

All of life is a gift

By [Elizabeth Hagan](#)

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So many of us have desires for our lives that begin: “I deserve” or “I must have.” We want what everyone else has. We ask God for very specific things. We want life to be somewhat fair.

Of course, it’s very human of us to feel this way. But if we don’t get what we want and a season of life turns out quite unkind, we so easily grow angry and bitter. And then angry and bitter some more.

Though I am not in this place right now, **I know this bitterness of unmet desires and lots of “Why, God? Why me? Why is *this* my life?” complaints.** And it’s miserable. Really, really miserable—especially if you just can’t seem to find your way out of it no matter what you do.

But for me, the tide began to turn after a recent bitter season when a friend gave me this nugget: All of life is a gift.

This nugget gradually worked its wisdom in and I realized that there’s nothing that you or I deserve in life. Nothing. *All of life is a gift.*

There is nothing that you or I have that we ultimately own. All of the best earthly gifts will one day pass away. And furthermore, If we say we’re followers of Christ, our very lives are not our own. We’ve surrendered them to a calling that is beyond what we see right in front of us.

For *all of life is a gift*. Or as James 1:17 speaks, “Every good and perfect gift is from above.”

Recently, as I was worshipping at my friend [Amy’s](#) church, [Riverside in NYC](#), [one of the hymns we sung](#) early in the service included these words:

“God whose giving knows no ending,

from your rich and endless store . . .

gifted by you, we turn to you,

offering up ourselves in praise,

thankful song shall rise forever,

gracious Donor of our days.”

I couldn't help but have tears roll down my cheeks in step with the invitation of this song, especially as I thought about the reasons why I was worshipping in this particular community on this particular day sitting with the lovely people sitting beside me in the pews.

In these quiet moments in church, I thought about how much joy has found me through the practice of surrender. People and places that have come into my life in such rich and life-giving ways that I know are a gift from God. And it's better than I could have ever imagined.

Trusting that all of life is a gift changes our prayers, our daily plans, and our responses to our worst-case-scenario realities.

For we can accept what we have (and don't have) with gratitude.

For we can accept what we have without demanding that it remains in its current state forever.

For we can accept what we have with enjoyment—not “it would only be a little bit better if . . .”

So today, if you find yourself in a place of life where you could say, “This is not the life I want,” remember *all of life is a gift*. Gifts, you see, are meant for our pleasure, our edification, and our thanksgiving for what they are. And then are to be humbly given up when the time comes to pass them along to someone else.

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