

Gifts Given/Gifts Received

Is a gift a gift if no one receives it? Seems like a dumb question but it has two implications:

1. Sometimes gifts get no further than good intentions.
2. Offering something is not the same as giving it.

Good Intentions

This holiday we may be reminded of many past Christmas seasons when we decided that “next year” we would do things differently.

- Get involved with people in need for more than the holiday.
- Simplify the schedule so people can be enjoyed.
- Be more aware of the reason and not just the occasion.

These good intentions are not given if we do not plan and carry them through. Of course we can always plan for next year.

Giving/Receiving

Perhaps we are unable to give [or receive] because we are unaware of others.

- Knowing and caring about others are essential to giving gifts that are received with joy.
- Being a joyful receiver means that we see the giver as more important than the gift.
- Gift giving and receiving should create a grateful attitude.

Meaningful gifts take great care, but should not cause us to be overly concerned. Gifts are tangible acts of love.

Reflections on Christ's teaching on Gifts

- *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.* John

14:27

- *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38*
- *...Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks find; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Luke 11:9-10*
- *...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40*

[Note: all scriptures are from the NIV translation of the Bible]

Before fretting over what to buy others or what to put on our wish list, maybe we should reflect on the heart of Christ when it comes to gift giving and receiving. It would change the tone of the season and maybe change the spirit of all who give and receive.

Dr. Bill Heston

bheston@fpchouston.org

Bill Heston works on the staff of First Presbyterian Church of Houston