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In Search of the Perfect Gift

It's Christmas time. Time to buy gifts for those I love. So I've been thinking about gifts and gift-giving. I am thinking about those on my list and wishing to find the perfect gift for them.

As I think back over my years, a few "perfect" gifts stand out in my mind. I remember the year my parents gave me a birthstone ring shaped like a heart with the word love on it.

I think of one year when Eddie and I were living in Mississippi. There was a big snow and ice was on the roads, but I so wanted to go home for Christmas. That classic old song Home for Christmas haunted me. *"I'll be home for Christmas, you can count on me..."* We drove from Mississippi back to north Alabama on a sheet of ice, but I had to be home! Now that was a gift of love from my husband. Needless to say, we were much younger then and maybe not as wise, but I got home for Christmas!

I remember the year my husband hid a beautiful ring in a pair of gloves. I was so discouraged over getting a pair of gloves and trying not to show it. I put the gloves aside for I had gotten more than one pair that year. Eddie kept insisting I try them on. In truth, I didn't want to take the tags off to try them on because I was planning on taking them back asap. When I finally consented and place my hands in the gloves, there was my ring inside the ring finger of the gloves.

I also remember times when gifts made me feel unloved or misunderstood. And I remember some gifts that were just a way to X me off someone's list of obligations. Like dishtowels. Please don't give me dishtowels. I mean, why do women get the gifts that have to do with cleaning the house and cooking meals? I don't mean to be ungrateful, but for me in order for a gift to be special, it needs to say you care, you know me. It doesn't need to be expensive, but it needs to show someone cares.

I remember some Christmases that were really hard. Gifts really didn't matter those years because the pain overshadowed everything else.

Gifts show love when they speak with understanding of our hearts. When they say, I know you and wanted to do something special for you.

When God sent his son as a sacrifice for us, his gift said he knew us. He knew more about our hearts than we ourselves did. He knew the good parts and he knew the bad parts. And he gave Jesus because he loved us so much right in the midst of our sin and imperfections.

The gift of Jesus is the gift of relationship. It is the gift that says God wants to spend all his time with us. Forever. He enjoys us. He wants us to come to his parties; the here and now parties and the future parties. Oh yes, God loves a good party; check out the story of the prodigal son.

You know, I love to give people expensive gifts. I always wish I could give those I love something they would never buy for themselves or that they were not able to buy for themselves. I can't always do that, but when God gave Jesus, he gave the most expensive gift ever. He gave the gift we could never purchase ourselves. Jesus is a priceless gift; a gift which cannot be duplicated; a one of a kind gift.

Sometimes I have difficulty accepting an expensive gift. I feel as if I don't deserve it. I have to humble myself to accept it. In the same way, we have to humble ourselves to receive the gift of Jesus. We don't deserve him. When we accept his gift, we are indebted by love to forever live in light of the gift.

So as I prepare for Christmas with all its gift giving and receiving, I know that God's gifts are the most beautiful and loving of all and I hope I will be able to give gifts this year that can somehow reflect God's heart.

For after all, perfect gifts aren't really things which can be bought. They are gifts of presence. Gifts of time. Gifts of intimacy. Gifts of celebration. Gifts born of relationship.

And Jesus is the perfect gift. Expensive for God to give. Humbling for me to receive. He is the gift I can continue to give to all those whom my life touches. He is the gift of time and intimacy and celebration and relationship, and the gift that always meets my needs and fulfills my deepest desires.

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