

DAY 33

IT IS BETTER TO GIVE
THAN RECEIVE
ACTS 20:35

Which is really better: to give or to receive?

I'll be honest with you; when I was younger I thought it was much better to get things than to give them. At Christmas, I loved getting things and really didn't care what others got. But now, in my old age, my thinking has changed. Now I get much more satisfaction in giving a gift than in receiving one. When I buy a gift for someone I truly care about, it's so hard to keep it a secret!

My wife and I got married in 2004 and in December of that year we moved away from Wisconsin to Missouri, leaving many friends we had met in college. In Missouri we had no real friends and we were both several hundred miles away from our families. Although we were far from family, I still remembered the traditions my family had around holidays. In our family, we stayed up late on Christmas Eve and opened gifts after my dad got home from all of the Christmas Eve services. Because he was pastor of a large church, there were multiple worship services and the last one didn't start until 11PM, so dad didn't get home until about one in the morning. Then we would open presents! I loved and cherished those moments.

So that Christmas in Missouri I bought my wife a pair of shoes I knew she really wanted and she bought me a golf club that I really wanted. We were both so excited to give each other the gifts we bought. And since we

weren't constricted to our old traditions anymore, we decided we couldn't wait any longer, and our first Christmas together we opened our gifts for each other on December 11th! The next year we did a little better; we made it until December 13th. Now we have kids and have to be responsible adults, so we're back to a normal Christmas Eve gift opening!

But here's the point in all of this: when you have a good gift for someone you care about, you can't wait to give it away.

Jordan Grafman actually asked the question,

"Is it better to give or to receive?" According to an article on Sharpbrains.com, "He asked nineteen fit volunteers to participate in a computer game while having their brains scanned by an fMRI. An fMRI is a machine that scans the brain that measures increased blood flow to the different blood vessels that accompany brain usage. And through scanning the brain, they were actually able to tell in this game whether people got more excited about giving or receiving a gift. The way the game was played was it gave out cash rewards for doing well and offered the contestants a chance to either receive the reward or to donate and to give the reward to someone else. The team of scientists found that giving a present to another being actually feels better than receiving a gift from one."⁴⁰

We have all been given the most amazing gift in the entire world by receiving the grace of Jesus Christ in our life. As amazing as it is to receive this gift, it is even better when we can give that gift to others. Any time I've

ever gotten a gift I really like, I love to tell others about it. I'm sure you are the same way, too, yet so often we fail to give people this greatest gift!

The best thing you can do with a good gift is rip it open, enjoy it, and share it with others. I hope you think about this for your life. Are you sharing the greatest gift you've ever been given with someone else right now? If not, why not? If you are, isn't it amazing?



THE BEST THING
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#REDLETTERCHALLENGE

The churches in Macedonia were excited to give even in the midst of their poverty. Pay special attention to the last verse; this is where all of our generosity stems from.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-10

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.



GIVE A GREAT GIFT TO A WORTHY PERSON OR CHARITY TODAY!

Eight horizontal lines for writing.

33/40

