

RESPECT  
ENCOURAGEMENT  
LISTENING  
APPRECIATION  
TRUST  
INTEGRITY  
ORDER  
NURTURE  
SYNERGY  
HOPE  
IDEALS  
PARDON

# 12 Seeds™ GIFTS OF LOVE

12 GIFTS FROM GOD • SOWN IN THE HEART • SHARED IN LOVE

## Gifts of Love

People talk about love all the time. The Bible itself uses the word “love” over 500 times. Jesus identified love for God and love for others as the greatest of all commandments. What is this love the Bible talks about? Is it only a feeling, or is it something more?

### God’s love

The Greek word *agape* describes the type of love God has for us. It is much more than a feeling, it’s an act of the will. It can be defined as “seeking the highest welfare – the best – for another.” It is the love Jesus commands us to have for others.

### Agape love fills many needs

We know about human needs for food, water, clothing and shelter. But beyond these physical needs, we have internal needs for *significance and meaning* in our lives. We need *courage to press on*. We need *attention*, and we need *to be valued*. We also need *security, authenticity and structure*. We need *to be loved*, and we need *to work together*. We need *motivation to go on*. We need *to focus on higher things*, and we need *forgiveness & release*.

### Filling needs in a relationship

We can help fill all of the needs mentioned above when we treat people according to the Biblical relationship principles we call the *12 Seeds*. Each seed is a useful gift that helps fill human needs. Since love involves helping to fill needs, each seed is a way to love others.

For example, we help fill a person’s need for *significance and meaning* when we give them Respect. We help fill their need for *attention* when we give them the gift of Listening. We help fill their need *to be valued* when we give them Appreciation.

A brief introduction and overview of each of the *12 Seeds* is found later in these pages.

The one great need in our Christian life is love, more love to God and to each other.

– Dwight L. Moody

For further study:

Psalm 117

1 Corinthians 13

Philippians 4:19

1 Thessalonians 3:12

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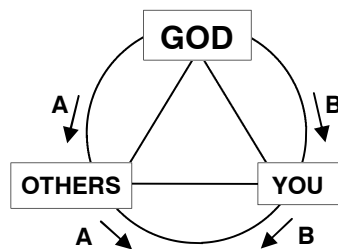
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### A simple yet exciting truth

It is both amazing and humbling to realize that God provides for the fulfillment of our needs. Furthermore, He often uses other people to do so. Think about it. When you need *courage*, for example, doesn't it usually come to you through the encouraging words or actions of another person in your life? When you need *motivation to go on*, doesn't it usually come through a friend sharing words of hope with you, perhaps words from the Psalms?

What's even more exciting is that just as God uses other people to provide His gifts to us, He can also use us to share His gifts with others in our relationships. If someone has shared words of encouragement or hope with you, for example, you can in turn share such words with others. Your sharing of the gifts can be a real blessing to others.



The triangle above indicates relationships. The circle indicates God's gifts. The "A" arrows indicate the flow of God's gifts through others to help fill your needs. The "B" arrows indicate the flow of God's gifts through you to others.

### The gifts come from God

How are we able to give all these gifts to others? We can give them because the Lord has given them to us. These gifts are some of the ways He loves us. Reread "Agape love fills many needs" on page 1 and think about how God provides for each of those needs in our lives, often using other people to do so.

As we receive His love it causes a change of heart in us. It brings His love, His *agape* love, into our hearts for others. It's a transformation from *self-centeredness* to **Christ-centeredness**, which then leads to *other-centeredness*. It comes with a supernatural ability, empowered by His Spirit, to share His gifts of love with others.

### Are the gifts deserved?

No. They are special blessings or favors from the Supreme Giver. It's called grace. In fact, the word "grace" can be defined as "unmerited favor." We receive things we don't deserve; we give to others things they don't deserve. *So much for waiting for people to "earn" our respect or pardon, or any other gift, before we will share it with them.*



And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge . . .

— Ephesians 3:17b-19a

For further study:

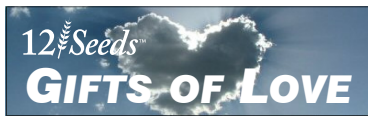
Acts 20:35b

Romans 8:28-39

Ephesians 3:16-21

James 1:17a

1 Peter 4:8-10



## The Kingdom economy

In God's Kingdom, His love is the driving force to fill the needs of people. He gives, we receive, we share. This is multiplied for the good of all – including those who give – because of His law of Sowing and Reaping:

**A man reaps what he sows.**

– Galatians 6:7b

## A few reasons to lovingly give:

1. Loving others is a command of our Lord. We honor Him by obeying His command.
2. Loving others is a natural result of the new heart that God gives us.
3. It is a way that God works to fill people's needs. It brings us joy as we co-labor with Him in meeting needs.
4. Our relationship with God grows.
5. Human relationships grow.
6. Sharing God's transformational gifts changes lives, it changes relationships, it changes all aspects of life together.
7. Loving others is a witness to the world that we are followers of Christ.

