

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Among the most ridiculous Christmas gifts available to purchase this year for that hard-to-buy-for person on your list are such sought-after items as canned unicorn meat, knitted beard beanie hats, and horse head masks. Or, if you’ve got some extra pennies, you could go for a diamond-encrusted flash drive, solid-gold high heels, or, for just a couple hundred thousand dollars, a personal robotic servant. For less eccentric shoppers, high-tech gadgets such as drones, photo printers, and panoramic video cameras top the most-wanted gift lists this year.

Another way to stand out in the gift-giving department is by going for excessive quantities, apparently. But how much is too much? One British mother of three came under fire from commenters after she posted a picture of her children’s Christmas tree surrounded by a mound of more than 300 brightly wrapped packages. The picture earned her the attention of the British press, and she appeared on at least one morning talk show to defend herself, saying that she hunted for bargains throughout the year and that her children are not spoiled like this all the time.

Store owners are also going to extremes to pull in shoppers, sometimes with equally extreme consequences. Hundreds of shoppers at the fourth largest shopping center in the UK, Bluewater, were stuck in the parking lot for around five hours recently when the combination of a disabled vehicle and the volume of cars all leaving at once resulted in a massive traffic jam. One driver reported that one of the exiting customers began sobbing and pleading with staff for help. Other people became involved in “aggressive beeping wars” (from Nicole Morley, Metro.co.uk).

Excessive expenditures, eccentric seekers, and extreme circumstances—isn’t that what Christmas is all about?

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’s the most ridiculous Christmas gift you’ve ever seen or received? Why did you think it was ridiculous?

Talk about some of the gifts mentioned in the story above. What do you think is too much when it comes to giving gifts? Is there anything wrong with the examples of gifts or gift-givers mentioned in this story?

What do you think motivates people to search for unusual or distinctive gifts? How do you decide what’s best to give others?

We’ve all received gifts that are less than what we wanted or needed. Popular gifts come and go. But what do we really need to have a full and happy life? The Bible tells us about the most extravagant gift ever given. Let’s look at why Jesus is the best gift anyone could receive.