SCRIPTURE:
Isn't everything you have and everything you are sheer gifts from God?
—1 Corinthians 4:7, The Message

MEDITATION:
Eugene Peterson’s interpretation of Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians here resonates with many of my recent thoughts about life. It really is all gifts. Wherever I look, throughout my day, God is providing gift after gift: beauty, family, friends, challenges, opportunities for reflection, restraint, thanksgiving, repentance, service, and more. Only when I see all these things as God’s gifts can I engage this life he’s given with real gratitude.

REFLECTION:
As we enter this time of Thanksgiving, let’s reflect on what it would look like for us to live as though all of life is a gift from God.

- What does it look like for me?
- How does an awareness that every aspect of my life is a gift affect how I give—of my time, my money, my energy, my material possessions?
- How does knowing everything is a gift affect where I direct my attention?
- How can I attempt to reflect daily (maybe even every waking hour) on the gifts before me?
- How can I experience them with God?

PRAYER:
Mighty Creator,
All you have given are gifts, but too often we are blind to see. Give us one more gift, we pray: by the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to truly live with the understanding that all we are and all we have are gifts from you.
Amen.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Angela Kantola is a retired fish and wildlife biologist. She holds BS and MS degrees in wildlife ecology from Oklahoma State University and the University of Florida. Angela began her career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a graduate student in 1983, working with West Indian manatees and studying Sherman’s fox squirrels. She worked on endangered species recovery in the southeastern U.S. and then served as the deputy director of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program from 1989 until her retirement in December 2017. This program received a Department of Interior Cooperative Conservation Award in 2008 and is considered a national model demonstrating that public/private partnerships can work to recover endangered species and resolve Endangered Species Act-related conflicts.

Angela has pursued her vocation with the understanding of conservation as a calling to care for God’s good creation. Over the years, Angela has been active with a number of Christian environmental organizations, participates in the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the ASA, and facilitates retreats that help people to rediscover God’s presence in creation. Angela and her husband, Don Wallace, live in the foothills above Littleton, Colorado, with their cat, Koshi, and an abundance of wildlife and natural beauty. They enjoy growing tomatoes year-round in their passive solar greenhouse, hiking, backpacking, kite-flying, and volunteering with citizen science projects.