

The Gifts of God

His Generous Virtues

Forgiveness, Patience & Thankfulness

Writer wishes to remain Anonymous.

To use a simple analogy, think of the single biggest debt you would have in life.

Think back, to the days of your youth - when you were looking to get married, raise a family, and buy a new home. It's a big step, but you think to yourself, all you need is a loan from the bank, right? Well, you go down to the bank, to see your local bank manager; and with hat in hand, you humbly ask him for a home loan, so you can get things started, and move towards buying your own house.

At the time, you think to yourself - *Whew! What a massive loan it is, and we've got forty years to pay it off; I sure hope everything works out for us in the end!*

After ten years of faithfully making the payments, something terrible happens - without warning, you suddenly lose your job, and with no immediate source of income, for paying off this loan (that you are committed to for the next thirty years), you know that you have to get another job, and quickly! Sadly, the bank that you signed with, is well known for it's lack of compassion, when it comes to it's customers having money problems, and it's harsh foreclosure practices.

You plead your case directly to the bank manager, asking for understanding in your situation; you explain that all you need, is more time to get a job, and start making payments again. Unfortunately, it falls on deaf ears; you find out pretty quickly, that they are not even remotely interested in helping you out. The one thing that stuck in your mind, is what they said during all this - *If we helped you, then we would have to help everyone, and we can't do that now, can we?*

With such an appalling lack of compassion, you see coming from the bank, your **patience** is wearing thin. You had high hopes, that they would eventually 'come to the party', and realize that people sometimes go through financial problems and difficulties in life; and that, for the most part, it is usually not their fault or making; and that all they need, is a little bit of time, to fix their financial woes.

Finally after all that, they give you an ultimatum - pay up before the deadline, or the foreclosure will proceed as scheduled, and you will lose everything you've ever worked for. In desperation, you go to everyone you can possibly think of: family, friends, neighbors, other banking institutions, everyone, but to no avail.

Sadly, you come to realize, that there is nothing more you can possibly do - the bank will get the house. You and your family, will be kicked out onto the streets.

The stress that you are under, is almost unbelievable; it is draining the very life out of you. Such a grievous burden you have, hanging over your head, ready to crush you. You wish that somehow, it would all just go away, and things would go back to normal, and you can start enjoying life again, (if you can remember how that felt). The pain that this has caused, has almost torn your family apart.

One day, a kind and generous person comes into your life. He informs you that He knows of your dire financial situation, and your desperate attempts to try and pay this great debt, that has been increasing every day, since you lost your job; and the bank's appalling attitude of apathy and indifference, shown towards you.

This kind and generous person, is moved by what you have been going through. He decides to settle this grievous debt of yours in one go, making it disappear forever, never to bother you again. This stops the foreclosure in it's tracks; the bank informs you, that your loan has now been completely paid off and that the paperwork (for your new home), will be handed over to you, in a meeting to be arranged between the bank and yourself, in the near future. After it finally sinks in, you have to sit down, and try and take it all in - *It's almost like a dream, did it really happen? Yes! it really did! This terrible ordeal of mine is finally over!*

The tears begin to roll down your cheeks because of what this amazing person has done. He has paid off your debt, to the last cent; a debt so massive, that in the time you had left, there was no way you could have settled it on your own.

This incredible act of generosity came to you, in your darkest hours, when you needed it the most. **How does one even begin to repay, such an amazing act of kindness, on your behalf?** You begin to feel enormous gratitude, for this person who has saved you. **Thankfulness** wells up inside your soul, for this kind and generous one, who has paid your debt in full - and this person's name, is Jesus.

If you have never experienced the euphoria that one gets, when a great weight or debt, has been lifted off your shoulders - wiping the slate clean, for all time, never to have it remembered or spoken of, ever again - then you will never know how glorious and special it is, this wonderful virtue of God, called **Forgiveness**.

His Wonderful Forgiveness

It is the intentional and voluntary process, by which the bearer, has a complete change of heart (towards those that have transgressed against them, and caused them injury) - by wiping the slate clean, and remembering the offence no more. Other words that might help you to better appreciate it's special meaning, are - **Remission, deliverance, salvation, release, mercy, discharge, amnesty, love, reprieve, clemency, kindness, understanding, benevolence and compassion.**

In truth - it is the bearer's deliberate free will choice, to let go of anger, bitterness, resentment, vengeance or desire to be made whole again, towards those that have hurt or harmed them - by giving them a full pardon, and thinking of it no more.

