

When Jesus Gives You Surprise Gifts

When we yield our wills to God's, the question "What's in it for me?" is answered with a resounding "Everything!" –Shellie Rushing Tomlinson

A few years ago I was under a major writing deadline that put a hinder on my Christmas preparations. I'd been asked to write a special book that would reach a lot of teens with the gospel, but I knew it was going to come at a price. Yes, the gospel would go out ... but my Christmas preparations were going to be seriously hindered in the process!

After sending in the book to the editor, I had ONE WEEK to do the shopping, the activity planning, and even the decorating. It was December 17th and not one red or green decoration was put out ... not even the tree.

We usually bought a real tree from a local tree farm, but as I was zipping through Costco I saw a beautifully decorated tree on display. It had lights, ornaments, bows, and even adorable elves decorating it's branches. I paused before it, wishing I had a tree like that and wondering how much it cost.

Too much for me to afford, I thought to myself.

Still, something inside urged me to ask one of the employees. "How much is this tree? There is no price."

"Oh, I'm sorry, those trees are sold out," the man apologized. "All we have is this floor model left, and I don't even have a box for it." He paused and looked at me and my kids. "But if you want this one, I'll give it to you for 75 percent off."

I couldn't say yes fast enough. Can you imagine the looks I received when I was rolling out an assembled, fully decorated

tree to my van? I didn't mind the stares. I'd just been given a wonderful gift at 75 percent off!

We've been using the same tree for the last fifteen years. And every year as we pull it out and re-assemble it, I remember how God gave me that unexpected gift. Sometimes—especially at Christmas—we worry about so many things: the food, the presents, the decorations. And sometimes we feel silly being so concerned about trivial things. *Yet when we seek God and do His work, He likes to show up.* Sometimes He provides the necessary things, like food and clothes. But other times He surprises us with extravagant gifts too, like my tree!

When we seek God's kingdom first, we're often worried that we'll be left out. The opposite is true. *When we seek God first He gives us more than we anticipate.* He gives us good gifts, and mostly He gives us Himself. What more can we need? We need *nothing* compared to His *everything*! Don't you agree?

Tricia Goyer has written more than 35 books, including two novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as *Guideposts*, *Thriving Family*, *Proverbs 31*, and *HomeLife Magazine*.