Gift or Gift?

James 1:16-18 [16]Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. [17]**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.** [18]Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:17 **πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ** καὶ πᾶν **δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν** ἐστιν καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων παρ᾽ ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι **παραλλαγὴ** ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα

> πᾶς *pas* - every, each, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything
>
> δόσις *dosis* – given, a gift
>
> ἀγαθός *agathos* - good thing, of good constitution or nature, good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy, excellent, upright, honorable
>
> δώρημα *dōrēma* - a gift, bounty, benefaction
>
> τέλειος *teleios* – perfect, brought to its end, finished, of full age
>
> ἄνωθεν *anōthen* - from above, from a higher place, of things which come from heaven or God, from the very first, from the beginning, anew
>
> παραλλαγή *parallagē* – variation, change

James 1:17 (my own paraphrased edition!): *All things that have been given a good and honorable nature by God as provisioned from Heaven as well as the most bountiful gift of all that come to us from our immutably unchanging Lord.*

The first thing that we can learn by looking at the original language is the use of the word "gift" twice, but with much different Greek meanings.

The first time it's used—"every good gift"—the Greek word is *dosis* (often driven by the root *agathos*), which implies "a good, pleasant thing" or the very act of bestowing it. But in the second usage—"every perfect gift"—the word changes to *dōrēma*, which means more literally "a gift" as a concrete present or donation.

Thus, James highlights in the first instance that everything around us is a gift. This could well begin with the very air we breathe and end with the love we receive from those who care for us. Consider the possibilities of what might be included in these "good things" at your own personal level.

In the second case, James highlights the "perfect gift"—a true present with great bounty and benefits to us.

Ponder both cases. Ponder the glory around us, truly from the air we breathe, our heart that's beating, and our eyes and mind that see and think, to the trees and hills. What good things these are!

But when doing so, don't forget the perfect gifts from God: His Word, His nature, His blessings, and His salvation. He truly is blessing us from both close and far. Make a point to bask in that truth more often!

Wondering what to say when someone asks you to pray? Start here!