



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

I volunteer for *Senior Access* (formerly *Drive a Senior*), providing rides for seniors who need to go to doctor's appointments, grocery stores and social events. A senior I often take 15 miles to his Alzheimer's support group recently asked me why I go out of my way for him.

Why? Let me list the ways. First is empathy. My greatest fear in aging has been the loss of mobility. I lost physical mobility for three months following an accident a few years back and got a taste of what it is like. It gave me compassion for those who must depend on others to get around.

Secondly, I am motivated by two scriptures: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded," (Luke 12:48) and "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act" (Proverbs 3:27). Thirdly, I truly believe that generosity begets generosity.

Our Genesis text reminds us of gifts God bestowed on us in creation; fruit in this instance. In our consumer society it is easy to get overly concerned or even depressed over the things we don't have while ignoring the gifts we have been given. Advertisers spend billions of dollars annually to make sure that happens.

They employ an army of psychologists to figure out how to make you unhappy with what you have so you will buy what they offer. And when buying more doesn't really make you happy, other psychologists are ready to help you deal with your unhappiness.

Our passage in James reminds us that God's ultimate gift is a new birth, a new heart, and a new way of looking at things. Just as we were gifted with fruits in the Genesis account, so James reminds us we are to be "a kind of first fruits of all he created," a gift for others.
— Joe Grove, First Church member

**Consider
the Source
Genesis 1:9-13
James 1:16-18**

A Family Affair

Read Genesis 1:11-13. Have you ever walked along the fruit and vegetable area in HEB and noticed all the different kinds of harvested food? Think about all the wonderful colors, tastes, and names of produce! God blesses us with many plants and trees that provide food.

Just like the abundance of food God provides, he freely blesses each person with many wonderful gifts to share with the world. Every person possesses gifts in the form of talents and skills.

As a family, discuss ideas about the amazing gifts God has given you. Are you a really good reader? Do you enjoy baking? God has a plan for you and your gifts. Some of your gifts you can share right now and others you may not discover until you are grown up! Could you share your gift of reading by reading to younger children? Could you share your gift of baking by bringing sweets to your Sunday School class?

Together, turn to James in the New Testament and read aloud verses 1:17-18. All gifts are from God. When we share our gifts and talents with others we are sharing God's love.

God freely blesses each person with gifts. There is no charge for the gifts he gives you. How do you choose to share your gifts?

Dear Lord, thank you for your generosity in so many areas of our lives. We pray that we can be on the lookout for ways to share our gifts with others. Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

Monday: Genesis 1:11

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it according to their various kinds." And it was so.

- Do you think of trees and plants as gifts of God?
- What are your favorite trees, plants, fruits?

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Not all God's gifts were given at creation. 1 Corinthians 12 gives a list of spiritual gifts.

- Which of these gifts are part of your experience? Of your friends?

Wednesday: Romans 12:6-8

Some of God's gifts have to do with talent and ability.

- Which of these do you enjoy?
- How do you use your gifts on behalf of others?

Thursday: James 1:16-17

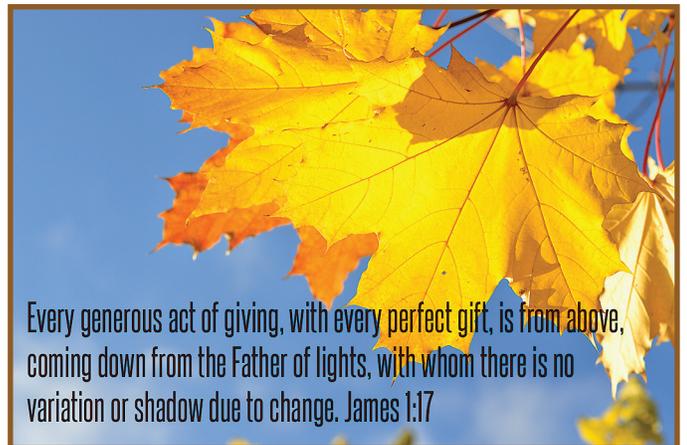
"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

- What do you think James has in mind when he says "perfect gift?"
- In what ways does God not change? What does this mean for you?

Friday: James 1:18

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. The analogy here seems to be that we are given a rebirth, and we are reborn as fruits.

- How does a fruit become useful?
- So, as an analogy, what does that mean for you?



Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17