In God's eyes, it is an act of great kindness, that is bestowed upon those who have 'injured Him' through their sins, and have since shown full repentance, and been personally redeemed, by the saving power of Jesus sacrifice for them, and resurrection from the dead - through His wonderful virtue, called **forgiveness!**

For those of us who were given it - **it is not deserved, or earned in any way.**

There are two conditions however, for receiving this great virtue, and you cannot bypass them at all - you must be able to **forgive** others, for their transgressions against you; if you do not **forgive**, you will not be **forgiven**; and the other one is - you must be able to **forgive** them completely, and remember the offence no more.

In Matthew 6:14-15, it is written -
*For if ye forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
But if ye forgive not men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

We have an obligation to **forgive** others, just as we have been **forgiven** by God.

And if we apply the same standards God has for us, to our brothers and sisters (to repent their actions); then they must face the victim (the one they hurt), and acknowledge their actions were wrong - and with sincerity, ask their **forgiveness!**

Remember, **Forgiveness** is still a voluntary action, and it is totally in the hands of the victim, whether they want to **forgive** someone or not, for what they did.

Normally, if we are injured, damaged, or owed something from someone, we would be entitled (through the law), to seek restitution from them, so we would be made whole again - and be restored to what we were, before all this happened.

As you might imagine, pursuing the reparations we seek (from the offender, through the law), can be painful, financially punishing, and on permanent record; but that's the price they must pay, to compensate us, for what they have done.

God's Judgment (of us, and our sins) however, is far far more. The bible says, *the wages of sin, is death* (in Romans 6:23); this means that, on our own, we would have to compensate God (to make Him whole again), with our very lives; that is because we have all sinned against God - and fallen short of His glory.

Remember, **the righteousness of God**, is like His authority - absolutely perfect and undeniable; but ours, on our own (without Christ), is absolutely worthless.

In Isaiah 64:6, it is written -
*But we are all as an unclean thing,
and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;
and we all do fade as a leaf;
and our iniquities,
like the wind, have taken us away.*

Because ours is absolutely pitiful, we cannot come close, to the high standards of righteousness, that is required of us (to be in God's presence), on our own.

That is why we need **forgiveness** for our sins, so we can be returned to God.

The only way we can attain this wonderful gift of God, is through the salvation of Jesus, through His death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead. He has done the 'heavy lifting' of our salvation, that we could not possibly do ourselves, on our own. He has already paid the price '**for our sins against God**' - all you have to do, is repent your sins, and ask Him for His wonderful **forgiveness**, and as long as you are sincere in the asking - **He will forgive you**, wholeheartedly! It is in His nature - to be generous with His **forgiveness**, to all who seek Him!

Through God's loving mercy, we have been shown the importance, of this great virtue. It means that our transgressions, our sins, our wrongdoings against God, have been wiped clean from His memory; never to be brought up again; never to have it held against us; erased for all time. It was as though it never happened.

His Boundless Patience

The wonderful ability to remain calm, and suppress restlessness or annoyance in oneself, when confronted with delay, trying situations or difficult people. To go through the most testing circumstances imaginable, with self-control and dignity. Other words that might help you to better appreciate it's special meaning, are - **Long-suffering, forbearance, endurance, tolerance, composure, coolness, self-restraint, equanimity, perseverance, suzerance, calmness and sangfroid.**

Just think for a moment - How many times in our lives, have we held ourselves back, from doing something we would regret afterwards, by showing incredible restraint and self-control? I can almost hear your deafening response ringing in my ears right now - the sighs, the rolling of the eyes and shaking of the heads!

The answer is blatantly obvious - many many times, so many in fact, that you are wondering how you ever managed to get through them, without screaming and ripping your hair out at the same time! Yes without a doubt, these difficult moments are occurring with more frequency and intensity than ever before; so it is absolutely essential, that we have God's calming virtue inside us at all times, so we don't end up looking silly, when losing our cool in the heat of the moment, by saying and doing things we don't mean at all, and regret doing straight away.

These situations can be a test of our character, and can arise at any time, of the day or night - when we are out in our cars going places; when we are shopping for groceries with our families; when we are on public transport going to work; from your own children, who they get with guilt trips and other nefarious forms of manipulation, so they can test what they want; to your neighbor next door, who is spending all his time trying to argue with you over petty things, like the small branch from your tree, that is hanging over his fence-line, by just two feet. These potentially annoying situations are occurring every day across the globe.

