

Unexpected Gifts

by Cathy Batson

This time of advent is doing something special for me because it's reminding me that there are many, many gifts, including those I have not always looked on as gifts.

For example, when I give a lot of my time at work, I'm looking at it differently now, seeing it at least sometimes as a gift. When I'm heading out the door and someone says, can I talk to you for a minute? I think, Oh Geez. But then I put my bag down and I look at that as a gift because, for one thing, it's just for a moment, and it can change the way somebody thinks or feels or behaves after that conversation. And it can change me, too.

It happened just the other day when I had been at work for almost 12 hours. I had my bag on my arm, actually it was two bags, and an old client of mine stopped me, as I was rushing out the door thinking about the four-day break I would have. She stopped me, and she was in a real crisis. And so, I put my bags down and, and talked to her. I ended up spending an extra hour, but it was good because it was a gift.



It was a gift for me and a gift from me. You know, it not only slowed me down, but it took me out of myself. I'm learning that there are gifts all over the place, a reality I have not recognized before. I don't remember how or when I identified them as gifts, having so often seen them only as burdens, taking more time than I have to give—but surely not gifts.

Now, those situations don't feel so heavy. They don't feel so burdensome.

There is another gift. I'm nearing retirement, so I have days when I say to myself, are you really ready? But I realize the gift is that I absolutely am ready.

Due to the Pandemic and travel restrictions, this is my first Christmas without

being with my biological family. That is not easy, but the gift is in meeting, being with, my chosen family, my church family and others.

And the gift is that my wife and I can sit together and enjoy the day. We're not doing a lot of hustling and bustling. We're just sitting and basking in the gift of each other. That is an enormous gift.

I'm grateful, I'm grateful in many ways for new and unexpected gifts. Thank you, God!