



The Gift

Leanna Bolden
Eternally Speaking Now

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6*

Earlier this week, I visited an older woman struggling through a major life change.

We sat together in her backyard, in the midst of a **gorgeous**, breezy, 70-degree afternoon. I shared peaceful moments of silence with her, in between listening a lot, talking a little, and shedding empathetic tears.

We watched the train pass by a few times as we soaked in nature's pleasantries surrounding us. Despite the **bad news** in the woman's life, the season of Spring effortlessly shouted its **glory**: lush, leafy, green gardening proclaimed soothing beauty all around, and an abundance of birds sang sweet songs throughout the air.

Sadly, my dear companion was far from singing her own sweet songs.
After 40 years of living in the same house,
it was time to move into an assisted living apartment.

She was stepping **out of the familiar** and into the **unknown**,
and her **unknown** was **undesired** and **unwelcomed**:
No birds, no garden, no longer a home of her own.
No trusted neighbors, no spacious living area, no longer a predictable
routine.
The entire move signified for her a **loss of identity and safety**.

*"I feel like I'm being sent away to my death," she admitted.
I sank into that moment with her,
choked up by her raw, honest confession.*

A minute passed, and I asked a question before I realized what I was
saying. *"What if this is a gift?"* I pondered aloud,
gazing off into the distance.

Although my question surprised myself as it tumbled out of my mouth, it
didn't catch her off guard. She looked at me with an accepting
countenance and an understanding nod, responding,

*"That's exactly what my **doctor** said.
She isn't even a psychologist or **counselor**.
Just a **primary care physician** who is **nice** and **caring**.
She **asked me how I was doing** this week,
and after she **listened** to me,
she asked the same question you just did:
What if this is a gift?"*

We remained again in silence together, personally exploring the strange
comfort of this promising discovery. What if what was happening to
this sweet lady really was a gift?

Before I go further, let's acknowledge the enormous elephant in this e-
room: Clearly, *any* bad news we could *ever* receive is *far* from being
perceived as a happy, welcoming present wrapped in a pretty bow and
plopped into our laps.

It doesn't matter what it is-- whether we lose a house, a loved one, a job,
or our health-- when life throws us a curve, we don't jump up and down
gleefully like a 5-year-old who just found out about a surprise trip to the
ice cream shop.

No one expects us to, either.

I do believe it's important, though, to define the word gift.
It's something given to us that **benefits** us in some measure.
Let's go further and split that definition into two categories:
A-Gifts and B-Gifts.

A-Gifts are the obviously happy ones. Like your favorite birthday cake, a promotion, a clean bill of health, or a newborn baby. These are cheerful things in life, the things we enjoy receiving and celebrating.

B-Gifts, on the other hand, are not described as happy. In fact, upon receipt, they are more like a slap in the face, an insult to our dignity, a wound to the heart, or a strike of fear in the deepest part of the soul.

B-Gifts would include things like a lost job, the death of a loved one, exposed adultery, or a devastating diagnosis. The greatest challenge with these gifts is perceiving them as gifts in the first place.

It isn't until the tape is peeled off, the outer wrapping is removed, the additional (unexpected, and sometimes seemingly never-ending) deeper layers are taken away, the inner box is opened, and the packing material is discarded that we finally discover the **shiny, sparkly surprise** inside.

Indeed, B-Gifts teach us lessons that unfold with time and strengthen our character.

Their benefits last much longer than melted ice cream. And their taste, in the long run, is far better. That's why we can define them as gifts.

As my time with the precious older lady came to a close that lovely day in her backyard, I leaned towards her, my eyes locked on hers, and I asked,

"Do you know what time it was when I walked through your door today?" I paused briefly, with a grin of intrigue.

"Your clock said 3:20," I reported, gleaming. I proceeded to tell her what Jesus says in Revelation 3:20, one of the Scriptures I think of whenever I see those numbers.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

In the midst of a woman's heartache, encompassed by half-filled boxes and miscellaneous items in disarray, at the core of the swirling emotions within her soul, Jesus showed up. He stood at the door of her heart, and He knocked. She opened, and He entered in as the **Primary Physician** that He is. *I'm so glad I got to witness that.*

The Lord **listens**,
cares for,
counsels,
and **comforts** us,
leaving us with the invitation to
view our negative situations as a gift.

