they are a treasure to the Father.

The enemy of our souls wants to keep us so focused on our 'to do list' and keep us so trapped in monotonous cycles that we miss those opportunities...those gifts...that are ours for the blessing! For example, I was sitting at my desk one afternoon with a pile of paperwork to go through. All of a sudden, I heard the Lord instruct me to go down the hall to a particular teacher's classroom and just ask her how her day had been. I tried to ignore that voice because I

really did not want to be delayed. However, the ‘nudge’ would not go away. I did as He directed and sure enough, when I asked her how her day had been, she wept. It had been a terribly bad day for her and she just needed someone to love her. I almost missed that blessing because I was so focused on the paperwork...the ‘to do list’.

I am not a shopper. Unfortunately, grocery shopping is not an option since we like to eat. It’s a shopping trip I can’t ignore but that is even becoming an adventure for me. Have you ever looked around at the opportunity for sharing Jesus at the supermarket? Maybe you are standing in a long checkout line for a reason. You are there anyway. Why not ask Holy Spirit why He put you there...for such a time as this! There just might be a gift in that line waiting to be unwrapped. Here’s the bottom line...*people* bring with them *situations* that bring gifts of *opportunity* for us to unwrap on a daily basis.

Let’s go back to the big box again. There were other smaller gifts of different kinds within the big box of a new day. Many times the Lord will speak to me with a simple phrase or a part of a scripture and then it is as if He says, “Here’s a clue! Now go! Search it out until you find a hidden treasure of heaven.” What fun! That is one of my favorite gifts. Our Father just loves to have a good time with His kids.

Other gifts boxes contained words of encouragement, or words of knowledge that bring a little more freedom to myself or someone else. There were gifts of unexpected financial blessings and the everyday gifts we tend to take for granted that are so special; gifts like laughter...a refreshing rain...a warm fire in the fireplace...a good night’s sleep...a dream...a vision...the beauty of a rainbow...fresh baked cookies...the smile from a friend. Every single day the Father gives us an outpouring of His love. We just need the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened to see it.

Will there be battles? Oh, yes indeed. You can be certain that some of the people and situations we encounter throughout the day do not come from the gift box. Some are put in our paths specifically as a trap set by the enemy to thwart God’s plans for us. There are also times when situations do not take on the appearance of a gift in the beginning. There may be deep travail over a situation as we labor to press in for breakthrough. As we come through those battles, however, we begin to see how they even bring gifts of opportunities to be strengthened and matured; to see the Kingdom of God established and advanced. Going through the fire gives us the opportunity to come out like pure gold. What a gift!

Scripture tells us to renew our minds; to think on things above and not on earthly things. Choosing to change our focus from drudgery and mundane to opportunity and adventure is one example of what that means. Seeing people and situations from a heavenly perspective as opposed to an earthly one will make all the difference in the world. The choice is ours.

Finally, the gift tag on the big box read,

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows,”

***Enjoy your day
Love, Daddy***

John 10:10 says, “*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I (Jesus) came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.*” Choose to think about the abundance that comes from the gift of a brand new day. Let your holy imagination run wild. There are no limits to what that can look like. “*His mercies are new every morning.*” (Lamentations 3) That is quite a gift and it brings with it an air of excitement and expectancy. It sure makes the alarm clock seem less like an enemy and more like a friend!

