

Why We Don't Exchange Christmas Gifts

Here's a little secret about our family that most people don't know because it is one of those things people assume everyone does. We don't give our kids or ourselves any Christmas gifts.

Our girls don't get Christmas gifts from us or each other. Before you decide that we are bad parents, let me explain.

We decided years ago that if Christmas is a celebration of someone else's birth, then, it isn't our birthday. Therefore, it isn't us who should receive the gifts. We try hard to show the girls that Christmas is about giving what you have received. After all, Christmas is also a celebration of getting Him. What else could we need that would even come close?

Over the years of Christmas past, we've given money to various ministries, given away toys and clothes, given gifts to our pastors. One year the girls decided on their own accord to empty their piggy banks and put it all in the offering at our church.

Of course, for our family, the 'spirit of giving' isn't a 'Christmas-only' ornament on our family tree. By the time Christmas rolls around, it is the end of another year. And we can look back and see all that we have given over the entire year. We reflect on the percent of our income poured into the kingdom of God that usually falls somewhere between 15 percent to 20 percent.

We've poured our heart and love into being good neighbors by all the mowing, yard care and shoveling done, which this last year, the girls handled mostly themselves very faithfully with joy. Our daughters have spent volunteering at various

charitable organizations with their Dad and Walmart over the past year. We've cooked meals cooked for loved ones in need and more. We get to look back over the year and see GOD's Hand in our lives. We get to be overwhelmed by His Goodness that has come and continues to come at us. He always provides for us, and manages to give us more than we deserve. We are a blessed people.

We as a family love Christmastime. It is a fun time of year for us. It is a joy to get to spend extra time together as a family hanging out. Aaron is usually able to take some sort of a vacation during this time. It is a time to cherish.

Our 4 daughters are ages 17, 14, 12 and 11. The presents they never received aren't missed. They've never had a bad attitude over not receiving presents. Our girls have always looked forward to Christmastime with great excitement and joy. They love the decorating, the cookie baking, the singing and the giving. They love to give, they love to help, and most importantly they love their Lord, the one who came to rescue them. They are happy girls who are full of life and love all year long, which is a gift from God.

I don't want to debate gift giving at Christmas. However, remember, whether it is 2, 5, 10 years, etc. down the road, your children probably won't remember what was in the presents sitting under the tree. But they will remember your presence. They will remember your love, your smile, your joy, your laughter, your hugs, your kisses, your kind words which as the years go by those are the presents they will really treasure.

Presents come and go. Gifts get old and dusty, worn and forgotten. However, His Presence never wears out, and even one moment in His Presence can never be forgotten. One moment in His presence is etched in our hearts forever. The gift of His presence changes our lives forever. Whether gifts abound under your tree or not, don't be sad, don't stress, don't fear. Grab for His Presence and your children will remember it for a life

time. Merry Christmas. May your house be filled with great peace, love, and joy!

–Janet Wirkus Pisors