

The Greatest Gift You Can Give Is A Positive Attitude

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The annual children's Christmas program was ending. The shepherds coaxed their sheep toward the door. The wise men marched royally toward the exit. The angels came down from their lofty perches.

Only Mary and Joseph were left. Joseph turned to go, but Mary lingered at the manger. Finally, she, too, began to walk away. The couple was nearly off the stage when suddenly Mary remembered. The Baby! She had left the doll baby in the manger. Instantly she spun around and returned to the center of the stage. Tenderly she lifted the doll into her arms, covered it with a little blanket, and rejoined Joseph as they exited together. The congregation chuckled at the thought of forgetting the baby in the manger.

Some persons would like to forget the Christ Child at this time of the year. For them, Christmas brings sadness and regrets, not joy and laughter. Maybe it's because a loved one passed away near the time of the Christmas holidays. Perhaps it's because Christmas was once a time of family joy but now the actions of an ex-spouse have destroyed the family and robbed the joy.

For others, Christmas is a reminder that they were never able to have children of their own to shower with gifts and love. Or maybe Christmas seems sad because the rest of the family will be celebrating far away without them.

Those who would rather not face Christmas have a choice. They can go through the rest of December pretending not to see the decorations nor hear the joyful music, or they can choose to see beyond their pain and catch a glimpse of the true reason for the season. It won't necessarily be easy. The layers of hurt and resentment may be nearly impenetrable.

But God specializes in doing the impossible. When the Virgin Mary wondered how she could bear a child, the angel said, "*Nothing is impossible with God*" (Luke 1:37).

Persons who allow hurts to ruin their lives get hurt twice. Once by the original circumstances, and then again by allowing it to eat at them like a cancer, destroying what remains of their lives.

While people often cannot avoid being hurt, they can choose not to allow the pain to cause them to shrivel up emotionally. They can go through December in misery, or they can choose to begin a healing process.

One of the greatest gifts we can give this Christmas is the gift of a positive attitude. It's a gift that will not only be gladly received by those around us; it's a gift that will bless us, the givers, as well.

Four kindergarten children at one church's annual Christmas program held large cut out letters to spell out the word "star". However, the little angels took their places in reverse. Instead of "star" they spelled "rats".

That's what this time of year becomes if we dwell in our hurts instead of following the star of Christmas to the love and forgiveness that Jesus brought to this troubled world.

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