

Should Christians be giving Christmas presents?

The concept of giving Christmas presents really comes from two distinct events. The first is the Biblical story of the Magi. In Matthew 2, we read of magi, or wise men, coming from the East bearing gifts for the Christ child. Of course, the magi did not give gifts to each other, which is an argument that some people make for not giving gifts. However, one need not point out that Jesus today does not really need anything, but told us that whenever we do give something to someone, it is like we are giving to him (Matt 25:31-46).

The second event that has led to the tradition of gift giving is the story of St. Nicholas, who lived in the third/fourth centuries. Legends abound regarding the saint, but most surround his generosity and anonymous giving. Though we don't have any actual pictures of St. Nick, it's pretty sure that he did not look like the Santa Claus we see in every mall and front yard these days!

So there is both biblical and non-biblical support for gift-giving. That said, the part that bothers us most about Christmas gift-giving is the commercialism of the season. We feel pressured to give gifts to people. Instead of giving out of love, we give out of necessity.

We don't have to fall prey to the commercialism and secularizing of Christmas! Gift giving isn't the problem. Our motive for giving is! It's a heart issue. The solution is not to give because we have to but to give because we love. Give thoughtfully and cheerfully! Be sensible! There's a difference between obligatory giving and giving freely. Remember that God gave freely to us. Let's use Christmas gifts to remind ourselves and our loved ones of Jesus Christ, God's incomparable gift to us