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You Have *Everything* You Need

The Lord is my shepherd, I have all that I need. Psalm 23:1

“God, you have promised to care for us. We bring You the needs of our hearts, the needs of our souls, the needs of our relationships, the needs of our situations, and we trust that You will meet them. You are our Provider, our Comforter, the One who sustains us.

There will never be a situation, conversation, or circumstance when God is not with us and working on our behalf. We will never walk into a room where He isn’t already there. We will never receive news that He hasn’t already heard. We will never face a challenge He hasn’t already overcome.

Nothing surprises God because He knows the past, present, and future. He can’t be derailed, disappointed, or deterred. He doesn’t become discouraged. He doesn’t grow weary. He doesn’t give up, give in, or let go.

God has endless capacity, so He is the only One who can truly handle everything. Nothing is too big for Him. And nothing is too small. He can do it all. We can’t be “too much” for Him, and we can’t be “not enough.” Any limitation that causes us hesitation will not slow Him down.

He has promised to be our help. He has promised to be our hope. He has promised to get us through whatever happens. He has a plan for us and it’s good. We can trust Him to complete His purposes in our lives because he loves us. God is on our side. And He is by our side. With Him we have everything we need for this day, tomorrow and forever.” by Holley Gerth

Taken from Max Lucado’s book entitled: ***Anxious for Nothing***

“Contagious Calm. Paul’s prescription for anxiety begins with a call to rejoice. **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:4-8)

Five verses with four admonitions that lead to one wonderful promise: **“the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” C.A.L.M. -- Celebrate. Ask. Leave. Meditate.**

Celebrate God’s goodness. “Rejoice in the Lord always” (v.4)

Ask God for help “Let your requests be made known to God” (v.6)

Leave your concerns with him. “With thanksgiving . . .” (v. 6)

Meditate on good things. “Think about the things that are good and worthy of praise.” (v. 8)

Joseph kept God in the middle of his circumstance. He viewed the sufferings of his life through the lens of divine providence. The contagiously calm person is the one who reminds others, ‘*God is in control!*’ We can calmly take our concerns to God because he is as near as our next breath! This was the reassuring lesson from the miracle of the bread and fish. In an event crafted to speak to the anxious, Jesus told his disciples to do the impossible: feed five thousand people. Did it occur to anyone to ask Jesus for help? The stunning answer is no! They acted as if Jesus weren’t even present.

You aren’t facing five thousand hungry bellies, but you are facing a deadline in two days ...a loved one in need of a cure...etc. On one hand you have a problem. On the other you have a limited quantity of wisdom, energy, patience, or time. What you have is nowhere near what you need. You have a thimbleful, and you need bucketloads. Typically, you’d get anxious. This time start with Jesus. Start with his wealth, his resources, and his strength. Before you open the ledger, open your heart. Before you count coins or count heads, count the number of times Jesus has helped you face the impossible. Turn to your Father for help.

Gratitude leads us off the riverbank of **if Only** and escorts us into the fertile valley of **Already**. The anxious heart says, “Lord if only I had this, that, or the other, I’d be okay.” The grateful heart says, “Oh look! You’ve already given me this, that, and the other. Thank you God.”

My dear friend Jerry has taught me the value of gratitude. He is seventy-eight years old and regularly shoots his age on the golf course. His dear wife, Ginger, battles Parkinson's disease. What should have been a wonderful season of retirement has been marred by multiple hospital stays, medication, and struggles. Many days she cannot keep her balance. Jerry has to be at her side. Yet he never complains. He always has a smile and a joke. *'Every morning Ginger and I sit together and sing a hymn. I ask her what she wants to sing. She always says, 'Count Your Blessings.' So we sing it. And we count our blessings.'* Take a moment and follow Jerry's example. Look at your blessings."
– Max Lucado



Celebrating God's Goodness . . .

May these insights written by Gene encourage you to count your blessings.

List the blessings God has given to you during your life up to this point. To do this, you may want to take several sheets of paper and divide them into the following seven-year segments (0-7, 8-14, 15-21, 22-28, 29-35, 36-42, 43-49, 50-56, 57-63, 64-70, 71-77, 78-84, 85+).

As you pray and ask the Lord to remind you of His many blessings, jot each one down within the appropriate seven-year segment. Completing one 7-year segment a day will give you time to thoroughly and prayerfully review that period of your life.

