

*Christmas Outreach Dinner 2017 ~ “The  
Christmas Gift” I John 5:11*

Well it's that time of year again. Everyone is trying to find the “perfect” Christmas gift, for that special someone...if they haven't already!

You know the routine....the gift has to be special, because the person it's for is special. It should be something, whether they know it yet, or not ,....that they would really want. Something useful,...something that they will at least cherish and keep for a long time. It should be personal...something that just fits their particular need, and hopefully not something that they would get for themselves. Whether it's hand made, or custom ordered, or just hard to find...it needs to be something special! Something that really says,: **“I love you!”** What could it possibly be? Time is running out, before Christmas morning!

History, by the way, records quite a few colossal failures, in this quest for the perfect and unique gift...And don't depend on the advertisers and retailers....they can lure you into a disastrous choice!

At the turn of the last century, Martinadales of London, suggested a very unique item called the **“Spintharoscope”**,... for the lady that has everything. It was a tube with a

peephole, that contained a tiny crumb of **radioactive radium** that reflected off a specially coated zinc sulfide screen. By holding it up to the eye, the heartthrob that you gave it to...could actually see evidence of individual atoms decaying with flashes of light! Unfortunately, if the glass broke,... and it often did,... your beloved, would be exposed to the same substance that killed Madame Curie! Pass on that one guys!

A few years later, Elkington Jewelers promoted a gold plated, but slightly askew, cross on a gold chain...a popular motif...that was...(quote) "the oldest symbol of good luck in the world"...or so they advertized. It was called the "**Swastika.**" For some reason by the mid-century it had fallen completely out of favor,... and no one would wear them anymore! Not a good choice either!

Not many years ago a Texas newspaper printed a display ad with the headline..."**Oh, just what I always wanted,...a Gold Cow Chip!**" No kidding! This creative gift retailer, was offering a gold plated Cow Chip fashioned into a Christmas Ornament for only **\$125**. What could say love more than that?! Not practical you say?...They also made available **Cow Chip Coasters, Cow Chip Door Stops** and **Cow Chip Pen Holders**, for a substntial bargain.

I hope you really didn't buy your special someone the gift of having a real **celestial star named after them!** I don't want to ruin anybody's Christmas this year....but that might not be the best choice either. It's not as unique as the **Star Registry Company** may have suggested. There are dozens of companies that do this...one says, "Give the timeless gift of dedicating a star to a loved one...for only \$18.95." Millions have been snapped up already! But don't worry...by the use of modern telescopes, astronomers have discovered that there are over 10 trillion galaxies in the universe. The closest one to earth, our own Milky Way,... is estimated to have over 100 billion stars alone! Do the math! Getting your name on a star would be like having your name on a grain of sand on a California beach. No any easier to identify, but at least with a grain of sand you could go visit the general vicinity, and soak up some much needed sunshine!

Why do we give Christmas gifts anyway? Church historians argue that although the Roman Catholic church adopted the pagan idolatrous holiday of Saturnalia, during the winter solstice, and turned it into the celebration of **Christ's Mass** ...the Protestant Church seized on Christmas as a time when the whole world was focused on the birth of the true historical Jesus. He was probably actually born sometime around the middle of

September. No matter,... if December 25th is already on the calander, then the true church would take the opportunity to tell the true story of Jesus! Part of that story was to worship the Christ child by bearing gifts, as the Magi did, of gold and frankenscence and myrhh. So they began to practice giving one another gifts in the early 1800s..

The real reason that gift giving is practiced at Christmas time is even more fundamental.

**We give gifts to one another because it makes us feel good...really good inside,....in a soulish way!** You see, we are beings, created in the image of God....and God is Spirit... And we are spiritual with deep intrinsic feelings. Created for relationships and to experience genuine love. **Acts 20:35** says that Jesus Himself said:... **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”** Believers and unbelievers alike receive a real blessing through giving to others. When we are giving, we are exercising that part of us that is created in God’s image. Because the Bible says in **James 1:17**, that, ...**“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...”** And on the very first Christmas, when Jesus was born, and the Son of God was manifest in the flesh in the incarnation,...**God the Father was giving us the very first Christmas gift!** That gift was the only perfect gift ever given in all of time! **I John 5:9-12** describes that

first Christmas Gift this way: **“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: That God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”**

God the Father’s perfect gift to us in His Son Jesus Christ is the gift of **eternal life**. It was intensely **personal**,... as it must be received individually by every believer! It is desperately **needed**... because every human being is a sinner by natural birth and is separated from a God who is perfectly Holy! It is a gift that once received, it is **cherished beyond any other possession in the world!**... And it is experienced every day, both now and forever, through eternity! **Eternal life in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is the only perfect gift ever given! It is the greatest statement of love ever made!**

It doesn’t matter when you believe the actual birth of Jesus took place on the calendar. **What matters is whether or not you**

**believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God!** And whether you have received Him as your **personal Savior**, by **repenting** of your sin and putting your **faith** in His death on the cross,... dying in **your** place,... for **your** sins! **The rest of the story... to the birth of Christ, is that He came to die!** The perfect gift that He was,... He lived a perfect life,... to offer God a perfect sacrifice for our sins,...that we might be reconciled to God!

Has God opened your heart to receive the very first Christmas Gift?! If He has,... then you know by the greater witness of God's own testimony that He gave **you**,... **personally**... the gift of His Son...the gift of eternal life.

If you know otherwise,... that you have **not** believed **the testimony that God has given of His Son**, you have made Him a liar, and you do not yet have the Son and you do not have life!

Is the perfect gift, yet un-opened in your understanding of the Christmas story? Maybe you don't really know. Don't leave the question unanswered for another day. **Ask God to open your heart,...and give you eternal life this Christmas!**

**(Pray to God alone...directly, briefly and sincerely...as one who must give account for souls.)**