

What Would You Like for Christmas?

by Jacqueline Laughlin

As 2020 has been a year like no other in my lifetime, I find myself not looking forward to Christmas. Whatever joy or anticipation there might be around celebrations, meeting up and visiting with family or even eating good food is clouded by dread or fears or just plain worry about the uncertainty of what could possibly be next.

I don't like Christmas shopping at all, but I love giving gifts. That involves selecting what a person might want (or worse, what I think they might need), wrapping the gift, surprising them, delivering and watching them open it.

And perhaps watching their expression . . . hoping for pleasure and delight. But it can get complicated, so also hoping, wishing I didn't get the wrong size, wrong color, wrong thing, scanning their face for the slightest bit of disappointment or displeasure. In a nanosecond, I can imagine them regifting, trashing, or wondering what in the world possessed me to think that they might want that item.



I have even heard friends say out loud (or in my mind), “Jeez. Now that you have given me something I have to give you something back.” There is often the angst that gifts seem to imply an equal exchange. Sometimes the simple reciprocity of being grateful, of saying thank you, is not enough.

Given the state of things, this year may involve little or no in person gift giving, gathering or or familiar rituals. So. . . can we just skip Christmas this year, especially the gift part and just imagine it never really happened?

Or, this year, you might try this three point cheerful giving plan. It must be completed before baby Jesus is born on December 25th.

First

Give yourself a gift. Indulge your wildest passion, the thing or activity that makes you giggle with joy.

Second

Give a gift to someone you know or better yet you don't know who absolutely doesn't deserve it or even need it. Just give it because it makes you happy, might be fun, or because you can and have never done anything like that before. No strings attached. It makes you laugh when you think of them wondering ...

Third

Make a wish list. The desires of your heart. Write it down on a piece of paper. Smile when you imagine what it would be like. Tell no one except baby Jesus. Put the paper away in a special place.

I pray you feel the joy known to a cheerful giver. This indeed will be a Christmas like no other!

You must give according to what you have inwardly received—not sadly, not reluctantly, for God loves a giver who gives cheerfully. There are no limits to the grace of God, who will make sure you will always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works. (2 Corinthians 9:7-8, The Inclusive Bible)