

GiFT

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Nathaniel Bronner: You can find what you look for. If you look for the positive, if you look to be thankful for life, you're going to find so much to be thankful for.

Female: You are listening to brothersoftheword.com. This is the message titled, "GiFT" by Nathaniel Bronner. This message is number 4080.

(Music Playing)

And now for 4080, "GiFT."

Nathaniel Bronner: I want to thank everyone for coming out today. It is interesting that even on the way here, Christmas morning is the most deserted morning of the year. I mean, any other morning if you're driving, plenty of traffic, everything is open, but on Christmas, all the streets cleared, no cars, nobody is coming to church on Christmas morning. And it is interesting this is the holiest day of the Christian faith. It is the day which we should be praising our Savior. But churches often don't have an early morning Christmas service. It's not that they don't want to have the service, they know folk won't get up and come out. So I just thank all of you who are here today just to give honor to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, those who had made the sacrifice to get up and to come out, and we always have a relatively short service. I just have a small message today yet hopefully a message that we can take with us and shape and mold lives.

This Christian walk is no joke. Life is just no joke. It takes something to make it through life. It takes something to get from Christmas to Christmas and as you get older, the Christmases come faster. It's like the milestone, just like a roller toilet paper. As you use up the paper, the roll spins faster. It is like that in life, so the Christmases they come faster and faster and faster. But yet as they come, we ought to become more grateful and more cognizant of what it really means. The most famous and most quoted verse in the Bible is perhaps John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave."

I want to talk today from the subject -- if you would just put the graphic on the screen, it's nothing but the word GiFT. And I want us to look at this word very carefully. Big G, little I big F, big T. And I want to just use for the short message of today just the word GiFT. Big G, little I big F, big T.

The G stands for simply for God so loved the world that he gave. He gave the most precious thing that he had. For God so loved the world that He gave. And when we understand just the principle of giving, it changes our whole life, it changes our whole world. And I want to just even to understand, too often we think of stewardship as simply a matter about giving to God but I want you to understand the different aspect of giving. Because before we can give, we must possess and before we can possess, we must receive. So there are actually three stages to give and giving is the final stage, but first, you have to receive it, you have to possess it and then you have to give it. And often, we only get to those first two stages. We want to receive, we want to possess, but for God so loved the world that He gave and we don't get to the giving part of things.

Oswald Chambers said this. He says, "With Christ, it is not how much we give, but what we do not give that is the real test." What are you holding onto? What is it that you would not give for Christ? He says not so much what we give, but what we hold on to is the really, really, real test. We have a clothing closet and a food pantry. And to be honest about it I got a whole lot of clothes that I want to put in to a clothing closet. But I don't want to put in any of the clothes in the clothing closet that I want to keep. But I got some really good clothes but I don't want to put any clothes in the clothing closet that I want to keep.

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The stuff that I really like, the stuff that I'm going to wear, not going to be in the clothing closet. They'd be some good clothes. But see, God gave the stuff he wanted to keep. He gave his most precious. So when we think of just the phenomena and factor of giving, we get into a different mindset.

The famous psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger said this. He was one of the early founders of modern psychology back in the 1800s and he dealt with a lot of mentally ill patients and people who had all kind of mental issues. And he said this, he said, "Generous people are rarely mentally ill." When people give, they don't go crazy. So we're talking about Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and all of the diseases that deteriorate the mind. If you want to keep your mind sharp, Menninger says, "Generous

people are rarely mentally ill.” Do you know the root of the word miserable? It’s miser. Do you know what a miser is? It’s a stingy person. So the very root of miserable is stingy.

So the first thing is of GiFT, for God so loved the world the world that he gave. First, thing is the G, give. Be a giver. And I’m not just talking about putting money in the church. When you leave church, often that’s the real test. Be a giver.

Little I, that’s one of the hardest things to do is to have a little I. You remember I talked about when I spoke at Dick Gregory’s funeral? It was the most embarrassing moment of my life. You can go to The Online Word, you can search on Dick Gregory, you’ll hear that. I can’t remember what the title was, but it’s the most embarrassing moment of my life. I was in front of 10,000 people, television all across the world. It was the most embarrassing moment of my life. But it was one of the most illuminating and free moments of my life. My vision somehow miraculously went better than 20/20. It just physically cleared up. When you get your I out of the way, literally your vision changes in terms of what you can see. We are so concern so much with what we can get, me and mine. It would even help if you just stop talking so much about yourself.

