

The Only Gift Jesus Wants From You This Christmas

At the holidays, it's tempting to focus on ourselves, our families and our to-do lists—and to lose ourselves in the busyness of it all.

Yet all this activity can crowd out the very reason we celebrate Christmas: God, and the gift of His only Son, Jesus, who came into the world to set us free from sin so we could live forever in intimate communion with Him and the Father.

No matter what the world has to offer—the latest tech toys, fancy cars, new clothes, or exotic vacations—there's nothing that can compare with knowing Jesus.

When Almighty God took on flesh and entered our world in the most vulnerable of conditions (born to a poor, unwed mother in a stable for animals), human history changed forever.

This greatest and most precious gift—a Savior who knows exactly what we go through because He created us and walked on the earth in a human body—is the “gift that keeps on giving” (see Heb. 4:14–16).

Christ's life is so important that if He did not come, die for our sins, and rise again on the third day, then, “your faith is futile; you are still in your sins,” Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:17–19. “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

There is a world beyond this one, a coming age of glory that will far eclipse “the former things” (Rev. 21:4). Setting our eyes on eternity, and tasting it now through Christ, is the best way to celebrate Christmas.

Yes, we may give gifts to family and friends in honor of God's

greatest gift, but we cannot let these temporal pleasures keep us from knowing the fullness that awaits us when we see Jesus face to face—either when He returns or when we die (see 1 Cor. 13:12).

The devil comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy,” Jesus said, but “I have come that [you] may have life, and that [you] may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Abundant life is only found in Christ. The world offers traces and shadows of it, but it cannot satisfy the deepest longings of our heart. Those places are reserved only for Christ—and He set it up that way (Acts 17:27).

Even as we celebrate the holiday of Christmas, let us keep our eyes on the One who upholds “all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3), who is “before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17).

There’s no escaping Jesus, “who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:1).

He came as a baby, grew as a man and suffered and died on the cross to pay for our sin. Then He rose from the grave, ascended to the Father’s right hand in heaven and will come again in glory to reward believers and punish unbelievers (see 2 Thess. 1:8–10).

The more we see Him, the more we’ll be like Him. And the more we make room for Him—in our daily lives and at Christmas—the more He’ll fill us with His joy and presence.

Don’t let busyness and materialism keep you from receiving—and sharing—the gift of Christ this Christmas. Even if you’ve known Him for years, there’s always more of His power and presence to experience.

Material gifts are good, but they cannot replace God’s greatest gift to us—salvation in Jesus Christ—which will be

with us for eternity.

“Keeping Christ in Christmas” is more than a slogan. It starts with each individual believer putting Him first in our heart and mind. Our actions will flow from our beliefs and our encounters.

This Christmas, ask the Lord for wisdom on how to seek Jesus first. He loves to give this gift (James 1:5).

After Christmas, if you’re seeking a special place to encounter Jesus and worship him with 20,000 young adults, we invite you to Onething, Dec. 28–31 in Kansas City. Find out more »

How can you make Jesus your focus this Christmas? {eoa}

*A Detroit native who was raised in Vermont and Connecticut, **Adam Wittenberg** worked as a newspaper journalist until 2012, when he moved to Kansas City to complete the Intro to IHOPKC internship. Afterwards, he earned a four-year certificate in House of Prayer Leadership from IHOPU and is now on full-time staff in the Marketing department at IHOPKC. Adam is also active in evangelism and has a vision to reach people everywhere with the good news of Jesus Christ.*