Just look at our mighty Creator, in the heavens; there have been many instances in the past, where individuals have tried to test Him and provoke Him to anger, to push Him almost to breaking point, just to see if they could get away with it, by exercising their God-given free will, to openly reject Him and all that He is. With brazen insolence, they treat Him with utter contempt, insulting arrogance and stubborn pride - this they do, to the Creator of all things, seen and unseen!

There are many who would say that, such offensive and contemptuous behavior shown before 'the Mighty One of Heaven'; demands an immediate and terrible response, of His fury anger and ferocity; to obliterate and destroy all those who would choose to show such fist-shaking defiance before God; to leave no trace of them who are openly rebellious to His sovereign authority, over all creation!

Thank Heavens about His lovely virtue, for without it, we would all be in a lot of trouble right about now! It is there, alongside His deep love for us in His Heart, and it burns so brightly for us all - His living, breathing and thinking creation.

Our beloved Creator, is **patient** and long-suffering with us, as we stumble and fall over in life; just as a young child makes mistakes, growing up in the sight of it's adoring parents. That's what we are - small children, with a lot to learn, and that He knows what's best for us. We can choose to be humble or arrogant before Him, but in the end, He is our mighty Creator high above us, residing in eternity, and we are down here, far below His lofty throne, with much to learn!

Because God loves us so dearly, He perseveres, He soldiers on, for our benefit, as we grow up before Him; what loving parent wouldn't do this for their child?

Can you understand how important it is, to have His calming virtue inside you?

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and give thanks for His incredible **Patience**.

His Precious Thankfulness

A virtue of the heart, that is shown by someone, in acknowledgment of a benefit or gift received - that is of such value, that they feel a strong desire, to be how thankful they are, by responding to the bearer, with gladness, warmth and praise. Other words that might help you to better appreciate it's special meaning, are - **Gratitude, appreciation, joyfulness, thanksgiving, affection, gratefulness, indebtedness, compliments, admiration, commendation and recognition.**

Behold!

A beautiful and expressive virtue, has been gifted to us from the Heart of God! In simple terms - it is a wonderful God-given ability, where we can express our gladness and joy, for receiving all that we are given, and to show this, with sincerity. It also helps us to appreciate all that we have, and be positive about them too.

When we give thanks to God (through this great virtue), we are showing Him how we really feel - about Him, or a particular gift or benefit He has given us.

The truth is - we should be happy grateful and pleased, not only 'for the good things we have in life', but also 'for the bad things we don't have in life', as well; because, as we all know - life can be precarious, and that things in our lives, can change in a millisecond; one minute they're fine, the next minute, they're not!

Think about it, we all know what the good things 'we have in life' are, things that we enjoy, value and appreciate; and the bad things 'we don't have in life', we should be equally happy, grateful and pleased, for their absence in our lives.

You only have to look at what's happening on TV these days, to know that terrible things are happening to people every day. It might be a sudden mudslide in South America, that has consumed an entire town, with a population of some 4,000 people - all dead, no survivors; you might be living somewhere, where it's all flat (no hills at all), and you think to yourself - *I'm glad I wasn't living there!*

Well, that's an example of a bad thing that didn't happen to you - immediately, you should be giving thanks to God, for keeping you safe, and away from this terrible disaster that has happened, and taken the lives of everyone living there.

Another example could be - you were late catching a plane somewhere, and you missed it; you find out later on, that the flight you missed, crashed landed, at the very destination you were going to, and blew up, killing everyone on board.

Once again, you should be showing heartfelt gratitude to God, for steering you clear of this bad thing, that has happened - by missing it, and not being killed.

One day, while you're out walking your dog, you see a woman waiting to catch a bus, and she has an oxygen cylinder next to her, that is helping her to breathe; you observe her just getting by, as every breath she draws, is clearly a struggle.

You, on the other hand, have no problems with your breathing at all; it is as easy and effortless, as it has always been. When you saw this poor woman struggling for every breath - you should be extremely thankful to God, for not having that!

Remember - you must be grateful and appreciative to God, for the good things '**you have in life**', and also for the bad things '**you don't have in life**', as well.

Showing our **thankfulness** to God, is the ultimate form of worship - for it is both heartwarming and pleasing to Him, to see us expressing ourselves in this way.

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