Realize along with King David, that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made", and that the Lord was there when you were conceived. (Psalm 139:13-16) and His care for you has been ongoing and personal (I Peter 5:7). As Ethel Waters so eloquently said some years ago, "God don't make no flops!"

After you complete your list, try the following:

1. Mentally remove one blessing at a time from your list. As you remove each blessing, stop and ask yourself how much "poorer" your life would be had the Lord not provided that gift to you.

Then, after you have removed all those good things . . .

2. Mentally replace each blessing one at a time and tell the Lord how grateful you are that He sent that gift to you.

Maybe it's been a while since you sat down and thanked the Lord for his goodness to you as evidenced by the many good people, experiences and things He has provided for you. Why not recall as many blessings as you can and thank Him for each one.

To jog your memory, you may want to prayerfully read through Psalm 103.

We often live as if God had no resources for us or that God's resources could be DEPLETED somehow if we asked for TOO MUCH or asked TOO OFTEN. But the Bible describes the Christian life as an exciting, abundant adventure, and for centuries many believers around the world have found it to be true." In 1 Corinthians 2:9 the Apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 64:4: **No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.**

Now, I realize that life has been difficult for all of us from time to time. You may even be going through a difficult time right now. I never want to minimize what you have endured. You may not, as a result of your circumstances or experience, feel much like thanking God for anything right now. However, let me encourage you to look beyond your current circumstances or feelings.

You may feel as if your life has been stripped and devoured of the good things and the special people you had once hoped would provide you with joy and abundance. If you feel this way right now, remember the Lord, Himself, has promised to restore you. The prophet Joel reminded God's people that He had not forgotten nor forsaken them. He reassured them: **I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten.** Joel 2:25-27.

The Lord is infinitely creative in just HOW and WHEN He will accomplish that for us. Someone once said: "**When you cannot TRACE the finger of God, you can always TRUST the heart of God.**" In spite of HOW you may FEEL or WHAT your CIRCUMSTANCES may indicate to you, I want to encourage us all to begin actively and intentionally celebrating our Father's goodness to us by thanking Him every day for His blessings. **Celebration** is a lifelong skill we need to develop if we are to be all that the Lord wants us to be.

Dallas Willard tells us that celebration *dwells on the greatness of God as shown in his goodness to us.* He also says *celebration is the great antidote to despair and is a wellspring of genuine gratitude--the kind that starts at our toes and blasts off from our loins and diaphragm through the top of our head, flinging our arms and our eyes and our voice upward toward our good God.*

Celebration is to be a regular part of our private lives. In fact, our worship of the Lord Jesus on Sunday morning would be so much more vibrant and alive, IF we were cultivating a heart of gratitude during the week. Leanne Payne makes the following observation in her book, *Listening Prayer*: "**The simple truth is that God does unending miracles to those with a thankful heart.**" Do you want to see answers to your prayers? A good place to begin is to begin thanking God for what He has already done for you! -- by Gene Beekman



Against All Odds and ***Standing on Holy Ground*** is a portion from two of the chapters in this book published by Stonecroft Ministries. I hope it will encourage you wherever you find yourself in your journey with the LORD today.

One of the Bible's most amazing stories of victory in spite of tremendous odds surrounds a young man named Gideon (Judges 6 and 7). When Gideon first appears in the book of Judges, he and all the Israelites are hiding out from the Midianites, who have been terrorizing them for years. When God calls Gideon to lead his people to freedom, Gideon's first response is disbelief—the circumstances appear impossible. God remains steadfast, however, and Gideon finally gathers together a band of men willing to go up against their fearsome foe.

Incredibly, God tells Gideon his army is too big. God whittles their numbers until just 300 of them are left to go up against the mighty Midianite army of 120,000 soldiers. Gideon's story begins on a hopeless note, and God *appears* to be making it even more hopeless. Pure craziness! Do you ever feel, in spite of your many prayers, things seem to go from bad to worse?

