

Is It Really the Thought That Counts?

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“Just remember, it’s the thought that counts.” Those are probably the worst words that any child could ever hear as he or she opens a gift. It usually means that it will be some small token gift that the child has little or no interest in receiving. Often times, it is a relative who wants to send something for the child but either does not know what to send, or has little financial resources for sending very much.

I can remember more than once opening a gift from a relative of mine and hearing my mother tell me to remember that it is the thought that counts. I remember not being very happy with the gift. As a child, it is very difficult to get beyond the gift and truly examine the motive of the individual. Even as an adult, it is sometimes hard for me to do.

It seems to me that the gift is a reflection of the thought. There is nothing wrong with getting a nice item when it is on sale. That is simply being a good steward of your money. But there are times that we spend as little as possible trying to simply give a token gift when we would really spend nothing at all.

I know when I buy a gift for my wife I am very willing to spend any amount I have to purchase something that I know will bring her joy. On the other hand, I am not as willing to be very extravagant on some of my nieces and nephews. I know that they will be grateful to receive something from me, but they will tend to notice more the gift than the motive. In fact, the closer our relationship is with someone, the easier it is to judge their motive. We know their likes and dislikes and tend to give them something we know they would appreciate.

Family members that I only see three or four times a year, I don’t know as well. I find myself going to other family members and asking for suggestions. On the other hand, I usually know what to give my wife, sons, their wives, and my brother and sisters. My parents are fairly easy to shop for, too. I know them all better and I can more easily give them something they will appreciate.

When we celebrate Christmas, we remember the gifts the Magi brought to the Christ child. They were costly gifts, but also representative of the ministry he would perform as the Messiah. Their gifts represented a great deal of thought, but were also very expensive. In other words, they gave in a way that reflected how much they thought of him. This is not to say that we must spend a great deal on a gift, but we are more willing to give a comparatively expensive gift when we judge that person to be worthy of it.

When it comes to giving costly gifts, think of what God gave us. When He sent His own son, He knew that it would eventually cost Jesus his life. Yet, He felt we were dear enough to Him that He was willing to pay such a high price for us to have eternal life. In God’s case, the gift was a direct reflection of the thought. Does your gift to God indicate what you think of Him?

The next time you give a gift, think about what you are saying to that person. Make sure each item you give really says what you want to convey.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a safe holiday season. Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.