## Just imagine!

Imagine a change from seeking what we can get out of relationships to seeking what we can give! Imagine what life could be like if we regularly gave respect, encouragement, listening, appreciation and the rest of the *12 Seeds* to others. Imagine the blessings for others, and for ourselves, as we live in a *community of givers in a world of takers!*

## The VIPs on your journey

The VIPs – Very Important People – in life include your family members, friends, church members, co-workers, neighbors, pastors, teachers and others. Enjoy receiving and sharing God's love together! Expect a harvest of joy and fulfillment as you share His abundant love on your journey through life!

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*12 Seeds*

**True love finds its  
greatest reward in the  
happiness of giving  
itself to others.**

– Henry Drummond

*For further study:*

**John 3:16**

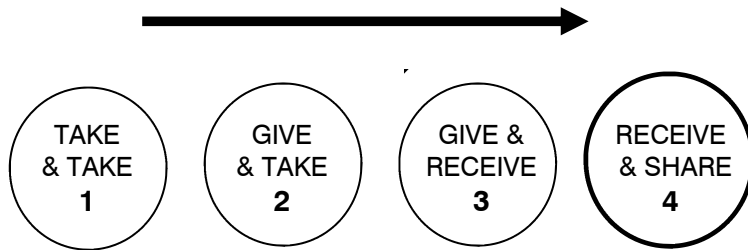
**1 Corinthians 4:7b**

**Galatians 5:14**

### Sharing the gifts

God calls us to share the gifts He gives with others. Sharing God’s gifts of love changes our perspective and brings joy and fulfillment in life. This sharing is part of a profound transformation toward greater Christ-likeness. Empowered by His Spirit, we change from a “take & take” lifestyle to a life of “receive & share.”

#### Transformation toward greater Christ-likeness

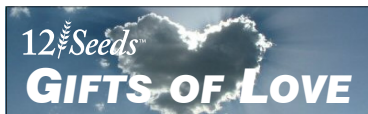


1. **TAKE & TAKE** – This sphere is a simple picture of the self-centered life, the selfish world in which many people try to live. The focus is on taking more and more, by force or deceit if necessary.
2. **GIVE & TAKE** – Since #1 above usually does not work very well for long, many people live by “give & take,” the world’s system of compromise and “get along.” It can still be very self-centered since the motive for giving may be to get a “good feeling” for oneself, or to maintain a relationship in which one can continue to “get” or “take.”
3. **GIVE & RECEIVE** – This is a gentler version of “give & take” and acknowledges that one should “receive” rather than “take.” However, the motive for giving can still be quite selfish. Some altruism (concern for others) may be in this category.
4. **RECEIVE & SHARE** – This sphere acknowledges that we first receive gifts from God. Then, as His stewards, we share His gifts, His *agape* love, with others. It’s a powerful way to live that glorifies God, blesses people, fills needs, changes lives, enriches relationships, brings joy and provides fulfillment.



Sharing God’s gifts of love changes our perspective and brings joy and fulfillment in life.

For further study:  
**Romans 13:10**  
**Philippians 1:9-18**  
**1 John 4:7-21**



## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE 12 Seeds

The Bible has a number of practical principles for living out *agape* love. The *12 Seeds* are some of these principles. They are gifts God gives us as He relates to us. When they're received from God, planted in our hearts, and shared in our relationships, great harvests grow. Lives are changed.

The *12 Seeds* form an acrostic for the word RELATIONSHIP. Acrostics have long been used as memory devices to help remember important concepts. Psalms 9 and 10, for example, are known as Acrostic Psalms since each verse begins with the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

### 5 ways to share the 12 Seeds

1. **Pray** for people and relationships. Thank God for His gifts. Ask for His help in sharing them.
2. **Meditate** on Scriptures that relate to each seed. Become more other-centered. Develop an attitude toward others characterized by the *12 Seeds*.
3. **Bless** others with good words (benedictions) of *Respect, Encouragement, Appreciation, Hope* and the other seeds.
4. **Serve** others. Treat them with *Nurture, Integrity, Pardon* and the rest of the seeds.
5. **Fellowship** with others. Practice the above ways together. Receive and share each seed. Reap a harvest of individual and group transformation.



