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* Third, that **Jesus paid the penalty for us**. The Sinless One died for the sinful. Jesus shed His Holy Blood on the Cross for us. His dying on the Cross made the only way of escape for us. Only in Jesus can we escape eternal torment in hell. (See John 14:6; Matthew 25:46; and Revelation 21:8.)

Friend, today, if you have not already done so, you **NEED** to receive God's gift. Recognize that you are a sinner. Know that God holds you accountable for your sinfulness. Know that God is infinitely HOLY, and without Jesus, you have no hope. Repent of your sins (i.e., renounce all of your evil ways, ask God to forgive you, and set your heart toward Him with the goal of not sinning.) Invite Jesus to be the LORD (i.e., Master) of your life. Knowing that He

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By: Robert Dallmann

To most people, Christmas is family time. Relatives get together and exchange love and gifts. The happiness and closeness of family life fills the air.

To shop owners, Christmas is the time of year for them to make fantastic profits. Money, money, money, is all some people see at Christmas.

To others, Christmas is the worst and loneliest time of the year. Depression and the suicide rate both increase during the holidays. This is often true of those who come from broken homes. Family problems set against the backdrop of the family atmosphere often lead to pain and misery and sometimes tragic endings.



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So what is Christmas really all about? The true meaning of Christmas **IS** about gift-giving and family life, but not in the way that most people perceive it!

The first Christmas is a well-known true story. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born and slept in a manger. Shepherds visited Him in the stable, and wise men followed the star that eventually led them to Jesus.

Let's review this first Christmas in the light of gift-giving and family life. As for gift-giving, where do we find it in this account? Many feel that this idea came from the wise men who brought gifts to Jesus. And so they did, but they brought their gifts in feeble response to the gift that God had first given.

Yes! God gave the very first Christmas present! He gave us His Son Jesus Christ; so that He could also give us eternal life.

The Bible records the giving of these gifts in John 3:16 and Romans 6:23, which say...

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*“For God so loved the world, that He **GAVE His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but **have eternal life.**”*

(John 3:16)

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the **free GIFT of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23)

If we receive Jesus, the greatest gift of all, then we inherit eternal life.

OK, now that it is clear that God is the first and best gift giver, how does that relate to one's family life?

God gave us Jesus so that we can have eternal life, but also that we can spend that life as His children! John 1:12 says...

*“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to **become children of God**, even to those who believe in His name,”* (John 1:12)

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As His children, He is our Father. God desires us to have that kind of intimate relationship with Him. He loves us! This then is the family aspect of Christmas!

Jesus, the gift of God to us, was not sent to be only a cute baby in a manger; so that we can decorate our homes with ornate nativity scenes. No! Jesus had a mission. He was to be the “Good News” (or “Gospel”) of true Christianity. The Gospel of the Bible is summed up in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4...

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**”*
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This is why God gave us Jesus. Jesus died for our sins! This teaches us three things.

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