# *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=sr_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