

How To Be Hilariously Happy in Your Giving

Read Time: 4 Minutes 17 Seconds

The day after Thanksgiving is culturally called Black Friday, in the U.S. It marks the beginning of retail sales that could ensure a successful and profitable Christmas-gift-buying season.

Black Friday

In decades past, book-keepers recorded operating income and expenses by hand. Losses were recorded in red ink, while black ink was used to show profits. Stores may have operated with limited financial margins and many were “swimming in red ink” all year long, up to the Christmas gift-buying season.

Starting the day after Thanksgiving, holiday buying might turn their operating numbers from “red” to “black.” The sales frenzy could make a company’s whole year profitable and keep a business “in the black.” The day it started to turn around was to be happily known by many as “Black Friday.”

Some have alternately theorized the ominous-sounding sales day was derisively dubbed “Black Friday” by Philadelphia police in the 1950s. It seems the influx of holiday shoppers meant police officers had to work longer shifts managing happy congestion and human chaos in the downtown shopping areas.

Today, we are in the beginning of a world-wide economic downturn. Some are even calling this financial “reset” a “recession.” Some of the recent Black Friday promotions offered 20, 30 or even 70% off many products, from toys to televisions and more! But with inflation in the U.S. hovering between seven and eight percent, it is gobbling up much of whatever discounts many post-Thanksgiving buyers found!

Cyber Mondays

“Cyber Monday” is a term created by retailers to encourage people to shop virtually, online rather than or in addition to “brick and mortar” stores. These targeted e-commerce transactions on the Monday after Thanksgiving (in the United States) pumped new life into the sagging sales many store-front operations were experiencing. These online purchases could conveniently be done by buyers in their pajamas, comfortably cloistered away at home.

The COVID pandemic made internet-based purchases ubiquitous. These contactless experiences catapulted many neophyte start-ups to the level of legacy sales points. Free shipping and rapid delivery options completed the marketing experiences.

Giving Tuesday

“Giving Tuesday” was created a decade ago (in 2012) to match the spending experiences of customers for Black Friday and Cyber Monday with a stimulus for philanthropic donations to charities in need of support.

Although it started in the U.S., “Giving Tuesday” has reportedly made its way to more than 70 countries. Your internet inbox today is probably filled with requests and notices about your tax-deductible giving opportunities—often with “matching gift” notices by friendly partners of these charities and nonprofits.

Giving online provides the anonymity many donors prefer and the motivation Jesus encouraged when He warned about doing our “charitable deeds before men”:

“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory

from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Matt. 6:1-4, NKJV).

Grace Giving: A Service to Fellow Believers

The apostle Paul took up collections among the believers in the churches he had started—not for himself but for the needy believers in Jerusalem and Judea, who were being persecuted and suffering economically (e.g. 2 Cor. 9:1-5).

Notice the words Paul used when He wrote about the collections. It was "ministering to the saints," a service to fellow believers. It was to be a "generous gift," willingly pledged and carefully collected in advance of his coming, so no one would feel forced or under pressure by his presence. High-pressure offering appeals are not compatible with grace giving.

Beloved Bible expositor Warren Wiersby had an aptitude for the use of words. On this matter of grace giving, he once said: "We must not be 'sad givers' who give grudgingly, or 'mad givers' who give because we have to (of necessity); but we should be 'glad givers' who cheerfully share what we have because we have experienced the grace of God."

Paul wanted the generosity of these believers, toward their brothers and sisters in Christ, to flow from their hearts and not from a sense of religious duty. He wanted their gift to return to them, as an abundant harvest, which is always larger than what is sown. That way, they would have more than enough of everything they needed, with an abundance left over for them to continue doing good deeds.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8-10, Paul urged believers to give what they had in their hands and trust God to multiply it back to us abundantly, so we can continue to give in a cycle of blessing. We are blessed in order to be a blessing to others, both tangibly and spiritually!

Evangelist and educator Oral Roberts once marveled, “How great is our God! We have no lack in Him—only potential!”

In the Gospels, Jesus spoke of a divine law of reciprocity: “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you,” (Luke 6:38, NIV).

A generous giver will be given increasing means to give to Him, His mission and His people. Only when we give can we expect to receive. The two acts go together!

Pay your tithes to the church where you are being spiritually fed (Malachi 3:8-11) and then give generously to God’s work and His people in need. This will be a cause for thanksgiving to God and proof of your obedience to Him and His Word (2 Cor. 9:10-15).

Remember, God loves a “cheerful giver” (v. 7). Be hilariously happy in your giving this season, so it will be—in fact—a “Merry Christmas.”

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