

## What Did You Get for Christmas?

What did you get for Christmas? I am sure that this will be the most frequently asked question throughout much of our world today. How did you respond when you were asked about what you got for Christmas? Did you spout off a list of items and never once mention that you received the greatest gift of all-God's son? Many children will respond with lists and lists of items from new bikes, computers, Web Kinz, ipods, dolls, clothes, games... Some will have received so much that they can't even remember what they have gotten. Others will have received gifts which must be assembled or need batteries. In some instances high tech gifts were received. These gifts may never be used or not used to their fullest capacity. In certain cases the efforts of the giver will not be appreciated. Sadly some children will feel that they did not receive anything. Still, many may have gifts which they haven't even opened yet. Maybe you are like me and somehow haven't even claimed all of your gifts.

Earlier this month as I was reading the evening paper I learned that I qualified for a gift certificate from Macy's since I was named "Virginia." This was part of their one day National Believe Celebration. Unfortunately, it was too late to return to the mall to claim the gift. My mother is also named "Virginia", but she did not even know of the opportunity for a gift. In all honesty I have been very busy and have let other one week shopping passes expire as well. My intentions were good and I am normally very frugal with money.

Actually the gift cards aren't the only thing with which I have not taken full advantage. Some weeks my gym membership could be more fully utilized. I do not use many of the functions on my cell phone. I only use my computer for e-mail, the internet, and a very old version of Word Perfect. My computer has all sorts of capabilities such as CD burning, graphics, and other software which I never tap into.

I wonder how many of us even begin to fully tap into the gift of Christ. Maybe like me for many years you accepted Jesus as merely a baby in a manger. I did not see him in his fullness and certainly did not have a relationship with him. He was just an insurance policy to protect me from hell in case I happened to die. I was baptized, took communion, attended church, and tried not to do too many bad things. That was the extent of it. I thought all was well. How could I have been so wrong?

Today I more fully recognize the gift of Christ. He is my savior, my provider, my friend, my protector, my strength, my healer and so much more. I willingly heed the directives he has placed on my heart. I have learned that I must stay plugged in to him through prayer, Bible reading, and fellowship if I want a good connection and want to more fully utilize the gifts which he freely gives. It is up to me to accept them and to protect them. His gifts are of little value to me if I leave them under the tree wrapped or leave them wadded up on the floor like an unappreciated Christmas sweater.

How many of us have not redeemed the free gifts which Jesus offers? He offers access to many gifts- not just salvation. Many of His gifts are for today and not on lay away for eternity. How ironic that throughout our lives the most precious gifts have come and will come from blood, sweat, and tears.

Sadly many do not take advantage of the gift of Christ for one reason or the other. Acceptance of Him and his gifts is put off until it is sometimes too late. Fortunately His gifts are for everyone, not just those of us fortunate enough to be named "Virginia." He accepts us just as we are and gives us the gift of eternal life and access to the throne, but we must accept the gift. It is then up to us to apply the "applications" for greater benefits.