

# And So This Is Christmas . . .

Stephanie Wolfe

## Three Christmas Perspectives

This is Christmas – a season to **Endure**.

Cha-ching, cha-ching, go the cash registers, and down the drain go the bank balances. I can hear the voice of Scrooge in my head saying, “Ba-hum-bug!” Memories of Christmas past may not be good ones. Financial pressures suffered all year long make Christmas an almost unbearable time. It’s just a reminder of what you DON’T have, and what you CAN’T afford, and where you WON’T be going again this year.

Many people play Family Feud this time of year, and I don’t mean the game! Emotion is high, and patience is low. Too many cooks in the kitchen, too many men on the couch; too many kids screaming, too many bills coming in, too many names still on our gift list, and too many events to cram on our already exploding schedule! If I can just hold on a few more days, it’ll all be over. It’s the season to endure.

This is Christmas – a season to **Enjoy!**

The cash registers are still ringing, but so are the church bells! I can hear the voice of Bob Kratchet saying a delightful “Merry Christmas!” He’s thankful for his life, his health, and his family. After all, is there anything else more important? There are gifts to receive, relatives to visit, decorations to put up, cards to send, parties and musicals to attend, cookies to bake, Christmas carols to sing, and memories to be made.

Family Feud or not, getting together this time of year brings out the best in most people. (If you are looking for the best, that is!) If we take this season for granted, we waste some valuable opportunities to communicate our love by sending cards, gift giving, baking for neighbors, and attending your niece’s Christmas performance. Yes, it’s the season to enjoy!

It’s the Season with a **Reason!**

I can hear the sound of church choirs singing, “Christ the Savior is born”. Christ’s focus was others. Christmas is the celebration of His birth, and He came as a gift for others, what better time of year for us to focus on others? Christmas is a season with a meaningful reason, so let’s not miss it.

Sure I get enjoyment out of watching my loved ones open the gifts we *give*, but like many gifts they will end up in a garage sale or pile for Goodwill so, I try to keep this in perspective. I enjoy keeping my eyes open for opportunities to bless someone less fortunate, and making their season special because they encounter someone who cares. But I must say my most favorite thing of all is the recounting of The Christmas Story – The Greatest Gift of all - Jesus Christ.

Here’s what I know about gifts.

- ◆ Gifts are not valuable because of how much they cost.
- ◆ The best Christmases aren’t those where we get everything we want.
- ◆ Gifts should not be numbered, or compared. The 3 Wise Men brought Gold, Frankincense,

and Myrrh – *presents*. But the Shepherds offered – *presence* too, and the Savior of the world was blessed by both gifts.

- ◆ With gifts, it really is “the thought that counts.” The most precious gifts are meaningful expressions of love.
- ◆ We should not focus on what we *get*, or on what we *spend*, but on what we *GIVE*. We should look at gifts like apple trees - apple trees don’t grow apples for their own consumption. They grow apples for the consumption of OTHERS!

Gifts come in all sizes, shapes and packages. Gifts come through the mail, through hands, and through stores. They come with bows, they come with ribbons, and today they often come in decorative bags. They come on Christmas Eve or they come on Christmas morning. They come under the tree, or in a stocking, and in some wealthy families they drive up to the house! Gifts are usually assets, possessions, or property, but the greatest gifts of all are none of those; the greatest gifts of all cannot be held in your hand, or touched with your fingers, or even seen with your eyes. They really do not cost us anything. Well, not money anyway; maybe time, or energy, or effort. The cost could have been paid years ago through life experiences which have matured us and given us more gifts to offer our fellow man. No, the greatest gifts cannot be bought from a department store, mall, or mail order catalog. For the greatest gifts of all are those we give from our hearts. These are gifts of the greatest value!

**One-Size-Fits-All Gifts to give this Christmas (and throughout the year)!**

1. Appreciation (Praise)-communicating personal gratefulness with words and feelings  
1 Cor. 11:2
2. Approval- expressed commendation; thinking and speaking well of  
Rom. 14:18
3. Affection- communicating care and closeness through physical touch and loving words  
Rom . 16:16
4. Encouragement- urging forward and positively persuading toward a goal  
1 Thes. 5:11; Heb. 10:24
5. Acceptance- deliberate and ready reception with favorable positive response  
Rom. 15:7
6. Attention (care)-taking thought of another and conveying appropriate interest and support  
Acts 27:3
7. Comfort- to come alongside with word, feeling & touch; give consolation with tenderness  
Rom .12:15
8. Respect (honor)-valuing and regarding highly; conveying great worth  
Rom. 12:10
9. Security (peace)-confidence of harmony in relationships; freedom from harm  
2 Thes. 3:16
10. Support- come alongside and gently help carry a load  
Gal. 6:2

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year,  
Stephanie