

the  Venues
Go Deep
Don't Mess with My Traditions
Presents
12.22.19

What was your favorite Christmas gift as a kid?

The first line of Little Women is, "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents."
How prevalent in our culture is that sentiment?

Did the tradition of giving gifts start with the Magi? Maybe not. Exchanging gifts at Winter Celebrations was a practice with people centuries before Jesus was born. *What does that tell you about the act of giving?*

Christmas celebration has not always been a "family affair." Historian Stephen Nissenbam writes in his book, The Battle for Christmas, that "the 19th century reinvention of the holiday was a triumph of New York's elites over the city's emerging working class."

It was the Christmas custom for poor people to go "wassailing" - when they would go to the doors of the homes of wealthy people who would then give them gifts. It was a way to "keep the underclass" happy.

What would be a better way to "keep the underclass happy?"
How is the practice of "wassailing" still practiced today?

The public celebration of Christmas became private with the work of a group of Knickerbockers - named after the founders of New York City - Washington Irving and Clement Moore wrote stories that introduced a new way to celebrate Christmas. The stories took off...and became our tradition.

What would our giving at Christmas look like if we followed the giving of God? - if the following passages were our "Guide to Christmas Giving." What do they tell us about God's giving?

Romans 8:32

Matthew 5:45

Psalm 113:5-8; Proverbs 19:17

Ephesians 3:17-19: How does Paul describe the love of Christ? Take a close look at verse 19. Based on that verse, how does a person experience the fullness of God?

Read and contemplate this line from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas": "He puzzled and puzzled till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. Maybe Christmas, he thought...doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps...means a little bit more."

Which literary line best reflects your understanding/practice of Christmas - Little Women or The Grinch?