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*12 Seeds*

Now He Who supplies  
seed to the sower  
and bread for food  
will also supply  
and increase your store  
of seed and will  
enlarge the harvest of  
your righteousness.

– II Corinthians 9:10

For further study:  
Galatians 6:6-10  
2 Corinthians 9:6-15

## RESPECT

REGARD, CONSIDERATION, HONOR

The word “respect” is from the Latin word *respectus*, meaning “to look at, regard.” To respect others is to have regard for their existence, ideas and opinions. Synonyms include attention, deference, esteem. Giving this seed helps fill the need for *significance and meaning*.

**Honor one another above yourselves.**

– Romans 12:10b

## ENCOURAGEMENT

INSPIRING WITH COURAGE

Encouragement is inspiring (“breathing into”) another person with courage or confidence. It is to reassure them, spur them on, support their efforts to succeed. Synonyms include cheering, heartening, boosting. Giving this seed helps fill the need for *courage to press on*.

**Let us encourage one another – and all the more  
as you see the Day approaching.**

– Hebrews 10:25b

## LISTENING

SEEKING TO HEAR; HEEDING

Listening is “making a conscious effort to hear.” It is “paying attention to” another person. Listening is foundational to good communication and a vital part of any close relationship. Synonyms include attending, considering, hearkening, heeding. Giving the gift of listening helps fill the human need for *attention*.

**Everyone should be quick to listen,  
slow to speak and slow to become angry.**

– James 1:19b

## APPRECIATION

GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF VALUE

Appreciation is grateful recognition of the value, quality or significance of a gift, deed or person. To say “Thank you” is a common way to express appreciation. Synonyms include thankfulness, acknowledgement, recognition. Giving this seed helps fill the need *to be valued*.

**Give thanks in all circumstances,  
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**

– 1 Thessalonians 5:18



**... let us do good to  
all people, especially  
to those who belong to  
the family of believers.**

– Galatians 6:10 b

**For further study:**

*Respect*

**Philippians 2:3**

*Encouragement*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

*Listening*

**Proverbs 18:13**

*Appreciation*

**Psalms 150:1-2**

## TRUST

CONFIDENCE IN ANOTHER

Trust is firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity or reliability of another person. Complete trust should only be in God, but a level of trust is important for any relationship. Synonyms include belief, faith, reliance. Giving this seed helps fill the need for *security*.

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
 and lean not on your own understanding.**

– Proverbs 3:5

## INTEGRITY

MORAL STRENGTH & WHOLENESS

Integrity is steadfast adherence to a moral or ethical code, and also the condition of being sound and complete. Synonyms include character, honor, virtue, nobility, ethics, honesty. Giving the gift of integrity helps fill the human need for *authenticity*.

**The integrity of the upright  
 guides them, but the unfaithful  
 are destroyed by their duplicity.**

– Proverbs 11:3

## ORDER

STRUCTURE, PRIORITIES, GUIDELINES

Order includes observance of laws, guidelines and boundaries for conduct. It includes priorities (order of importance or precedence). Training in orderly behavior is called discipline; continuing in orderly behavior is called routine. Synonyms include harmony, pattern. Giving this seed helps fill the need for *structure*.

**Everything should be done in a  
 fitting and orderly way.**

– 1 Corinthians 14:40

## NURTURE

CARE & FEEDING; LOVING SUPPORT

Nurture is caring for someone, doing things for the benefit of another. Closely related to “love,” nurture is love with hands and feet in action. It’s the way we can apply each of 12 Seeds to help meet needs. Synonyms include nourishment, assistance. Giving this seed helps fill the human need *to be loved*.

**Love never fails.**

– 1 Corinthians 13:8a



**Love seeks one thing  
 only: the good of the  
 one loved.**

– Thomas Merton

**For further study:**

*Trust*

**Psalm 40:4**

*Integrity*

**Proverbs 10:9**

*Order*

**Psalm 119:133**

*Nurture*

**1 Peter 5:7**

## SYNERGY

COOPERATION, TEAMWORK

Synergy is the beautiful phenomenon that occurs when people working together in harmony perform and achieve far beyond what they would separately. Synonyms include accord, concert, conjunction. Giving this gift helps fill the human need *to work together*.

**Now you are the body of Christ,  
 and each one of you is a part of it.**

– 1 Corinthians 12:27

## HOPE

POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS

Hope is a wish or desire accompanied by the confident expectation of its fulfillment. Synonyms include anticipation, aspiration, expectation, desire. Giving this seed helps fill the human need for *motivation to go on*.

