

Giving and Receiving

By Joe Chester

"What are you getting for Christmas?" "What do you want for Christmas?"

How many times have you heard these questions lately? Christmas shopping is in full swing.

For the next week many gifts will be given and received. Which do you enjoy the most - giving or receiving? Unfortunately, for many people, the truthful answer to that question conflicts with the answer they know they should give. Honestly, receiving gifts, especially the one(s) we've always wanted, brings a lot of pleasure and happiness. But there's no honor in receiving gifts (however, there can be dishonor in the way we act when we don't get the gifts we'd hoped for).

Several years ago, Calvin Coolidge, our 30th president, said, "No person has ever been honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave." Can you think of an award or honor given to someone that received the greatest or most gifts? There may be, but nothing comes to my mind. On the other hand, there are numerous honors and rewards for those who excel at giving to an individual. Oscars and Emmys are given to the person who contributed the most to the music and entertainment industry. Athletics have their Most Valuable Player awards. Universities, governments, and even zoos have buildings named after major contributors.

This probably doesn't surprise you at all. No doubt you have heard many times the statement of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The best known verse in the Bible honors God for what He gave, not for what He received (John 3:16). What does surprise many people is that when God honors giving, it has nothing to do with the amount of the gift. Generation after generation honors the poor widow who, even though it wasn't much, gave all she had (Luke 21:2). The Macedonians are also esteemed for their giving, even though poverty stricken themselves (2 Cor. 8:1-5). In contrast, very little is said about those receiving the gifts. What do you know about the poor saints in Jerusalem other than they were famine stricken and very poor? About the only thing we know about how to receive gifts is to do so with gratitude and in a way that glorifies God. Perhaps we need to work a little harder at becoming a generous giver, and spend less time hoping and dreaming about all the things we might receive. That's hard to do, especially at this time of the year, but by doing so, we will become a little bit more like the God we love and serve. Givers truly are more blessed than receivers.

- Bulletin Digest.com (via Dewey Avenue Church of Christ, St. Marys, WV) -

When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed. - Maya Angelou

News & Notes

SYMPATHY: To **Mickie Barrett** at the recent passing of her brother, Timothy McGurran, Sr. and to **Ed Wiersbicki** at the passing of his brother, George. God bless and comfort these families in their sorrow.

PANTRY: Oatmeal and applesauce.

NOTICE TIME CHANGE FOR EVENING SERVICES:
Sunday, Dec. 24th (Christmas Eve) **2:00 p.m.**
Sunday, Dec. 31st (New Year's Eve) **2:00 p.m.**
NO Fellowship Meal either Sunday

NEW YEAR'S DAY BREAKFAST: **Jan. 1st, 9:00 a.m.** at the Fellowship Building. Our Brothers will be cooking & serving. Plan to start the New Year in fellowship with your church family. Sign-up sheet in the foyer.

MALAWI PROJECT: Give voluntary monetary donations to purchase items to make the Birthing Kits to MaClay Toomey. Donate cash or checks made out to the church.

SICK & SHUT-IN: Continuing Health Care of Lisbon: Dean Spencer, 100 Vista Drive, Lisbon, OH 44432. **At Home:** Peggy Linger, Glenn McMahan, Gary & Marlene Evans, Claudette Miller, Melissa Rosohac, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, David Strum, Cheryl Renfro Walker. **Fox-Chester:** Mary Johnson (Lois Hissom's sister). **In Ohio:** Herman McHan, 7401 Elmwood Drive, Lisbon, OH 44432.

The Intelligence of the Intelligent

There is an urban legend about a group of famous scientists who stopped for lunch at a small-town diner. Seated at the table were six of the greatest thinkers of our day. Their average IQ was in the 160s.

They noticed that their salt and pepper shakers had been reversed. One with the S on top was filled with pepper. The other with the P on top was filled with salt. So, they concocted an elaborate plan to switch the contents without spilling them. It involved a napkin, a straw and a saucer.

Proud of their solution, they presented it to the waitress. "That is an interesting scheme," she said. "Of course, we could do this." Whereupon she simply unscrewed both shakers and switched the tops.

The Bible asks an important question: "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Corinthians 1:20b). To a Being as wise as our Lord, we must seem like little children to Him. We develop our theories and axioms and syllogisms, but to Him it's just child's play. So, the truly wise one is the one who accepts God, and His Word, by faith.

- Larry Fitzgerald, Bulletin Digest -