

You Are the Gift God Made You to Be

There is a peculiar sadness in spending your whole life wishing you were someone else. We admire the gifts of others and quietly grieve our own, as though God had made a mistake when He fashioned us. We look at the eloquent speaker, the natural leader, the person who fills a room with warmth, and we conclude that we ourselves were something of an afterthought. Yet Scripture will not permit us this despair. The God who spoke galaxies into being also formed you with deliberate care. Nothing about you is accidental.

The psalmist understood this. He wrote, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14). Notice the word "knit". This is not mass production. This is the patient work of skilled hands, choosing every colour and every thread. You are not a copy of anyone. You are an original, and the Artist has signed His name upon you.

Here is where our culture leads us astray. It tells us that we must construct our own identity, that we are self-made, that our worth is something we earn through achievement and applause. But this is an exhausting gospel, and ultimately a cruel one, because it leaves us forever measuring ourselves against others and forever coming up short. The Christian message is gloriously different. Your identity is not achieved but received. It is a gift, given to you before you did anything to deserve it. You do not become someone by striving. You discover who you already are in Christ.

This changes everything about how we understand our gifts. Paul writes, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them" (1 Corinthians 12:4). The same Spirit. Your particular gift, whatever it may be, comes from the identical source as the gifts you envy. The hand cannot say to the eye that it is unnecessary, and the eye cannot despise the hand. The body needs both. When you refuse to be who God made you, you do not merely diminish yourself. You rob the whole body of something only you could give.

Consider how much freedom this brings. You are released from the crushing burden of being everyone at once. You need not be the preacher and the administrator and the encourager and the prophet. You need only be faithful with what has been entrusted to you. The servant in the parable was not condemned for having received one talent rather than five. He was condemned for burying it, for letting fear persuade him that his small gift was not worth offering (Matthew 25:14-30). The tragedy is never that our gift is too small. The tragedy is that we hide it.

And yet we must be careful here, for there is a subtle temptation lurking even in this truth. We can turn our giftedness into a new form of pride, or into an excuse to avoid growth. Being the gift God made you to be is not a licence to remain comfortable. It is a summons to pour yourself out. The gift was never given for your admiration but for your surrender. Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matthew 10:8). What you have received, you have received to spend.

So the question is not whether you are gifted. You are. The question is whether you will trust the goodness of the God who gifted you, and then offer that gift back to Him with open hands. This requires humility, because you must accept what He gave rather than what you wanted. It requires courage, because offering your gift will expose you to the possibility of failure and misunderstanding. But it also brings a deep and settled joy, the joy of doing precisely what you were made to do.

You are not a mistake. You are not an afterthought. You are the beloved handiwork of a God who makes nothing carelessly. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). He prepared the works, and He prepared you for them. Be, then, the gift He made you to be, and give yourself away.

Questions

1. What does it mean to you that God "knit" you together with deliberate care, and how might this change the way you view the parts of yourself you tend to dislike?

(Psalm 139:13-14)

2. In what ways have you been tempted to construct your own identity through achievement, and how does receiving your identity as a gift free you from that burden?

(1 Corinthians 12:4)

3. Is there a gift or ability you have been burying out of fear or comparison, and what would it look like to offer it faithfully instead?

(Matthew 25:14-30)

4. Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give." What have you received that you sense God is asking you to spend on others?

(Matthew 10:8)

5. How does knowing you are God's handiwork, prepared in advance for good works, shape the way you approach the coming week?

(Ephesians 2:10)