Dale Carnegie in the book “How to Win Friends and Influence People” says that the most beautiful sound that any person hears is their own name. And people just want to talk about themselves. If you can get a little I, God told me that’s going to be one of my biggest blocks to greatness is simply pride. Pride is a doozy. It really is. The more God gives you, the more you have to be weary of the pride that comes with that thing. That’s why Paul had this thorn in the flesh that God would not remove just to keep his pride down. So, Big G, little I.

Big F. I have been studying more and more because I want to fulfill the lifespan that God has spoken. And the more health stuff I read, the more stuff points to, you need friends. And a lot of people will say, “I want a friend, I want a friend.” But you need to change the mentality of that to, “I want to be a friend.” And that moves you away from the big I to the little I. Everybody wants a good friend, change your mentality, I want to be a friend. I want to listen. You’ll hear a lot of people say, “I just need somebody to talk to.” Let me rephrase that of what it really mean. I need somebody who will listen to me. Why don’t

you become the listener? Be a friend. You set it out in your mind that I'm going to listen to somebody else instead of them always listening to me. Instead of me just wanted to talk, let me listen. And these became the characteristics of a good friend because often a good listener, but so often we go through life without really close friends.

God spoke to me one early morning. He said, "A friend is more valuable than a fortune." If you can just have a good friend. I remember my son George once in school and a lot of the people were changing around and the school and we were worried about him having friends. And George said, "All I need is a one good friend."

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One good friend can get you through so much stuff in life, but you need to re-gear your mentality to become that good friend. Big G, give. Little I, reduce your pride, focus on others. Big F, be a friend. And big T, the big T is simply be thankful. You cannot be miserable. You cannot be depressed. You cannot be complaining when you are thankful. It's cool this one. That's why I got my jacket on because the Church is cool. But do you know you ought to be thankful for the cold weather because it really is an example of God's promise? What do you mean it's an example of God?

He said it in Genesis 8:22, he said, "As long as the earth endures, cold and heat, seedtime and harvest" it will always. So God told you it's going to be cold and heat. When you stepped outside in a blast of cold and heat, thank you Lord for keeping your promise because you said cold and heat as long as the earth endures would be here. Seedtime and harvest as long as the earth would be here. So if you all just be thankful even for the cold weather that God is keeping his word. You can be thankful or complaining about anything in life. But when you are thankful for no matter what the situation is, your joy would bubble up.

We had a situation recently with one of my old friends, and he's a real avid sports person. He'd never been to a football game, not a live football game. So my wife has several season tickets. So I got her to give him two tickets because she's got two sets, one in the close section and the one way up. So she only had two

way up tickets, and I gave him two of those tickets. He'd never been to the stadium and never been to a live football game, but was an avid -- super avid fan.

When he left the game, he texted me and he said, "Thank you for the tickets, but they were way up." And he said, "Only die-hard fan would buy those tickets because they were way up there." And I said, "You didn't pay a dime for this. You'd never been to a game before, and some of the people actually prefer that because with the closer ticket, you could only see one section of the field real good. But way up, you'd see the whole thing." So, instead of seeing the beauty, what he saw was the complaining, and I said, "Well, sweetheart, that's just the way he is." I said, "You know," and she said, "If he had one of the closer tickets, he wouldn't be able to complain." I said, "Yes, he will." I said, "You put him right down and closer, he's still going because that's his nature." I said, "That's why I don't associate with him anymore. That's his nature. He's going to find something negative."

She said, "No way he can find anything negative. So we got to bet for next year." She is going to give him two of the close-up tickets. I said, "I guarantee you even if he's sitting there about eight rows back from the fields." I said, "I guarantee you. He will find something negative about those tickets because you can find what you look for." If you look for the positive, if you look to be thankful for life, you're going to find so much to be thankful for. If you look for the negative, you can find it all day long. That's why a third of the angels got kicked out of heaven. You won't find negative in heaven itself.

So if you don't be thankful for life, you'll find all these negative stuff. For God so loved the world that he gave. Be a giver. The little "T". Stop focusing so much on you and yours and be like Jesus. Focus on other folk. Big F. Be a friend and big T, be thankful. And when you get these four things in order, you'll find the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of his joy would bubble up in you and you live life so much more, and you'll be so much full of joy. Amen. Amen.

Well, I thank all of you for coming today and getting out in your warm bed, and you ought to be thankful for that warmth. But do you know, the average person takes 23,000 breaths every day, 23,000. I want you to just take a deep breath, one deep breath. You have 22,999 more to go within the next 24 hours.

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The average person takes 23,000 breaths a day in their good breaths. But how many of us just are thankful for the 23,000 breaths we take every single day? We step, we breathe, we move, we eat, we sleep. We have all of this stuff. If we are thankful, it changes how we move through life, and we'll inspire others and be full of joy ourselves. Amen.

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