

Rick Warren: This Is What the Spirit of Christmas Truly Looks Like

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

During this Christmas season, you’ll hear one word more than any other. It’s not “merry,” “tree,” “Santa,” or even—unfortunately—“Jesus.”

It’s “gift.” By the end of November—and sometimes even before then—we begin a frantic dash to find the right gift for everyone on our list. The word “gift” consumes us for a month.

Many people think that gift-giving at Christmas was started by the wise men when they brought gifts to the baby Jesus. But it was God who started it all when he gave the first Christmas gift.

The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16). On the first Christmas, God gave the greatest gift of all—He gave his Son. He gave his Son to die on the cross so you can have a forgiven past, a purpose for living, and a home in heaven. Jesus is the original Christmas gift.

We only give because God gave to us first.

The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of generosity. In Acts 15:11b, the Bible says, “We are saved because the Master Jesus amazingly and out of sheer generosity moved to save us” (MSG).

If it weren’t for God’s generosity, we would have nothing. The air we breathe is a gift of God’s generosity. The blood

coursing through our veins is a gift of God's generosity. The fact that our hearts are beating is a gift of God's generosity. Every good thing in your life—including your life itself—is a gift of God's generosity.

But God's greatest act of generosity came on the very first Christmas when he gave us Jesus.

Talk It Over

- How do you respond to knowing that God gave the first Christmas gift?
- What are some gifts from God not mentioned in the devotional today that you are grateful for?
- What can you do this Christmas to better remember God's gifts to you? {eo}

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of *LifeWay*, a global internet community for pastors.

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