

What Does God Want for Christmas

Text: Luke 2:13-14

Introduction: One Christmas when my sons were eight to ten years old I thought it's time for them to have bicycles. For the older son I bought a bike that was adult size because I knew he would grow taller. It took me hours to assemble the bikes and after they were asleep I snuck them into the house near the Christmas tree. On Christmas morning I could hardly wait for them to try out their new bikes. Using the curb to mount the bike and barely able to touch the pedals and with a little shove by dad my son started well. Bud in about twenty feet the bike began to waddled and weave. He crashed and cried. He vowed he wouldn't ride a bike again. The gift I gave had turned into a bad scene.

My wife and children enjoy reviewing my failures in giving Christmas gifts that none of them wanted. I'm sure you have had that experience. I believe that the busiest place in stores on December 28 is the return counter. If gift giving to humans is so difficult what about the struggle in knowing what to give to God? A being Who has everything. What does God want for Christmas?

THE ANGELS GOT IT RIGHT. Luke 2:14a

Give Him glory. The interpreting angel said that's what is needed in this event. Because the Father has sent His anointed one, the Christ, the Savior, v.13. After centuries it has come to pass.

TO GIVE GLORY IS A MAJOR THEME OF THE BIBLE

The prophet Isaiah after enumerating the low estate of Judah in her rebellion against the Lord explained why Yahweh had not already punished them. Is. 48:9-11 to deal harshly with His chosen people would bring into question His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. My reputation is at stake. Moses used this same argument when God's anger burned. We have a similar verse addressed to the believing community today. Let us look at II Timothy 2: 12-13. Verse twelve does not mean that we are not saved if we deny him, but in spite of our response he will keep his word, i.e. His promise. He is committed to Himself. His honor is at stake. Like Jonathan Edwards in the Great Awakening, and C.S. Lewis in this past century John Piper is calling us back to this life transforming truth of giving glory to God. The words of the Westminster Confession of Faith affirm this truth. It says that the end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. John Piper changes one word that brings this to a present reality. He suggests, "by enjoying Him forever." My friend, his favors toward us are not promoted by our preciousness, but His passion for glory.

WE HAVE BEEN WARNED (Acts 12:21-24)

Now let me take a few minutes to offer you a few baby steps in how to glorify God. Piper's best shot in defining the glory of God is helpful. He claims that the glory of God is the infinite beauty and greatness of his

manifold perfections.) That is what Paul meant when he said, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We don't measure up to the awesome beauty of his majesty and power. But I want to suggest some ways to give glory to God.

The college I attended had societies rather than fraternities. Some of them had Greek characters as names X, D, Theta, Phi, etc. but I chose Shakespeare Society. That choice had an unusual benefit for me. The motto verse was I Cor. 10:31, "so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." How does one give glory to God?

- **BY RECOGNIZING THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS I Tim 4:3-5:** One of the less obvious sins is leaving God out of the ordinary affairs of life.
- **BY LOVINGLY EATING. I Cor. 10:33, 11: 21**
- **BY DOING GOOD WORKS IN THE STRENGTH PROVIDED. Matthew 5:16, I Pet. 2:12 and 4:9-11**

Conclusion: When we reject Jesus we deny glorifying the Heavenly Father. John 12:27-28. When a person fails to obey the Gospel they rob God of his glory. Rom. 1:21-23 we have all fallen short of the glory of God. Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 13-14. When we discount the value of the church, we fail to engage ourselves in her activities and missions we reduce our potential to bring glory to God. Ephesians 3:20-21

I LIKE THE PRAYER OF JOHN PIPER. God, I love you. It would be to my greatest fulfillment, my highest pleasure, my richest treasure, my popcorn and my chocolate ice cream if at the end of this day I could believe that someone has come to cherish your power and wisdom and love you intensely because of me. God let it be. So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Let it be the filter through every small and large items pass through.

BENEDICTION: Rev. 5:11-13 and Romans 15:5-6