

Giving God What He ...

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thrilled him to receive his daughter's gift.

All that we give the Lord is given to us by Him. When we give Him anything, it is, as was the small child, only giving Him something He gave or allowed us to have. Still, God loves it when we give to Him. Putting God first in our lives thrills Him.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17

The First and Last Time He Comes

Oliver B. Greene

The Lord Jesus Christ, whom we should exalt, especially on Christmas, is not just a baby in a manger. He is not a character in a children's story. He is far more.

✦ The first time He came, He came veiled in the form



I am the one that is making the list, and I don't have to check it twice!"

— God

of a child. The next time He comes, and we believe it will be soon, He will come unveiled, and it will be abundantly and immediately apparent to all the world just who He really is.

✦ The first time He came, a star marked His arrival. The next time He comes, the heavens will roll up like a scroll, and all the stars will fall out of the sky, and He will light it.

✦ The first time He came, there was no room for Him. The next time He comes, the whole world will be unable to contain His glory.

✦ The first time He came, only a few attended His arrival — some. The next time He comes, every eye shall see Him.

✦ The first time Jesus came as a baby. Soon, He will come as Sovereign King and Lord.

"This year, I did not see one reminder that the Christmas season is about Jesus. His birth was not remembered in one television program, not in one store, and not in any town-wide decorations. I did not even see one manger scene! It has happened, at least where I live, that Jesus was banned from His own birth remembrance! What a sad season Christmas has become!" — Bill Brinkworth



Where's My Present?

Bill Brinkworth

"Happy Bill's birthday!" welcomed another party-goer.

"Wait until you see what I got you," as the present was removed from its hiding place behind his back.

"You got me something?"

Oh, wow," was the exclamation as the curly bow was hurriedly ripped from the gift.

As the gift-receiver tore off the wrapping paper, another excited voice gleefully proclaimed on the other side of the room, "And I got you something, too."

An ecstatic voice shrilled, "For me?" as she received the large, carefully wrapped package. Several in the celebration gravitated to that part of the room to see what excited her.

The gift-giver smiled as he could tell his thoughtfulness was appreciated. He watched her



carefully remove the packaging tape and responded with the customary, "Happy Bill's birthday."

Soon most of the gathering attendees were giving someone a package they produced from hiding places. The room was filled with sounds of ripping paper and "You shouldn't have"s. A surprised couple of "Oh, I didn't get you anything"s could also be heard scattered about the room.

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Giving God What He Gave Us

Author Unknown

A little girl told an older friend that she would give her papa a pair of slippers for Christmas. "Where will you get your money?" asked the friend.

The little girl opened her eyes wide and said, "Why, Father will give me the money." The friend was silent as he realized the father would buy his own Christmas present. Even though the father paid for his own present, it still

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Where's My Present?

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In all the gift-giving excitement, no one noticed the surprised person enter the room from the stairwell. He moved from group to group, almost unnoticed. As he moved to the child admiring her new laptop, she made sure he saw it and outstretched it to him to get a better look. "Why, it's a great one," he remarked. After he was shown it, she immediately returned to her group and grabbed another package she was handed.

On he drifted to another group on the other side of the room. "Oh, it's Bill!" exclaimed the one standing closest to him. "Happy birthday, Bill."

After hearing that name, most in the room stopped their gift-giving and opening and turned to the visitor and echoed, "Hello, Bill." Some greeted him with, "Happy birthday, Bill." Hands waved at him.

One "Hey, old man" echoed inside the dining room. Throughout the room, giggles ensued over that remark. It was not long until all turned back to their peers and engaged in their party activities. Bill was once again left to himself.

"The BEST GIFT is not under your tree; it was on the tree at Calvary!" — Roy Phillips.

Soon, the party got back on track, and Bill stood alone. No one even heard him sadly whisper, "And where's my present? It's my birthday!"

Forgotten at one's own birthday party would be horrifying and heartbreaking, however, it happens every year. A day put aside years ago by our Christian-oriented forefathers to remember the birth of Christ is still practiced by most but has lost its true meaning.

Gifts are given to one another. Feasts are prepared for those attending family gatherings. Benevolence is at an all-time high. Even the least unfortunate are remembered and given something by strangers.

Festivities are displayed everywhere in the decorations throughout towns and decorations on trees in living rooms. Unfortunately, like Bill's party, the purpose of the celebration is often forgotten. The reason for the Christmas season is to remember the birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Sadly, He is little remembered or honored. In some circles, even mention of His name is forbidden.

This year, make your Christmas different. Ignore the world's tendency to remove any mention of Christ on the day that was put aside to honor His birth. Let all know that Jesus is the reason for the season with as many opportunities to say "Merry Christmas" as possible.

Above all, make sure you give the Reason for the season the best gift of all. No, Christ has no desire for any material present. He desires your heart, your time, and your devotion. All year long, give to Him:

- ◆ Your obedience to His Commandments:
"If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15
- ◆ The praise He deserves:
"I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high." Psalms 7:17
- ◆ Your willingness to live for Him:
"Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing." Psalms 100:2
- ◆ Your love:
"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6:5

This year, give the Lord what He wants — you!

The Reason for The Season

Deb McCoy

*Christmas is a joyous time of the year,
Displays of decorations, lights,
and holiday cheer.
So much commotion and excitement overflows,*

And don't forget the gifts and children's faces all aglow.

*Let's take a moment and reflect on that very first Christmas night,
The angel had announced the birth of the Savior to bring the world Light.*

*Born in a dark stable came our most gifted treasure,
Our gratitude and praises no price can we measure.*

Celebrating Christmas should be a reflection of selflessness and love,

*The window of the soul is illuminated by the Spirit of Christmas sent from above.
This year may peace on Earth and goodwill to men,
Be reflected in each of us time and again.*

*May you be filled with the joy of this holiday season,
Let it shine in your heart and be reminded of its true reason.
It's all about Jesus. What gift will you bring?
Salvation in Christ will make your heart sing.*

*This Christmas and throughout the coming year.
Discover the riches of this treasure, and may your heart be filled with holiday cheer.
Celebrate Christ this Christmas, and you will find,
Hope and comfort offered to all mankind.*