God shows incredible patience with Gideon's lack of confidence and faith that his people would ever again be free. God is also patient with you when your confidence wavers. He continually reassured Gideon. To bolster his confidence, God tells Gideon to sneak down to the Midianite encampment the night before the battle and eavesdrop on a conversation between two soldiers. Read what happened in Judges 7:13-15:

Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. *'I had a dream,'* he was saying. *'A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.'* His friend responded, *'This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.'*

When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshipped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, *'Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands.'* To understand the significance of this, you need to get a picture of where Gideon was when he suddenly dropped to his knees to worship God.

Read Judges 7:12: *"The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern people had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore."*

The enemy's numbers are innumerable—too many to count. Yet, right there outside of the soldier's tents, Gideon decided to have a prayer meeting! Smack in the middle of enemy territory, he took time to acknowledge the One who was directing the miraculous circumstance of his life.

When we decide to position ourselves to worship Almighty God, even in enemy territory, we step into the realm of the miraculous. We place ourselves in the presence of the Creator of the universe! We stand in the shadow of Perfection and Wisdom and Mercy and Compassion and Love. As we give God our full attention, we experience His full attention. Begin to comprehend the wonder of this.

Gideon proclaims victory – *even before they set out for the battlefield!* "Get up!" he tells his men. *"The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."* When he proclaimed victory in advance, Gideon believed that what God said was true—he was proclaiming his faith and confidence in God. He sets his mind not on *his* ability, but on God's faithfulness to do what he said. Our faith is important in seeing God at work.

Wherever God is, the ground is holy—and God can go anywhere! There is no physical or emotional barrier He can't overcome. There is no philosophy or belief He can't overpower. There is no circumstance He cannot transform.

You are limited, but *God is not*. Holiness walks hand-in-hand with the miraculous. Impenetrable walls crumble in the presence of the Holy.

Take some time to worship Almighty God, who has no limitations.

The Best Translation of the Bible

There is a story about four clergymen who were discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its beautiful English. Another liked the American Revised Version best because it is more literal and comes nearer to the original Hebrew and Greek. Still another liked Mofatt's translation best because of its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent. When asked to express his opinion, he replied, "I like my mother's translation best." The other three expressed surprise. They did not know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes, she did," he replied. "She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw." – Author unknown

The Images of Mother . . .

I thought you would enjoy and smile at "The Images of Mother" and maybe even be able to relate to some of the stages our children go through as we celebrate **Mother's Day** this month. 😊

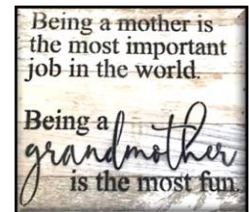
- 4 years of Age – My Mommy can do anything!
- 8 years of Age – My Mom knows a whole lot! A whole lot!
- 12 years of Age – My Mother doesn't really know quite everything.
- 14 years of Age – Naturally, Mother doesn't know that, either
- 16 years of Age – Mother? She's hopelessly old-fashioned.
- 18 years of Age – That old woman? She's way out of date!
- 25 years of Age – Well, she might know a little bit about it.
- 35 years of Age – Before we decide, let's get Mom's opinion.
- 45 years of Age – Wonder what Mom would have thought about it?
- 65 years of Age – Wish I could talk it over with Mom.



Jonathan asked my Peeps . . . **What do you love about Grandma?**

She's kind, she's a good cook (cheese crisps), she works for churches, she's fun!!, she gives us treats and makes strawberries, she loves me! - Henry

She spends time with us, she's kind, she gives great hugs, she lets us play with remote-controlled cars, and she lets us go in the pool! - Charlotte



Make sure the heavenly Father hears about your kids daily!

"You don't have to do everything right as a parent but there is one thing you cannot afford to get wrong. That one thing is prayer. You'll never be a perfect parent, but you can be a praying parent. Prayer is your highest privilege as a parent. There is nothing you can do that will have a higher return on investment. In fact, dividends are eternal. Prayer is the way we take our hands off and place our children in the hands of God." -- Batterson



One of the most important things I did for Jonthan and Jennifer was to pray the Scriptures into their lives asking God to make those promises a reality in their hearts. I did this for Jonathan in 2004 and for Jennifer in 2005. As I read my four passages each day and prayed those Scriptures into their lives, I underlined verses that were important to me. I also wrote notes to them throughout their Bibles, sharing what I was specifically praying for them that day. This truly was a highlight in my life! They said these Bibles are some of their most treasured possessions!



May our lives be "convincing translations" to all those around us,

Sara

