

ACCIDENTAL PHARISEE

WEEK 8: GIFT PROJECTION & MONEY POLICE



Gift Projection & Gift Envy

We all see and interpret life through the lens of our own experiences and so it is natural to expect that others see and feel the same things we do. There are two problems when it comes to the issue of spiritual gifts:

- **Projection:** Whatever God has gifted and called me to do, everyone else should do as well.
- **Envy:** Flip side of gift projection by wishing we had gifts that we see in others.

“Full-blown gift projection is the sin of the spiritually passionate.”

– Larry Osborne

However, we do not get to choose spiritual gifts – they are given by God alone and we are merely recipients of those gifts.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit ... ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good ... ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” – 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7, 11 ESV

Gift	Projection to Others	Envy
Evangelists	<i>Might have a hard time remembering that most people are not wired like them.</i>	<i>Ability to talk about the Lord so easily with everyone. Focus on eternal things and concern for people’s souls.</i>
Bible teachers	<i>Tempted to look down on people who don’t know what they know.</i>	<i>We may desire to appear as smart or spiritual as a great teacher.</i>
Missionaries	<i>Why aren’t others sold out for Jesus? People love this world and not the things of God.</i>	<i>Missionaries are the ultimate example of spiritual dedication and sacrifice.</i>
Risk takers (i.e., stop human trafficking)	<i>Equate living by faith as living on the edge. Take risk to solve injustices they see.</i>	<i>I should be willing to step out in faith but I am a fearful of ...</i>
Full time ministry	<i>The really committed are in full time ministry.</i>	<i>Do I love Jesus enough? Should I quit everything to advance the kingdom of God?</i>

“The more full-blown our gift projection becomes, the more likely we are to think that God is especially pleased with us and ticked off at everyone else.”

– Larry Osborne

Our guilt over spiritual gifts is most often driven by gift envy – not from gift guilt or projection from others:

- It's usually applied to something we think is especially important in the kingdom of God and wish we were better at.
- God has not called and gifted each of us with high-profile gifts (evangelism, teaching, church planters, etc).
- Instead Jesus has called all of us to show our workplace, community, and neighborhoods the love of Christ.

Money Police

If you don't line up with some Christians standard of how to deal with money/debt or generosity (or sacrifice), they won't just criticize you – they'll question your salvation.

- The money police will write you off as a materialistic bogus Christian who rationalizes away the hard sayings of Jesus.
- The money police fixate on the words of Jesus, but seldom check out the New Testament letters to see how the Apostles interpreted Jesus words and applied them to the life of the early church.
- Tend to treat the words of Jesus as far superior to the words of the Apostles.

“Today there’s also a strong tendency to read the Bible through the lens of a poverty gospel. It asserts that godliness is found in simplicity, suffering, and poverty. It has a built-in bias against wealth.”

– Larry Osborne

The poverty Gospel is a pendulum swing away from the prosperity Gospel:

- The poverty Gospel asserts that godliness is found in simplicity, suffering, and poverty.
- Claim money is the root of all evil. Scripture says it is the love of money and the desire to be rich that cause them to wander from the faith (1 Tim 6:9-10).

Scripture is often used incorrectly to teach about money. The rich young ruler and Zacchaeus are not about money but are often used by the Money Police to condemn people. Paul's writing to Timothy does not mention anything about giving all (or even most of it away) to the poor:

- Rich young ruler is used to point to the high cost of following Jesus (Matt 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18:18-30):
 - Are we willing to give it all up for Jesus?
 - The story is actually about the man's arrogance and pride. Jesus did not tell anyone else to give up everything to follow him.
 - If we want to be consistent – we would need to insist that everyone who follows Christ sell everything they have and give it all to the poor.
- Zacchaeus shows that Jesus didn't ask us to sell everything (Luke 19:1-10):
 - Zacchaeus only offered to sell half of his ill-gotten gains and he offered to repay anyone he defrauded four-fold.
 - Jesus didn't ask about the rest of his ill-gotten gains.
- Paul gave Timothy instructions for rich Christians in Ephesus (1 Tim 6:17-19):
 - Don't be arrogant.
 - Don't put your hope in wealth.

- Do good and be rich in good deeds.
- The rich should be generous and ready to share.

Final Word

Two thousand years ago, some of God’s most zealous followers found themselves in a place they never could have imagined. Despite their rigorous study of Scripture and scrupulous obedience of everything they found in it, they become the enemies of God.

The Pharisees of old had the best of intentions – they wanted to please God and to show others how to please Him:

- They believed their labyrinth of extra rules and spiritual disciplines provided a helpful template for people to follow.
- They considered all of their rules and standards to be solidly biblical (even if none of them were found in Scripture – they were all based on Scripture).
- They thought they were helping God by thinning the herd and keeping the riffraff out.

We are all susceptible to becoming Accidental Pharisees. Most often it starts with:

1. A failure to grasp the true gravity and depths of our own sin.
2. A heightened disgust for the sins of others.
3. Justified by a cut-and-paste theology that emphasizes some of the hard sayings of Jesus while ignoring those that speak of His compassion, mercy, and grace.

“Following Jesus is not a race to see who can be the most radical, sacrificial, knowledgeable, or quickest to burn out. It’s not a contest to see who’s willing to take the hardest role.

For the gospel to remain the gospel, grace and mercy have to remain front and center”

– Larry Osborne

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the gifts and callings in your life that you would be most likely to project onto others?
2. Which do you think you struggle more with – gift projection or gift envy?
3. What could FCOV do to undercut the myth of full-time ministry and to foster a healthier view of Christian vocation?
4. Are you prone to be one of the “money police” or are you more likely to be criticized by one?