

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Missouri Right to Life – Western Region

Life is a Gift

On my ninth or tenth birthday, I walked into my house after school and noticed my parents and two older brothers just standing around and looking at me with a strange expression of expectation. Confused and a little wary of this reception, I fled to my bedroom and closed the door. There I found that my old bedroom furniture had been replaced by a white canopy bed and a matching set fit for a princess. Meanwhile my family is standing outside my door with a tape recorder and microphone to catch my reaction. Dead silence. When they came in to see what happened, they found me in my closet sucking my thumb. (I know what you're thinking...strange must run in the family. You wouldn't be wrong, but we prefer to refer to ourselves as quirky.) The truth is, I loved my birthday present, but I was rendered speechless to the point of embarrassment that I was deemed worthy enough to receive such a gift and loved enough to be blessed so extravagantly.

Yet isn't this a mere reflection of what Christ does for His children? Matthew 7:9-11 reads, "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?" As much as I love to give gifts, I could never outgive God. A two-minute search of Scripture shows us that God gives us many things: ability, breath, delight, encouragement, endurance, food, freedom, grace, happiness, His Son, the Holy Spirit, knowledge, light, love, peace, possessions, power, rain, rest, self-discipline, sight, songs, strength, tasks, understanding, victory, wealth, wisdom, and LIFE (without

which, nothing else matters). This is by no means an exhaustive list, and it is not just about *what* he gives, but *how*. Christ came not just to give us life, but to give us an **abundant** life (see John 10:10). He is not only a generous giver, but an intentional, intuitive, and consistent one (see James 1:17).

So what is the point of this every-day-is-Christmas existence we have with God? Is it to bring us joy? Is it to fill us with his goodness? Well, yes, actually. “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 1:14). However, God does not want us to simply sit back, soak up the love, and get fat on his blessings. He desires that his goodness translates into our holiness. He fills us to overflowing so that we can overflow toward others. He lavishes us with his gifts so that we can be a good gift to those around us! (see 2 Corinthians 9:8-9). In short, he wants to bless our lives so that our lives can be a blessing.

If we are being honest, though, how many of us feel less like a spiritually-equipped saint and more like my ten-year-old self who ran into a closet because she was too embarrassed to embrace a gift so lovingly given? How many of us do not feel worthy of the gifts that God desires to shower upon us, much less offer our lives as a gift to others? On my own spiritual life journey, I have found that the only true Source of validation is through Jesus Christ. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us, with all wisdom and understanding” (Ephesians 1:7-8). His acceptance of us is so pure, intense, unconditional, and beautiful that we must avert our eyes because we feel so damaged, dirty, and unworthy. But He longs to give us back our beauty! Not because we deserve it, but because that is what we were created for. He wants to take us back to that imprint of humanity at conception that shows we are made in the image of God. It is this inheritance that equips us. When we allow the gifts of God to radiate through us, we become beautiful gifts that glorify God. Gifts that shine like a Christmas star leading others to Christ and the life he longs to give us.

During this season of Christmas, and throughout the year, may we experience a fresh heart of wonder and awe at God’s unfathomable gift of life and the gift of his son sent as a child to redeem us. May we never lose sight of Christ’s sacrificial gift of love on the cross so that we could also become heirs with Jesus. “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (I John 3:1).

Partnering with Your for Life,
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