

The Gift Is Only the Beginning

On March 9th Stephen Lim was born to our daughter, Kara and son-in-law, Julian. There was much rejoicing among family and friends. Stephen was the subject of instant and unconditional love from all. Baby Stephen didn't need to do anything to receive our love. He just had to be.

The love of this child actually started much before 8:42 PM that night. Kara and Julian loved their unborn child throughout the time in the womb. *"I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD."* (Samuel 1:27-28). Kara and Julian prayed about him nightly. They shopped in advance to set up his room. Friends and family members gave gifts at a baby shower and helped prepare the home for Stephen's arrival into the world. God answered their prayers.

Our role as family and friends is to be part of the community of believers that helps Stephen grow up into a fine young man. As parents, Kara and Julian will make sure that Stephen comes to know Jesus. But, the parents are only part of the community of believers that help his spiritual growth. We have a role, too.

Gifts come to us in many forms and all are intended to enhance our life. The giver eagerly waits to see how the gift will be used. I gave a relaxing February beach vacation as a Christmas gift for my wife. I wanted her to have time to unwind, spend quality one-on-one time with me and temporarily remove her from the daily distractions. It was wonderful.



Stephen's precious footprint on our hearts

faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10).

Look at the blessings you have been given. How can you honor the giver, the Lord God Almighty, to enhance the lives of others?

Scripture: ... *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked (Luke 12:48).*

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We thank you for the gifts you have given us. We pray that we will utilize the opportunities to bring hope and love to others.



Opening the gift Christmas Day was just the beginning. Recharging our energies at the beach was important as we looked forward to the busy months to come.

I couldn't hold my enthusiasm for the birth of Stephen to Kara and Julian. I made a comment to a friend saying I am so blessed to have the extended family that I have. But I followed up that statement by saying, "to whom much is given, much is expected." God entrusted me with a great family and I have an important role in that family. The gift of Stephen is just the beginning of a great relationship and my opportunity to help in his development. *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as*