As I stood up to leave, I playfully pointed to the chair where I'd been seated and said, "*When I go, you get to pull up this chair and talk with Jesus.*" She smiled, we hugged, and I left God's daughter to spend time with her Daddy.

(Read a delightful story about the number 320 [here](#),
and read another about pulling up the chair for Jesus [here](#).)

The following day, I stopped by to see how she was coming along. The moving truck was there, and I found her in the kitchen packing up some final pieces. She greeted me with a joyful disposition as I handed her... a gift.

You could call it a housewarming present,
but I propose it carried greater meaning.
She opened it right away and was thrilled to discover three things:

- 1) A devotional with prayers written from a princess to her King,
- 2) A prayer box with pen and paper, and
- 3) A big box of chocolate.

What greater meaning did these simple items provide?

- 1) The devotional will help her confront her current struggles from the position of her true identity as a child of God,
- 2) The prayer box will aid in keeping her thoughts surrendered to Christ,
- 3) And, well, chocolate. (That doesn't require further explanation.)

Do you know what that beloved woman did as soon as she saw the candy?
She opened that box of chocolates,
offered some to others,
then ate a piece herself.
Then one more.
At 9:30 in the morning.

Beyond the box of candy, one may suggest that this lady's move to the apartment is the gift she's to embrace, but I'd say it's even more: the move itself is a catalyst that will bring about a fresh work of God, which in turn will unveil uniquely designed things that can only come to pass as she steps into this new season.

Yes, she has an **undesired, unforged** path ahead of her,
and there will probably be **bumps** along that road,
but **this experience** is a gift *that will reveal its **blessings** with time.*
Because she's clinging to Jesus, she's going in the right direction.
And by the look on her face at 9:31 that morning, I can confidently report
that she's already benefiting from the **good taste.**

Challenge

So, what do we take away from this?
All we need is a little bit of chocolate and a whole lot of Jesus.
(That's a fine place to start. Now let's take the application a bit further.)

The question at hand is,
Are we willing to treat life's challenges and struggles as gifts?

Don't get me wrong:
I'm not saying we take what the enemy flings at us,
receive it uncontested,
and wallow in self-pity.

No way.

If you know me, you also know I'm determined to **stand up**
and **refuse** a negative diagnosis, bad news, or unanswered prayer,
seeking God and interceding until it's changed (or I am).
I'm committed to **commanding the enemy** to leave a situation,
taking authority over what the Word of God promises.

Amen, right?

*(By the way, I addressed this in my March writing, *Out for Delivery*.
If you haven't read it yet, please do so [here](#).)*

Every day that passes, though,
as we await the manifestation of God's deliverance,
if circumstances haven't changed,
or if we know deep inside that it's time to move on
(even though we don't want to),
then it's time to define our challenge as a gift.

Walking forward in a trial
and calling it a gift
requires some serious faith
because we must believe
our hardships will yield something **good**,
*even though we cannot see that **goodness** yet.*

Remember Romans 8:28, "**God works all things together for the good of those who love Him,**" and Hebrews 11:1, "**Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.**"

The key is to remember in Whom we place our faith. We don't put our trust in people, ourselves, chance, luck, or blind hope. No, those are fleeting ideas of man that float away with the wind. Rather, **we put our faith in God.**

A recent text from a friend exemplifies this well. This dear friend and sister in Christ was recently diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer. While she and those around her are praying and believing for her healing, whenever and however the Lord makes it manifest will not squelch her determination to embrace all of Jesus through it today. Here is her text.

*"This is not what I wanted to hear, and frankly,
I am not looking forward to walking through this fire,
but it is a wonderful opportunity to test
if I really believe what I say about the Sovereignty
of this God who loves me and my family,
sees all, knows all, reigns over all,
and will use all things for our good and His glory.
May it be!"*

This is the kind of Christian attitude that **shines the work of the Holy Spirit** through our lives!

Hmmm. Maybe the Holy Spirit working mightily within us *is* the gift we get through the trial. If so, He's only a prayer (or chair) away. As Luke 11:13 says,

*"If you then, being evil,
know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will your Heavenly Father
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

Let us choose to courageously forge forward through today's battles, clinging to Jesus and believing by faith that He will bring good out of it all. In so doing, we won't miss **His great and glorious gift.**

Encourage others by sharing this story.



[Share This Email](#)



[Share This Email](#)



[Share This Email](#)

Copyright May 2023
Leanna Bolden, Eternally Speaking Now
www.leannabolden.com