

April 2007 Prayer Newsletter—CALL TO PRAYER—Andrea Herman

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Special Gifts

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

1 Peter 4:10

In my devotional time this last week I came across the same idea twice in a few chapters and it really struck me. God was talking to Moses about how He wanted His people to construct His tabernacle, so He would have a dwelling place among them. There were many very specific things God required and they sounded very difficult. However, as God was explaining the details, He specifically named a few men that he had chosen to lead the work, Bezalel and Oholiab. God said He had filled them with His Spirit to do this challenging work that He had asked them to do. God also said that it was **He** who had given them their abilities in craftsmanship, that would enable them to create the intricate things He had planned for His dwelling place among His people. (Exodus chapters 31 & 35)

It just really struck me that God had this HUGE task that He required of His people. However, He also specifically gifted these people to be able to do the work he called them to do. These men were artisans and craftsmen, not always jobs we think of as particularly practical. However, God gave them those gifts and abilities so that they could give glory and honor to God through them!

We don’t get to choose what we are gifted in, but God does. God has given every human being He has created special gifts and abilities, as unique as our personalities. Though we may take pride or joy in the gifts we have, that is ultimately not the point. The reason God gives us life and abilities is to give glory and honor to **Him**.

We have not been called to make ornate decorations for the earthly Dwelling place of God in the time of Moses, but we are all called to give honor and glory to God. Whether we honor Him by living a life of integrity as an example to those around us, or whether we use our love of nature to educate others on how to be good stewards of the earth that God has given us as a home during our short time on earth, or whether we donate time or skills to serving God, each of us has some ability which can glorify God. He gave us everything we have. We have an opportunity to say “Thank You!” for the gifts he has given us by using those same gifts to honor Him in our own special way.

In Exodus, when God asked the people to bring some of their valuables to decorate His dwelling place, the people brought so much bronze, silver, gold, linens, animal skins, precious stones, etc. that the craftsman had to tell Moses to stop the people from bringing more

valuables because they already had more than they needed to do as God had commanded. The donations of gold alone were over one metric ton!

It's difficult (actually, impossible) for me to think of a time in my life when I was giving so much glory to God that someone had to tell me to stop because it was too much. However, I pray that someday that will be the case; that one day I will learn what it is to use my gifts not for my own good, but for the glory and honor of God, who has given me all my gifts and abilities.

What's my gift?

Though we all have gifts, we don't always know exactly what they are. Since we're with ourselves constantly, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish something that we might do every day as a gift. However, there are many ways to discover your gifts. One way is by talking to close friends or family. They know you well, and probably see some of your giftings more clearly than you do. Go ahead and ask what kinds of things your loved ones see in you that is a unique gift. You might be surprised! Of course there are also questionnaires you can take that can give you a very specific idea of where your gifts are. Some churches regularly do a spiritual gifts class, where you fill out a questionnaire to learn what your gifts are and how you can use them.

It is interesting that what we think our gifts are, are not necessarily what they turn out to be. Many of us function in areas that we are not particularly gifted for. It doesn't mean we should stop doing all things that aren't in our top three gifts. However, seeking out opportunities to serve in areas where you are particularly gifted will probably be a more joyful experience for you, than struggling through tasks that don't match your natural giftings. We all have to do things in life that maybe aren't our best fit for giftings (e.g. balancing the checkbook), but the good news is that God created you to do specific things that are a natural fit for YOU. Trying to coordinate your roles as an employee, a volunteer or even a family member with your gifts in mind is one way you can enjoy the blessing of God's gifts for you in your life. Whatever your giftings are, you can also use those gifts to thank God for them by how you choose to use your time, gifts, and abilities. So, I encourage you to start seeking out those special gifts God has given you and start using them. Through it, you will be encouraged and God will be praised.

Please join me in thanking God for:

- the progress on my well & plumbing repairs: water has been less of a problem this month
- the new battery that fixed my computer problem (it arrived JUST in time for someone to bring it down to Guinea) Praise the Lord!
- making it clear that Natalie was not the language helper I was looking for
- providing Fatumata to help me with language
- finalizing flight arrangements to be home on vacation this summer
- the blessing of friendship with missionaries in Mali
- the first rain of the season arrived May 1, which means we'll soon have relief from the extreme heat Hooray!

-continued peace and good developments in Guinea

Please join me in asking God to provide:

-Fatumata and I both with ease in working with one another through language, and patience for her as my teacher, that she will let me struggle through the learning process instead of giving me the answer if I don't respond right away

-Time & discipline for me to set aside daily time to pray for the Maninka people

-Health & Energy: physical, emotional and spiritual—I've been struggling with a variety of illnesses and a possible allergy to dust (but I hope not, Siguiri is a dusty place)

-Plenty of restful sleep so I can stay healthy

-ENTHUSIASM! for language learning, especially in the market

-a positive attitude even when nothing goes "as planned"

-a reasonable way to transport furniture from southern Guinea (so my clothes and dishes can have some shelter from the dust). We've been trying to get it shipped since March and it has been a frustrating experience.

Thank you all so much for your prayers. Your continued prayers, particularly for all the details surrounding language learning are very much appreciated.

May God guide you as you seek and discover the special gifts He has given you to be a blessing to others and a song of praise to Him.

In His service,

Andrea

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.'" Jeremiah 29:11-13