

12.14.2019

## 12 GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

### How to be a Better Man

I recently Googled the best gifts to give a man in today's world. Several prestigious websites such as Esquire, Good Housekeeping, Business Insider and Uncommon Goods each had plenty of lists of suggestions. For example: 54, 23, 107, 82 and even over 140+ gift suggestions for a man.



They all said something to the effect no matter what their particular interests and hobbies are, these lists had the answer. In fact, the man you might be thinking of getting a gift for, has probably already gone out or about ready to go purchase that briefcase, whiskey glass set, gaming system, touchscreen, smart watch or killer sneakers.

I dug deep into the various lists but nowhere could I find anything about becoming a better listener, learning to forgive, bringing happiness to another or that elusive gift of Wisdom. The concept of Empathy for another was incredibly ABSENT! Nowhere in those lists was anything said about our need to prepare a place in our hearts for the Christ Child. Nothing was said about how important it was for us to NOT miss, let alone recognize the time of the physical visitation of God on Earth.

**"You will be showered with many more lasting and life-giving gifts when you bend your will to God's."**

St. Hilary Men's Group

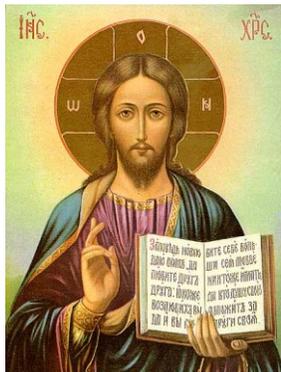
These lists said nothing about how important it is to know God and bend our will to His, thus allowing His Spirit to reside in our hearts. These lists specify that we would become Better Men if we only had in hand the physical products they hype.

Not one of these lists said anything about Joy, Carrying a Cross or the best indicator of becoming a Better Man...living a life filled with Grace. For when we do truly become a Better Man, undeniably, it is the goodness of God abiding in us that makes us likable and able to touch others in a positive, if not holy manner. This in turn allows for a change of heart to take place in those lives that we touch.

When we take a moment to give away a sample of Jesus, that goodness that abides in us, we Bless another's life.

What happens to our lives when we make a shift in our attitude and admit that Jesus is our Savior and invite Him into our heart of hearts? Let us listen attentively to the wisdom found in Holy Scripture, our Catechism and in Modern Comment.





### Luke 19:41-46 – The Lament for Jerusalem

As Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

For the days are coming upon you when your enemies will raise a palisade against you; they will encircle you and hem you in on all sides.

They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

Then Jesus entered the temple area and proceeded to drive out those who were selling things, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.’”

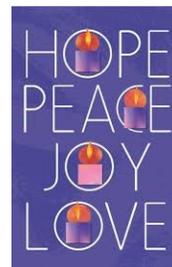
The Word of the Lord

### Catechism

#### 526 - The Mystery of Christmas

To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above" or "born of God". Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us. Christmas is the mystery of this "marvelous exchange":

O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.



### Modern Comment 12 Gifts for Christmas

David Eich

1. **Happiness in this world is not the goal...**you can spend “eternity” trying to figure out how to be happy during the Christmas season, or do what it takes to achieve eternal happiness.
2. **Everyone has a “spiritual” clock, but only God knows what time it is...**the prisoner on death row, the grandparents with no visitors, the homeless, and the spouse with no one to love, experience two emotions during Christmas: loneliness and time.
3. **Do not miss the time of your visitation...**each person you encounter this Christmas season, stranger or otherwise, may be on an assignment only God understands; therefore, be slow to judge their intentions and quick to accept their reality.