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
 as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by  
 the power of the Holy Spirit.**

– Romans 15:13

## IDEALS

VALUES & MODELS OF EXCELLENCE

Ideals are the high standards and examples that are worthy of imitation and replication in a life of excellence. Synonyms include standards, principles, patterns. Giving this seed helps fill the need *to focus on higher things*.

**Whatever is true . . . noble . . . right . . .  
 pure . . . lovely . . . admirable –  
 if anything is excellent or praiseworthy –  
 think about such things.**

– Philippians 4:8

## PARDON

FORGIVENESS & RELEASE

Pardon is forgiveness of an offense. It provides the offender with release from penalty; it provides the one granting pardon with release from bitterness. Synonyms include forgiveness, release, “letting go.” Giving pardon helps fill the need for *forgiveness and release*.

**Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

– Colossians 3:13b



**Bear with each other  
 and forgive whatever  
 grievances you may  
 have against one  
 another. Forgive as  
 the Lord forgave you.**

– Colossians 3:13

### **For further study:**

*Synergy*

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

*Hope*

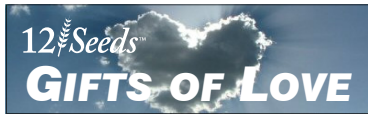
**Isaiah 40:31**

*Ideals*

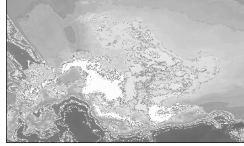
**Galatians 5:22-23**

*Pardon*

**Isaiah 55:7**



12 GIFTS FROM GOD • SOWN IN THE HEART • SHARED IN LOVE



### *A Prayer*

Dear Father, thank You for all the gifts You give me.  
Please help me, empowered by Your Spirit,  
to lovingly share Your gifts with others.

Help me to give **respect**,  
**encouragement** and **listening**.  
Help me to also give **appreciation** and **trust**.

Help me to live with the **integrity** and  
**order** that are blessed gifts to others.  
Prompt me to give loving care – **nurture** – as needed,  
together with the cooperation  
that allows **synergy** to flourish.

Help me to share **hope** and the treasure of **ideals**.  
And remind me, when others fail to exhibit  
the above qualities,  
to forgive and **pardon** them as  
You have pardoned me.

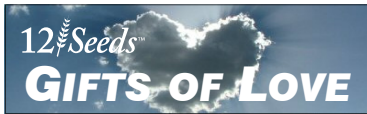
Thank You for the gifts You give me.  
May the way I relate to others, and how I share Your gifts,  
be a refreshing witness of the life-changing relationship  
I have with You. In the Name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

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**S**YNERGY  
**H**OPE  
**I**DEALS  
**P**ARDON

12Seeds

**But when you pray,  
go into your room,  
close the door and  
pray to your Father,  
who is unseen.  
Then your Father,  
who sees what is  
done in secret,  
will reward you.**

– Matthew 6:6



12 GIFTS FROM GOD • SOWN IN THE HEART • SHARED IN LOVE

*Some recommended forward steps:*

1. **Reread and highlight the text** in these pages that is especially meaningful to you.
2. **Talk with God** about how each seed is a part of your relationship with Him. Thank Him for giving these gifts to you.
3. **Memorize the 12 Seeds acrostic** to help plant the seeds in your mind.
4. **Think about God's great love for you.** Ask Him to help you plant the seeds in your heart.
5. **Pray, Meditate, Bless, Serve, Fellowship.** Develop personal ways to do these. See "5 ways to share the 12 Seeds" on page 5.
6. **Jot down insights and experiences** in the open spaces of these worksheets. Use for personal review; share them with others.
7. **Find more ideas, tools and applications** at: [www.12seeds.com](http://www.12seeds.com)

*More resources:*

**The 12 Seeds website** has additional resources including a downloadable library of over 140 Scripture references related to the 12 Seeds. You'll also find free Leader-Mentor guides and other training tools. *Visit:*

[www.12seeds.com](http://www.12seeds.com)

### **12 Seeds for Successful Relationships**

This 128-page book explains each seed in greater detail and how each is part of a growing relationship with God and with others. It has over 250 suggested ways to practice the seeds, steps toward healing a relationship, how to overcome the weeds, and a Scriptural growth formula to help the seeds grow. Go to our website ([www.12seeds.com](http://www.12seeds.com)) to order online or ask at your bookstore. ISBN 0-9753844-0-6



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**'We were not born to be alone. God created us for relationship.'**

— Rebecca Manley Pippert