# *Human Gifts: Giving to Transform Ourselves, Others and the World*by James Hallam

1. **Love**
	* Who do you find easy to love, and who is most difficult to love?
	* To what extent is your ability to love affected by your own state of mind as opposed to the potential object of your love?
	* Do you agree with Hallam that love is the grounding or bedrock of the Christian ethic?
		+ How might non-Christians react to this claim?
	* [9] “The essential thing is not to feel love, but to do love. We do not feel then act; we act, then we feel.” – quoting Michalson
		+ Put this into your own words
	* Hallam (and others) claim that Jesus mandates we love ourselves.
		+ Can you support this claim with things Jesus said and did?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
2. **Kindness**
	* What are some good examples of kindnesses you’ve experienced?
	* What are some examples of kindnesses you’ve given?
	* When do you find it hardest to be kind?
	* [16] Were you surprised at the rabbit experiment Hallam described which found that rabbits receiving kindness had 60 percent fewer fatty deposits in their blood?
		+ How has kindness affected your health?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
3. **Empathy**
	* How do you react to empathy vs. sympathy?
	* Share an experience where someone showed you empathy. *Hospice*
	* [23] Do you find yourself falling into Hallam’s proposed human nature of denying others empathy?
	* In what ways do you see Jesus as empathetic?
	* [23] “It is difficult to feel alone when someone is crying with us.”
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
4. **Compassion**
	* What’s the difference between compassion and sympathy?
	* Who are some of the most compassionate people you know?
		+ Do they have any other common characteristics?
	* [28] Hallam notes that compassion comes with an emphasis on \*doing\* and gives the example of the Good Samaritan.
		+ What are the actions done by your compassionate examples?
	* When have people been compassionate to you?
	* What blocks you from being compassionate to others?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
5. **Helpfulness**
	* As you’ve gotten older, have you been more or less apt to ask for help?
	* Why are we reticent to ask for help?
	* [39] “…in answering the cry for help, we often think we know better than others what they need.”
		+ Can you think of examples where you’ve fallen into this trap?
	* Who are the helpful people in your life?
	* What do we have to do as a nation to be helpful to people in need?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
6. **Presence**
	* Can you think of times when someone’s mere presence, regardless of what they said, provided much-needed comfort?
	* Can you give an example of when you have been present for someone in need?
	* Who can you think of who might need your presence today?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
7. **Listening**
	* Who are the good listeners in your life?
	* Do you think of yourself as a talker or a listener, or both?
	* Do you have any suggested practices that help you with listening?
	* [52] “We feel that we must always have advice ready in response to another, even when they are not looking for it.”
		+ Why do you think we do this?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
8. **Touch**
	* What has your experience been with social “touching” as a result of COVID?
		+ Do you think things have forever changed or are we reverting to the pre-COVID norm?
	* Are you a “hugger”? Why or why not?
	* How do you discern whether someone is receptive to touch?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
9. **Acceptance**
	* Who or what behavior might you deem unacceptable for the sanctuary during worship?
		+ How do you think Jesus would react to this person or behavior?
	* Do you think our lack of church diversity is due to lack of acceptance? Why or why not?
	* Hallam suggests that we must accept ourselves first, before offering this gift to others.
		+ In what ways do you fail to accept yourself?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
10. **Affirmation**
	* To what extent do you crave or even need affirmation?
	* How much affirmation did you receive as a child?
		+ How much do you extend to your children?
	* [73] “We are to let others know they are special not because of what they do but because of who they are.”
		+ What are your reactions to this?
	* Other reflections on this chapter?
11. **Time**
	* Do you, like Hallam, find yourself paying more attention to the ages people die in their obituaries?
	* Looking back at your life, are you satisfied with the way you’ve allocated your time?
		+ If not, how would you change things?
	* Can you give examples of meaningful gifts of time you’ve given and received?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
12. **Patience**
	* In what situations do you find yourself being most impatient?
	* Why is driving such a strong source of impatience?
		+ Compare it to other modes of transportation.
	* Are you more patient with children or older adults? Why?
	* What strategies do you use to help be more patient?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
13. **Friendship**
	* How would you define a friend?
		+ Is there an essential quality to all your good friends?
	* In Stephen King’s *The Body,* later made into the movie *Stand By Me*, the author quotes “I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve.”
		+ How true is this quote for you?
	* Do you place more of a priority on having many friends, or having fewer, close friends? Why?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
14. **Vulnerability**
	* Have you witnessed the reciprocity in transparency that Hallam mentions?
	* To what extent were you conditioned to hide your feelings in childhood?
		+ Who did this conditioning? Parents, teachers, friends, others?
	* When do you think Jesus was transparent and when was he reserved?
	* With whom are you able to be vulnerable?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
15. **Forgiveness**
	* What Biblical passages come to mind when you think of forgiveness?
		+ *“not 7 times, but 77 times”*
		+ *Lord’s Prayer*
		+ *Prodigal Son*
		+ *“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*
		+ *“your sins are forgiven” – prostitute, paralytic man, …*
	* In what situations do you find it most difficult to forgive?
	* When have you experienced benefits from forgiving someone else? How did it help you?
	* [106] “Sometimes, however, the hardest person to forgive is oneself.”
		+ How do you find this to be true?
		+ Why is this the case?
	* When have you received the gift of forgiveness?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
16. **Gratitude**
	* What was your experience with writing thank-you notes when you were a child?
	* [112] “Gratefulness is a matter of words, attitudes, *and* actions.”
		+ How do you show gratefulness by your actions?
		+ Whom do you know that maintains a grateful attitude?
	* Have you ever created a list of thanksgiving?
		+ Is this a challenging exercise for you?
		+ How did it impact you?
	* For what or whom are you most thankful?
	* When have you received a memorable thank you?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
17. **Generosity**
	* “What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.” – Albert Pike
	* Hallam states that in our society, “we think about giving to others in terms of what it will take from us.”
		+ How have you found this to be true or untrue?
	* In what ways do you find yourself erring on the side of “saving for a rainy day” vs. giving to those in immediate need?
	* What are some examples of non-monetary generosity?
	* Describe a time when someone was generous to you.
	* Other reflections on the chapter?
18. **Legacy**
	* How often do you think of your own legacy?
	* What would you hope appeared in your obituary?
	* Other reflections on the chapter?

References for material:

* [*Human Gifts: Giving to Transform Ourselves, Others and the World*](https://www.amazon.com/Human-Gifts-Giving-Transform-Ourselves-ebook/dp/B0C5ZSD2Q1/ref%3Dsr_1_2?crid=2IFC0R7RQATX6&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.sF9oWyTgo290ZTSwbAIyNz__0ad-wz8oFcJYWoiefukuxvPg_XcPfcHjpB5SrJ5GdqLgM2Y1KgZ0ojalExB0GQ.AjruZGlRI6iIMOzgcMAXrM5fE6na1I7z3HwYw3hQejs&dib_tag=se&keywords=human+gifts+hallam&qid=1708632171&sprefix=human+gifts+halla%2Caps%2C227&sr=8-2)

*Italics* imply important points or example answers the leader can convey