4. **“There, but for the grace of God, go I”...during this Christmas season you will have opportunities to share blessings with others less fortunate; or take for granted all that you have been given: choose wisely.**
5. **Pay attention and focus or be the focus of unwanted attention...**though Christmas temptations come and go, God's gift of freedom guarantees everyone an opportunity to choose whatever behavior they wish. He wouldn't have it any other way, especially during those times we honor Jesus.
6. **Spiritual homelessness will guarantee a reservation in Gethsemane...**for those who choose to complain during the Christmas season about the cross they carry; refuse to help others carry their cross; or continue to condemn troubled souls for the evil they commit, there is work to be done.
7. **Wisdom sometimes hides itself in another's decision to abandon what you thought was important...**the minimalism movement seems to have attracted the interest of those searching for a way to “de-clutter” their lives. Perhaps your Christmas shopping list should be motivated by the words: “Don't buy what you don't need and don't keep what you will not use.”
8. **Christmas joy is one feeling you experience when you find something you never knew you missed...**the key is having the wisdom to both recognize and live the experience.
9. **Prayer during the Christmas season begins with silence, elevates to humility, and ends with a request, “thank you,” or promise to do better...**this gift is God's invitation to engage Him in a private conversation.
10. **Never assume that little or no response means someone isn't listening...**sooner or later everyone has a Christmas epiphany. The trick is to discern why and what you are going to do about it.
11. **If happiness is your destination, forgiveness is your passport...**verbal recalls during family Christmas gatherings, like automotive recalls, are similar; both pay a price to fix a problem that should not have happened in the first place.
12. **The Christmas encounters you have, coupled with the choices you make, will define the memories you leave...**remember, the road to Christmas sorrow is littered by reputations of those whose freedom to love was clouded by poor vision and poor judgment.

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**Dear Jesus, let me become a Man more Pleasing to Thee. It is in this endeavor that I may be perfected and thus gain a place with the Communion of Saints in Heaven. May I be a Blessing to others. Amen.**

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**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Which of these 12 Gifts for Christmas do you most identify with? Especially in the past year? Can you recall an encounter you had during Christmas that parallels one of the 12?

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2. If you could pick one of these gifts as a New Year's Resolution, which one would you use?

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**Men's Group Calendar**

**A Man who never quits is Never Defeated.**



12/21/2019	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>1/11/2020</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
1/25/2020	Leadership Meeting	8 AM Sacred Heart Library
<b>2/8/2020</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>

**ACTION PLAN**

This week I will do my best to listen for God's will in my life by:

- Creating a daily prayer practice.
- Seeking God in prayer and being quiet in His presence.
- Paying more attention to God's Blessings in my life.
- Asking Jesus for help in becoming a better servant.
- Pleasing God by giving Christmas Blessings away willfully.



Lord, God and Savior, by your love you draw me to yourself. Forgive me – the sinner that I am, and fill me with every good thing, not withholding even the gift of your most beloved son. Come dwell in my heart.

Send forth your Holy Spirit to guide me in your path. Make me worthy of your love, and teach me how to forgive as you forgave.

Thank you for your tender mercies. I ask you to bless my family, friends and those who I meet in my comings and goings.

Where there is joy, give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them your peace and mercy. Where there is self-doubt, release in them a renewed confidence. Fill their every need with your Holy Grace.

You are indeed my Lord, God and Savior. Amen

For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.  
Matthew 18:20

May God Bless You.  
St. Hilary Men's Group

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**“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High”**

**Luke 1:30-32**

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## **TODAY IS CHRISTMAS DAY.**

WE HAVE A CHOICE.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS BY WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED...OR BY WHAT WE HAVE GIVEN.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT...OR ACCRUE SPIRITUAL WEALTH BY SERVING OTHERS.

WE CAN CHOOSE STRIFE AND CHAOS...OR PEACE AND HARMONY.

WE CAN CHOOSE CONDEMNATION...OR FORGIVENESS.

WE CAN CHOOSE WHAT WE WANT...OR WHAT SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS.

WE CAN CHOOSE COMPLACENCY...OR THE COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS.

WE CAN CHOOSE BETRAYAL...OR FIDELITY TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO FIND FAULT...OR COMMON GROUND.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO CLOSE OUR MINDS...OR OPEN OUR HEARTS.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO SPREAD A RUMOR...OR SPREAD GOODWILL.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR STATION IN LIFE...OR THANK GOD FOR WHAT WE HAVE.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO SAY WE'RE TOO BUSY...OR MAKE TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO BLAME OTHERS...OR ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND FAILED TO DO.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO WORRY ABOUT OUR FUTURE...OR HELP OTHERS REACH THEIRS.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO TAKE FOR GRANTED OUR HEALTH, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY, FORTUNES OR FREEDOM...OR WE CAN REMEMBER THAT...

## **TODAY IS CHRISTMAS DAY.**