

Spiritual blessings and gifts are from God; they are available to all who are willing to accept them.
 We must be willing to first repent of our sins, since the world's ways are incompatible with God's ways.

 We do not deserve them, but God offers them to us.

 They are from God alone. They are not something that we humans can give to other people.
 But we can show others the way to the God of these gifts! We can share the Good News with them!

 Jesus, who made these spiritual blessings possible, was a gift to us.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

 Isaiah 9:6 (BSB)

God may also give us physical blessings of many kinds. It is a gift from God to be [To some] ... God gives wisdom, able to eat and drink knowledge, and joy, ... and experience the good Ecclesiastes 2:26b (NET) that comes from every kind of hard work. · Physical blessings and gifts are Ecclesiastes 3:13 (GW) from God. We do not deserve them, but he often gives them to us in spite of what we deserve. (They are not something that we are guaranteed; they are <u>not</u> automatically entitled to us.) These blessings are temporary. We lose them all at death Many of them are things that we (humans) can give to (or share with) other people.

The contrast between OUR gifts and GOD'S gifts. God's gifts are always good. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17 (NIV) Our gifts may be good; but God's gifts are much better. Even though you're evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him? Matthew 7:11 (GW)

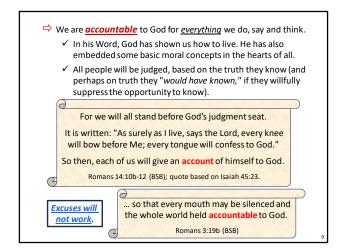
When we consider gifts and abilities, there are two "forgotten" concepts we need to look at.

⇒ Forgotten because: ✓ We just don't think about them.
✓ They're not what we want to hear.
✓ We suppress them when we prefer to sin by not doing them (Romans 1:18).

⇒ These concepts are: ACCOUNTABILITY
✓ Each of these words has a range of meanings, and they sometimes overlap.
✓ We are going to use them this way:

• "Accountability" – referring to the fact that we will someday have to answer to God for our choices.

• "Responsibility" - referring to our obligations toward people – how we choose to use our gifts and abilities.



We have <u>responsibility</u> to do, say and think <u>everything</u> in a way that honors God and is beneficial for other people.

✓ In his Word, God has shown us how to do this. He has also embedded some basic moral concepts in the hearts of all.

✓ At the Day of Judgment, excuses will not work.

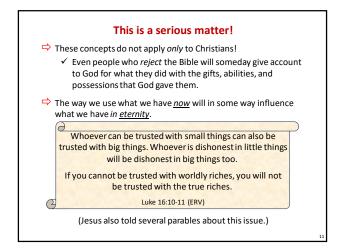
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

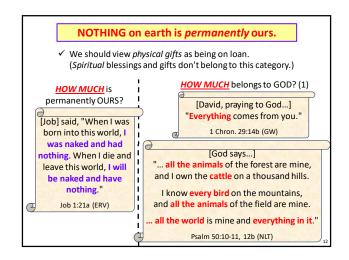
Do everything in love.

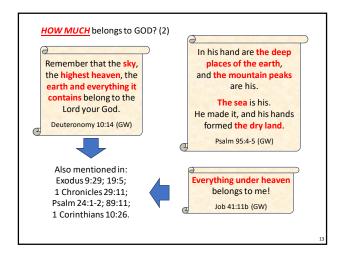
1 Corinthians 10:31; 16:14 (NIV)

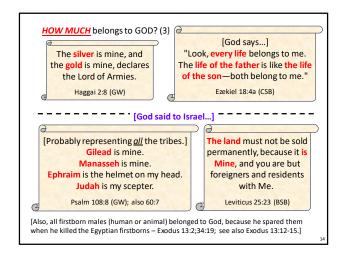
We are RESPONSIBLE to do all things in a way that honors God. At the Day of Judgment, we will give ACCOUNT for all that we have done.

We will be held ACCOUNTABLE for the way we have (or haven't) fulfilled our RESPONSIBILITIES.









WHY don't people pay attention to the fact that God own's ALL?

Reason #1 – Sin. It is natural for us to suppress this truth.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

Romans 1:18-19 (NIV)

Reason #2 – Ignorance. We must let Scripture change the way we think, before we can know the truth and learn how to live by it.

[You must] be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2b (NIV)

RESTRICTIONS on our use what we have been given.

WE are NOT free to do as WE please, with no regard for how our actions effect others.

✓ This type of attitude will be especially prevalent in the "last days," before Jesus returns.

Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.

2 Peter 3:3 (NLT)

(Many of the following characteristics apply to one's use of gifts and abilities.)

There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ...

2 Timothy 3:1b-4 (NIV)

WE are NOT free to encourage OTHERS to do as they please, with no regard for how their actions will effect others

✓ We will be held accountable by God, when we encourage others to sin.

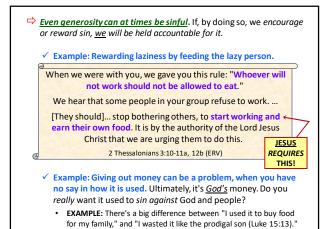
Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come."

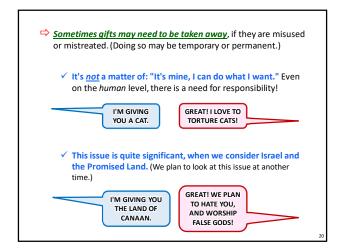
Luke 17:1 (NIV)

Don't cause others to stumble, whether they are Jewish, Greek, or members of God's church.

1 Corinthians 10:32 (GW)

Lt's easy to sin with gifts, abilities, and possessions (whether received from God or from people). Doing what is <u>right</u> (and honoring to God) takes effort! ✓ It may be obvious sin: We can be wasteful, as the parable of the prodigal son illustrates (Luke 15:11-32). "... the younger son gathered his possessions and left for a country far away from home. There he wasted everything he had on a wild lifestyle." Luke 15:13b (GW) ✓ It may look good on the surface, yet not be honoring to God. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. ... But love your enemies, do good to them, ... Luke 6:32-33, 35a (BSB); see also vs. 33-36.





So what does all of this mean?

- This issue is quite significant in our study of Israel and end-time issues – but we will look at this later.
- These things also apply to us both as individuals, and as groups.
- ✓ We can REJOICE in the gifts we receive whether from God or from other people.
- ✓ We need to REMEMBER that:
 - All gifts that are a part of this world are temporary. This should influence our priorities.
 - We have a responsibility to use our gifts (whether physical objects or abilities) in a God-honoring way, aware that we will someday give account for what we did with them.

Everything you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Col. 3:17 (GW)

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything to the glory of God.

1 Cor. 10:31 (GW)

- ✓ All humans have this obligation. (Even atheists who pretend that God does not exist – Romans 1:18-23.)
- ✓ Followers of Jesus have God's Word to teach them how to do this.
 - We often *fail* at doing it. But rather than giving up in discouragement, we can start again.
 - God is at work in our lives, growing us in our ability to do what is right (Romans 8:28)! We can <u>rejoice</u> in this!

OUR MISSION

Understanding the nature of gifts and abilities, and of accountability and responsibility, will significantly impact what we do in these matters!

- ★ We have much to REJOICE in... so let's do it! ★
- ✓ We can GIVE and we can RECEIVE; and do so with GRATEFUL hearts.
- ✓ Aware of our ACCOUNTABILITY and RESPONSIBILITY in these matters, we can give THANKS to God.

By means of his Word and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, God is teaching us how to live and respond the right way in these matters.

Credits

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