

A PRICELESS GIFT

1Timothy 6:17-19

Lois Cheney in her book, *God is No Fool*, tells a revealing parable about a man who was touched by God. God gave this man a priceless gift the capacity for love. The man was grateful and humble, and he knew what an extraordinary thing had happened to him. He carried this capacity for love like a jewel and he walked tall and with purpose.

From time to time, he would show this gift to others, and they would smile and stroke his jewel. But it seemed that they'd also dirty it up a little. Now, this was no way to treat such a precious thing, so the man built a box to protect his jewel. And he decided to show it only to those who would treat it with respect and meet it with a reverent love of their own.

Even that didn't work, for some tried to break into the box.

So, the man built a bigger, stronger box--one that no one could get into--and he felt good. At last, he was protecting the jewel as it should be.

Upon occasion, when he decided that someone had earned the right to see it, he'd show it proudly. But they sometimes refused, or perhaps they smudged it, or just glanced at it disinterestedly.

Much time went by, and then only once in a while would someone pass by the aging man. He would pat his box and say, "I have the loveliest of jewels in here." Once or twice, he opened the box and offered it saying, "Look and see. I want you to." And the passerby would look and look and look. And then he would back away from the old man, shaking his head.

The man died, and he went to God, and he said, "You gave me a precious gift many years ago, and I've kept it safe, and it is as lovely as the day you gave it to me." And he opened the box and held it out to God. God glanced in the box, and in it was empty.

Love guarded and unexposed. A jewel faded away. A servant cast into the outer darkness. Friend, life is not to be hoarded. It is to be lived fully, abundantly, without reservation. It is to be invested in love, in hope, in faith so that a wonderful harvest of lasting influence will be reaped. So, how about it? Are you reaching your full potential as a follower of Jesus Christ? When you face the Lord, will you have the joy of hearing these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"?

God bless,
Pastor Barbara