**THE FATHER OF LIGHTS AND THE BEST GIFT**

**James 1:16-18**

* “Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not 'So there's no God after all,' but 'So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer.’” **– C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed***

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS GOOD AND IS THE GIVER OF GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS**

* *“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights…”* (James 1:16-17a)
* **There is nothing in this world to be obtained that can compare even remotely to the gifts God gives His children.**
* *“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.”* (Matthew 7:11)
* **God never stops blessing His children.**

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS UNCHANGING IN HIS GOODNESS TOWARDS US**

* *“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”* (James 1:16-17)
* **Every day we have breath in our lungs we are walking in the grace, mercy, and love of the Lord.**
* *“Because I, the Lord, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed.”* (Malachi 3:6)
* *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* (Hebrews 13:8)
* **Because God never changes, His goodness towards His children has no limits.**

**OUR HEAVENLY FATHER HAS GIVEN US THE BEST GIFT IN HIS SON JESUS**

* *“By his own choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth…”* (James 1:18a)
* **Because of God’s great love for us, He *chose* to give us the gift of redemption through His Son Jesus.**
* *“But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:12-13)
* **The new birth experienced in Christ is the greatest gift that anyone could ever receive.**

**WHEN WE RECEIVE THE GIFT OF JESUS INTO OUR LIVES WE BECOME GOD’S MOST PRIZED POSESSION**

* *“By his own choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18)*
* *“He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.”* (James 1:18 NLT)
* **God did not save us just so we can avoid eternal judgement, but so we could bring honor and glory to Him as we shine the light of Christ in this world.**
* **Just as we are “a kind of firstfruits” to God, we should prioritize God with our first and best of all we are.**

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Understanding:**

* What does James 1:16-18 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What is James responding to in James 1:16-18?
* What does the phrase “the Father of lights” mean?
* What does it mean to “be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (vs. 18)?

**Digging Deeper:**

* What are some ways we can get deceived when we think about God’s character and attributes? How can we combat those deceptions?
* How do we know God is Immutable (unchanging)? How does that benefit us as Christians?
* How does it impact you knowing that God chose you? How should it impact the way you live for Him?
* How are you currently “shining the light of Christ” in your life?
* What will you do differently as a result of this message? Or, how has your view of God been impacted?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?