

The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. – Romans 5:16b

It's so much fun to give gifts at Christmas. Let's face it – we love to receive gifts, but we really like to give gifts too. I think the main reason we like to give gifts is the way it makes us feel. We like it when our loved ones get all excited and tell us how much they like the gift. We like seeing them become happy when they accept our gift and we like the appreciation. But there is a risk in gift giving. What if the person we are giving the gift to doesn't appreciate it or like it?

How many times have we been told by our parents that we should say thank you for a gift, even if we don't like it? How many times have we said that to our children? Why do we insist on doing that? When someone doesn't like our gift or doesn't appreciate it, we become insulted, embarrassed and upset. Some of us might get angry. Almost all of us would say that we might never buy that person a gift again. It's insulting. The risk in gift giving is that it leaves you open to be hurt.

Now recognize that God has given you gifts. The Father is called the giver of life. He gave us our lives. Jesus gave us his own life. He sacrificially gave his life so we might live. Finally, the Holy Spirit has given us gifts to use to build up ourselves and God's kingdom. Have you thanked Him for these gifts? Have you appreciated these gifts? Have you even accepted these gifts? If you answer "no" to any of these, then you have rejected God's gifts. How do you think He feels about that? Giving and receiving gifts can be a win-win situation. But it can also be a lose-lose situation. It's up to the recipient to determine which way it goes. It's your choice – what do you choose?