The Best Gifts -- Ever

First, the background.

Have you ever *really* wanted a certain thing – hoped someone would give you that special gift?

Perhaps, as a kid, there was a toy you badly wanted.

Then you got it.

Do you remember how you felt about it a month later -- was it still exciting and important?

Generally, no; that excitement doesn't last.

Gifts often have a limited, temporary impact. Then, we begin to want something *else*, and start hoping to get that new thing.

Why are we so hard to please?

The Bible explains why:
"God has placed eternity in our hearts."
(Ecclesiastes 3:11).

What does this mean?

It means that we automatically expect to live forever (we can't imagine being dead), and we *long for* perfection in all things! (Have you ever noticed how you notice things that could be better than they are – how they don't "meet our standards?")

Until we're 100% certain that we *will* exist forever, for all eternity, in a perfect world, we get frustrated, and try to fill life with *things*, *activities*, *power*, *money*, *fame*, *or people*, that will satisfy that God-placed craving that we all carry inside us.

But none of these can satisfy us, forever. It's only when we have God in our heart and life that we can be content in any demanding situation encountered in life.

We all have problems – or if not right now, just wait! Jesus said, "In this world, you *will* have problems, yet be of good cheer…"

Problems stretch and grow us, make us turn to others for help, and more. God uses problems for reasons we may not understand, but he has a purpose which points to – *wait for it* – eternity!

Eternity in our heart and spirit is *the gift that lasts* – enabling us to get through daily challenges because we know that a far longer, eternal satisfaction is coming.

So, how can anyone get that satisfying eternity in our spirit?

Unlike *stuff*, eternity in paradise is *free*! It's a gift offered by Jesus, who died, to offer us the gift of eternity:

> ***"The wages of sin is hell, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus."*** *(Romans 6:23)*

Something is a *gift* only if it's *accepted*.
If someone buys you a gift, but you refuse it, don't use it, or regift it, it's *not* a gift; it's a *purchase* which someone *sacrificed* to buy, which *you chose to reject*.

Jesus *sacrificed*, by dying on the cross, to *purchase* eternal life for each of us.

We each personally choose to accept or reject this gift. And, if we choose to not think about it, that's choosing to reject God's gift of sacrifice!

How does anyone accept God's gift?
Simply by sincerely admitting to God that we sin, can't erase it, can never be "good enough" to earn our way into heaven, and by humbling accepting that He, Christ, paid for 100% of my sin, and rose from the grave, proving that he is God.



There are no required rituals, you need not be in a church or with a priest or pastor. It's a conversation between you and God, and can happen even where you work or as you commute. All who do so, have the promise of eternity.

There's a second gift…

After accepting Christ's gift of payment, we get a wonderful Helper: *"the Holy Spirit helps us understand the things of God."* (1st Corinthians 2:12). He helps us to read and understand the Bible, and apply God's wisdom to life.



…and a third gift!

With the Spirit's help, we receive peace for all situations, gaining freedom from controlling emotions: *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* (2nd Cor 3:17)

Because God loves giving us good things, we receive many gifts of eternal value:

- Eternal life.
- Desire to know God and his word.
- The Holy Spirit's guidance.
- Peace knowing paradise is coming.
- Ability to be content.
- Growing trust in God for decisions.
- The loving companionship of God.

Ask Jesus to help you understand His sacrifice for you as Savior.
Ask Him for help in everyday things.
You can please God as you choose to tell Him about life's challenges and seek His guidance (it's called praying) – just like you want to be trusted and relied upon.

You can complain to Him. The Bible book *Lamentations* tells how to complain to God!)

Did you know….

Our calendar's creation is based on the birth of Jesus 2,025 years ago (even if no one knows the actual day).

Jesus's birthday – and 300 other things about Him - was predicted in scripture about 3,000 years ago, such as in Isaiah 7: *"A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, who will be known as 'God with us.'"*

God came to earth as a baby, grew into a man, and chose to die to pay for all our mistakes, sin, and disobedience – offering everyone the most incredible gift of all: eternal life with God.

May you feel God's love for you.

Merry Christmas and peaceful blessings, health, and safety, in your new year!



You matter…

The holiday season is busy.

Many are running around shopping, cooking, doing banking, attending events –

Meanwhile, YOU are working, helping others, faithfully doing an important job.

THANK YOU!

Your presence is a gift to others.

So, please know that amazing gifts are waiting for you…

