

The Gables – Gift Giver

Opening Story:

We have a son, John, who is eighteen, and a daughter, Abigail, who is sixteen. John is a freshman at Liberty University in Virginia and Abby is a junior at Hall High School in West Hartford. As I watched John backing out of the driveway in our van this morning for the trip to church, with Abby in the front passenger seat, I was struck at how much they have grown. Both have their licenses now. They even had their first argument Friday night over who would get the car for the evening.

When they were little, they liked to play hide-and-seek as soon as I got home from work. We had a daily routine where I would open the front door and say, "Where's Johnny? Where's Abby?" It was usually pretty easy to find them at first. I might see a foot hanging out from behind a couch or from under a bed. I'd usually just walk by and pretend I didn't see them. To heighten the excitement, I might call out to Donna and say, "Honey, are you sure the kids are home?" That might have elicited a muffled giggle or two. Sometimes they felt they had to help me out by blurting out little yelps to get my attention.

In the physical realm, John and Abby are the greatest gifts that God has given us. God is a magnificent gift giver!

We look forward to Christmas morning when John and Abby open their gifts. The look on their faces helps us to understand that it truly is "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35, NIV).

Dialog between Rick & Donna (adapted from Devotions@Proverb31.org, 12/9/2010).

Rick: Donna, who do you think is the greatest gift giver that ever lived?

Donna: I don't know. God, I guess.

Rick: That's right. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..." (James 1:17a, NIV). What are some of the awesome gifts that he's given us?

Donna: Well, let me think for a moment. Hmm! He's given us physical life.

Rick: Yes. Genesis 2:7 says, "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Donna: He's given us eternal life too.

Rick: Yes, He has. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

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Donna: Umm! Let's see. He's given us a family!

Rick: Yes. Psalm 68:6 says, "God sets the lonely in families ..."

Donna: God gives us wisdom!

Rick: Absolutely. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Donna: He gives us peace.

Rick: Yes. He gives us a peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7, ESV). Jesus also said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."

Donna: He gives us joy.

Rick: Yes He does! The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, "... in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

Donna: He gives us rest.

Rick: "Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'" Matthew 11:28

Donna: He has given us The Holy Spirit.

Rick: Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you." John 14:16

Donna: There is an inheritance waiting for us.

Rick: Yes, there is. In Colossians 3:24, the apostle Paul wrote, "...you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."

Donna: He's given us freedom.

Rick: 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Christ to be wisdom itself. He is the one who made us acceptable to God. He made us pure and holy, and he gave himself to purchase our freedom."

Donna: It seems like God is doing all the giving and we are doing all the receiving?

Rick: Yes it does. All we have to do is receive the gifts he's given to us.

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Donna: Yes, but what can we do in return?

Rick: We can thank Him for all he's done for us. We can praise Him for who He is and what he's done.

Donna: Yes, and we can strive every day to be more like Jesus and pass on His spirit of giving to others.

Rick: Amen.

Donna and Rick: Merry Christmas, everyone!