

Sign Up for God's Glorious Gift Exchange and Watch His Blessings Overflow

If you're a hurting parent, I have a message of hope for you today. Can you remember when your children were young and would be invited to birthday parties? You'd go shopping together and select a gift for their friend. I remember those days.

I raised three kids, and over the years, something changed. They began coming home with gifts, too: a prize they won in a game or a thank-you for coming to help celebrate.

The prospect of what they might get was exciting. They never turned down the chance to go to a friend's party.

Another Type of Invitation

My children are adults now. They've been invited to another type of party—we all have. Only God is the host of this one.

He offers the ultimate gift exchange: we bring our sins and He gives us Jesus, His one and only Son.

What an offer!

What an exchange!

What a prize!

How We Pray

When sons and daughters struggle with alcohol or drugs, mental health issues or other things, we pray for them to be willing to accept help; to be ready to humble themselves; to want freedom from bondage; to accept God's invitation, as many of us have done.

We yearn for them to believe His offer is true, with no strings attached. He really does love them that much, with all their faults and failures, to freely give them His ultimate gift. We pray and wait for the day they'll accept it.

Our children don't need to do anything to be worthy of his gift, simply open their hearts and move toward their maker in faith. The Bible says, "Yet to all who received Him, He gave the power to become sons of God, to those who believed in His name" (John 1:12).

He couldn't wait to bless them. All they had to do was respond by bringing themselves and the exchange would be made. Nothing else was required!

What God Gives

He's eager to give wonderful gifts, free for the taking:

- His best for their worst.
- His cleansing and forgiveness for their dirt and shame.
- His healing for their wounds.

As a result, there would be:

- No more guilt or loneliness.
- No more searching for a place to belong, for unconditional love.
- No more emptiness or aimless wandering.

What God Can Do

I realize this may sound oversimplified, especially for those who wrestle with addiction, mental illness or self-injury. Isn't their healing more complicated than that? I'm not saying recovery will be easy or that they won't need counseling or rehab or treatment of some kind. I'm sure they will; most do. God works through each of those. They're important and necessary.

What I *am* saying, is that I believe God's gift exchange can do amazing things in their lives.

They'll still struggle, *but things will be different.*

Their lives won't be completely free from problems, *but they'll have hope.*

They may experience hard consequences of poor choices, *but Jesus will strengthen them and use their pain for good.*

They'll feel weak at times, *but will have access to the power of God*; the Holy Spirit will be in them as Helper, Comforter and Teacher.

Their life can have a huge impact.

The ultimate gift of God's Son is the best gift exchange in the universe.

It's out of this world!

Prayer: *O Father, help_____ believe your invitation will never expire even though they've refused time after time. Your Word says: ""The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding, but they would not come" (Matt. 22:2-3). But You haven't given up. You're still eager for them to come. Your arms remain stretched out in an open welcome. You long for them to just say yes. Come to the party_____! Receive the ultimate gift for your soul! In the name of Jesus, the hope of the world. Amen.*

Recommended book:

Take Your Life Back: How to Stop Letting Your Past and Other People Control You by Stephen Arterburn and David Stoop {eoa}

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Hurting Parents, she is a blogger, former pastor's wife and CRU affiliate staff. She and her husband, Tom, have been guests on "Family Talk With Dr. James Dobson," "Family Life" with Dennis Rainey" and "Focus on the Family" with Jim Daly. A proud mom of three adult children, she loves being Mimi to her grandchildren. Find out more at .

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