My

Abundant Gifts

Journal

Name: _____

Dates:

From _____ to _____

A Word from the Author of *Abundant Gifts: A Daybook of Grace-Filled Devotions*

Dear Friend:

I am so glad you have decided to use this Abundant Gifts eBook Journal! I believe that as you take a few moments each day to recall and record the things that felt like gifts to you that day, your life will slowly but surely be transformed.

I believe this because of how keeping a gifts journal has transformed my own life. Whenever I regularly jot down God's good gifts, it refocuses me more on God and his character—goodness, grace, generosity, mercy, kindness, wisdom—and less on my own problems.

Some people believe that what you focus on expands in your life. I would take it a step further: What you focus on is what you become. Paul the Apostle exhorted his readers to dwell on whatever is positive and true (Philippians 4:8), promising that if we do that, the God of peace will be with us.

In the Old Testament, God repeatedly tells his people to "remember." Remember his wonderful deeds, his kindnesses, his miracles. When they remembered, they were blessed. When they did not remember, they fell into sin and often judgment followed.

In fact, the entire Bible is a history of how God acted in the lives of his people as a whole. When you keep a gifts journal, you begin the record of how God works in your life as an individual.

When you remember and record God's goodness in your life, you can go back to it later, during the times when God doesn't feel so near or active or real. At those times, reading your own history of God's goodness to you personally will bolster you to believe that he is with you even now, though at the moment a cloud might block his warmth and light from reaching you.

It's not difficult to keep a gifts journal. Here's what I suggest:

1. Print this out, 3-hole punch it, and put it into some kind of binder. Or, you could keep it on your computer and write in it that way. Or, you can use the Digital Web Book that's downloadable from my web site (www.abundant-gifts.com) and record your blessings in that.

2. At the and of each day, take 5-7 minutes of quiet time to reflect back over the day. Jot down the date, and think: What was difficult? Did God help you with that difficult situation in any way? What joys pop out at you? Was there anything that had seemed difficult at one point, but now you see that it was really a gift in disguise? Were there any simple pleasures you savored? Any gift you gave another person that brought joy to their heart and yours? Was there something you heard, or read, or something someone said to you that seemed especially meant for you at that moment?

Whatever blessed you, jot down the kind of gift it was, and describe it in just enough words that you will remember it later. This is totally subjective—that's okay. We're talking about your heart and your personal relationship with God, your loving, heavenly Father.

3. Added suggestion: Sharing the gifts of the day is a wonderful way to connect as a family as well. Explain to your children that you are going on what Karen Mains called a "God hunt." You're looking for ways God shows up in your lives, and you want to share those as you gather for a meal. You can easily create a "family gifts journal" as well by adapting this document and adding a place for the person's name on the top of the page.

I promise you that if start recording gifts, as an individual and/or as a family for even one week straight, that will be enough to change your perspective. Once you begin to look for God's gifts, his tokens of that generous spirit that loves to bless his beloved children, you will begin to feel loved unconditionally.

And that, my friend, is what God intends: that you know just how generous your heavenly Father is, and how much he loves you.

Remember, and be blessed.

Diane Eble

P.S. It would bless me greatly to hear from you about how this practice is enriching your life. Feel free to send an email to me at diane@abundant-gifts.com. Please put "my story" in the subject line so that I can quickly spot it amongst the spam. Thanks in advance!

"Those who have abandoned themselves to God always lead mysterious lives and receive from him exceptional and miraculous gifts by means of the most ordinary, natural and chance experiences."

Jean-Pierre de Caussade, Sacrament

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*Kinds of gifts might include: Common or universal gifts, ordinary gifts that sometimes go unnoticed, gifts from God through others, gifts to others, inner gifts, personalized gifts, miraculous or extraordinary gifts, gifts of mercy, "disguised" gifts, spiritual gifts

I have always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning.

J. B. Priestley

Date: _____ Kind of Gift: _____

This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it--the Lord is his name: Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:2-3, NIV

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The words you choose and use establish the life you experience.

Sonia Choquette

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God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8, NIV

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Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

Hebrews 13:5, NIV

Date: _____ Kind of Gift: _____

Lord, grant that I never shun the pain of giving birth to love, nor the fatigue of the effort that nurtures it from day to day. Teach me to value each moment as I value each beat of my own heart, and to find in the pulsing of my blood that distant tempo of birth, of growth, of love, and of death, which repeats itself over and over through a billion hearts and a million years, and which is the echo of the one eternal rhythm.

Ernest Boyer, Jr.

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"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me."

Jeremiah 29:11-13

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Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them--the Lord, who remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed.... The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.

Psalm 146:5-8, NIV

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That man is blest who does his best and leaves the rest; do not worry.

Charles F. Deems

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.

Psalm 118:29

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In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.
Albert Einstein

Date: _____ *Kind of Gift:* _____

One is taught by experience to put a premium on those few people who can appreciate you for what you are.

Gail Godwin

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Life is a marvelous succession of wonders.

Arthur Gordon

Date: _____ *Kind of Gift:* _____

Love happens. It is a miracle that happens by grace.

Irene Claremont de Castillejo

Date: _____ *Kind of Gift:* _____

How much love God lavishes on each particular heart when he murmurs words intended for that heart alone! How much love the lonely heart misses if it will not hear the personal word.

Walter Wangerin Jr.

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Waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Romans 8:22-25, The Message

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When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown!

Isaiah 43:2

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Jesus is laying down the rules of conduct for those who have his Spirit, and it works on this principle--God is my Father, he loves me, I shall never think of anything he will forget. Why should I worry?

Oswald Chambers

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We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16, NIV

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Any experience, when offered up to God, can become your gateway to joy.

Elisabeth Elliot

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The true object of all human life is play.

G. K. Chesterton

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At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities.

Jean Houston

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One appreciates that daily life is really good when one wakes from a horrible dream, or when one takes the first outing after a sickness. Why not realize it now?

William Lyon Phelps

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Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.

Ephesians 3:20

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I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other and that the taller we grew in Christian character, the more easily we should reach them. I find now that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other and that it is not a question of growing taller, but of stooping lower and that we have to go down, always down to get his best ones.

F. B. Meyer

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I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

Isaiah 42:16, NIV

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For we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:28

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[This] is why I love Jesus so much. He was so … well … er …irresponsible with grace.

Michael Yaconelli

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The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17, NIV

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What's next?

Now that you've finished the first month of keeping a gifts journal, I hope it will become a habit for you.

Feel free to print out a fresh version of this Journal and begin anew. You can print out as many copies as you like.

Also, pass the eBook Journal on to a friend, perhaps in an email with a message about what this new habit has done for you.

To download another copy of this eBook Journal, simply go to http://www.abundant-gifts.com/ebookjournal.html and save it onto your computer.