

Santa Teaches a Valuable Lesson

Legend has it that once a year a mystery man in a bright red suit visits the homes of the youth around the world. He arrives in the middle of the night so as to not be seen, usually bringing with him the #1 wish list gift for each of his young believers. Then, he enjoys some cookies left for him and heads on his way to the next house. It is obvious that he unconditionally loves children. All he asks of them is, “Have they been good this year?”



His identity is no secret. His picture has been plastered all over TV and print ads for months, and he has made millions of appearances around the globe. He is one of the most recognizable people on the planet.

So you ask, what is the lesson that Santa gets right? The answer is, ***Santa doesn't expect anything in return nor seeks any credit for his gift.*** In fact, in many households, his may be the only gift under the tree without a name tag. On Christmas morning children instinctively know which gift is for them and they know who it is from.

There are some interesting parallels of Santa and the celebration of Jesus' birth. Both make their initial public appearance at night. Both are memorable characters, capturing our hearts with just a mention of their first name. When we think of either we immediately think about gifts. Santa usually provides the most coveted gift on our wish list. Jesus, on the other hand, provides what we truly need and His entire life is a gift from God for us. With both, there is a special bond between children and the giver. Their love for children is well known. Both love children unconditionally.

Mentioning Jesus and Santa Claus in the same sentence might give you the impression they are equals. That is far from the truth. Santa is the opening act to the real thing. He attracts the attention of young children, while those with a mature faith understand that Jesus is the reason for the season. While Santa brings us a gift, the person of Jesus Christ is the gift. Gifts are exchanged at Christmas because the Magi brought gifts to honor the Christ child and celebrate His birth. Without the birth there would be no reason for this to be a gift-giving season. Santa's role is completed when he has delivered all the packages around the world and he has returned to the North Pole. Jesus' birth, however, is just the beginning. He seeks a life-changing relationship with each of us. Instead of riding on a sleigh Jesus mission will slay the devil and offer to take away our sins.

The popular children's Christmas song tells us that Santa "... knows if you have been bad or good so be good for goodness sake." How does he do that? He has to get parental help. Jesus, on the other hand, knows all about you because He is God. Jesus knows we are human but He forgives us anyway. As Christians we attempt to be good because of our faith, not to earn a present. A big part of Jesus' gift is a path to eternal righteousness. Santa's gift gives us happiness for a short time while Jesus' gift is eternal. The biggest difference is that Santa is a secular character emphasizing giving gifts to children. Jesus ***is*** God's gift for all of us – children and adults.

So, this Christmas enjoy the fantasy of a human figure named Santa Claus. He is flashy and cheerful. He expresses his love for others, although as parents, we all know that Santa's love is an extension of our own. To his credit Santa gives without any expectation of thanks. That is the noblest quality that we can tell our children about him as they grow up. But, be sure to tell them about the Savior whose birth we celebrate each Christmas. He is more than cheerful himself. He offers ***us*** joy. The birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is a message that is everlasting, and the reason for celebration. As the manger scene depicts, all came to worship Him because He is God. Jesus seeks the acknowledgement that He is God and came to change our lives. What He really wants is for us to tell others of His love for them.

The Bible Says: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord (Luke 2:11).*

Prayer: Heavenly Father. Tonight we celebrate the birth of your son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. While we may have many manmade customs let us never forget that Jesus' birth is the reason for Christmas. Amen.