

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

'Tis the season! Black Friday, cyber Monday, Internet overload, frenzied malls, grouchy shoppers, frazzled store clerks . . . it's that time of year! As followers of Jesus, we know that this season is about much more than what's under the tree, hanging by the fireplace, or on backorder online. Still, it's easy to get caught up in the “gimme” attitude of the holidays. We all think about things we'd like to have and the things our friends are getting—the latest phones, the newest gadgets, the hottest fashion trends. But have you ever thought about what you *don't* want for Christmas? The folks at *Reader's Digest* have, and they recently polled readers about the worst Christmas gifts they've ever received. The results might make you grateful for pretty much *anything!*

- Erich of Phoenix, AZ: “A turquoise man-kini. I am 60 years old and weigh 250 pounds.”
- Robin of Smithfield, PA: “One slipper.”
- Belinda of Orangeville, PA: “A very nice sweater that someone had worn, stained, and regifted to me.”
- Lisa of Boise, ID: “Legos. I'm 34.”
- Audry of Norfolk, VA: “The book *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. I was in high school and not even dating.”
- Marcia of Carlsbad, CA: “A pill vial designed like a white elephant and filled with the baby teeth of my friend's children.”
- Julie of Shellsburg, IA: “I once received a toilet seat.”
- Cary of Royal Oak, MI: “A Christmas tree ornament. I'm Jewish.”
- Lisa of Alpharetta, GA: “Dental floss.”
- Phil of Carmel, IN: “I received a book on Chinese culture written in Chinese.”
- Marci of North Richland Hills, TX: “A donation in my name to a cause I don't support.”
- Rosemary of LaGrange, KY: “A subscription to the Nutrisystem weight loss program.”
- Clark of Magdalena, NM: “A fifth of whiskey, even though I'm an alcoholic.”
- Sheila of Grand Junction, CO: “A used spatula.”
- Carol of Oklahoma City, OK: “I got my own Christmas gift back the next year.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

What do you remember as the worst gift you've ever received? What made it so awful?

What has been the best gift you've ever gotten? What made it so special?

What would you consider your prized possession today? Why?

We all have prized possessions. It is crucial, however, not to let our possessions possess us! Jesus told a story that illustrates three truths about possessions. Let's learn what Jesus had to say about God's blessings, the responsibility of stewardship, and the danger of greed.



MEETING GOD FACE-TO-FACE

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