



Life Principles Notes™

The Greatest Gift of All

Summary:

Of all the Christmas gifts that you've received over the years, which is your favorite? Perhaps it cost a large amount of money. Maybe one year you received exactly what wanted. Or the item might be something inexpensive that carries sentimental value for you.

Regardless of the gift, you didn't discover how wonderful it was until you unwrapped it. Even a child knows that a present must be opened and explored before its true worth can be realized. Yet many people neglect to "unwrap" the Father's gift

of salvation. They receive His forgiveness for sin but fail to discover all the marvelous treasures they possess as children of God.

Key Passage: John 3:15-21

Supporting Scriptures: *Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Matthew 7:15; 27:51; Mark 2:17; Luke 2:11; 5:23; John 3:16; 8:4-11; 10:11, 14, 27-30; 14:1-3, 9, 16-17, 26; 15:14; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:1-2; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:18; 4:30; Hebrews 4:15-16; 7:25*

Scriptural Principles:

1 What is the greatest gift of all time?

John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." From this verse, we can see that the *source* of the gift is God. His *motivation* in giving it was love for us. And all humanity are the intended *recipients* of this free reward. The Lord's *purpose* for sending His Son was that you and I could have eternal life. And how long will this gift endure? Forever.

Many people can quote John 3:16 but have little or no understanding of how its truths can change their lives. They are like a person who receives a beautiful present and decides not to unwrap it because the package looks so beautiful. These believers may neglect to explore salvation because they mistakenly assume it is merely a guarantee of eternal life. However, the Father's gift encompasses far more.

2 What does salvation include?

God Himself: When the Father sent His Son to earth, God came to dwell in human flesh. We call this mystery *the incarnation*. Although Jesus didn't sin, He knew temptation and experienced hunger, thirst, heat, fatigue, etc.

The Savior: The angels who announced the birth of Jesus said, "Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Why does humanity need rescuing? The Bible says that all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus saves us from an eternity in hell, where we would be separated from the Father because of our rebellion against Him.

Pardon for sin: When a criminal is pardoned, the law no longer considers him or her guilty of a particular offense. In a similar way, those who have placed their trust in Jesus receive full pardon for all their wrongdoing. We accept His death on the cross as payment for our sin.

Continuing forgiveness: Even as believers, we sometimes disobey God. Thankfully, that doesn't cost us our salvation (John 10:27-29). First John 1:9 promises us "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Christ demonstrated mercy towards the woman caught in adultery. Rather than condemning her, He said, "Go. From now on sin no more" (John 8:11).

Access to the Father: If you are a believer, you have direct fellowship with God. Hebrews 4:16 tells us to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Many Christians remain weak because they fail to approach the Father directly (Matt. 27:51).

A personal relationship with God: Not only do we have access to the Lord, we can have an intimate friendship with Him. Most other religions teach that God is distant and transcendent. They imagine Him totally inaccessible to the average person. But Jesus said, "I and the Father are One," and "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father" (John 10:30; 14:9). By Christ's sacrifice, we are accepted by the Father and can fellowship with Him.

The Holy Spirit: His indwelling presence is a guarantee of God's promise that, one day, we will be with the Him forever (Eph. 1:13-14). The Spirit reminds us of the teachings of Christ and enables us to fulfill the Father's will (John 14:16-17, 26).

The Good Shepherd: Jesus is our shepherd (John 10:11, 14). He protects, provides for, and guides us. Christ loves and cares for you and me individually, unconditionally, and compassionately. God's incomparable affection for us is demonstrated in the parable of the prodigal son. Even though the young man had squandered his inheritance with wild living, he knew his father would welcome him home. We can have the same confidence that despite our sin, the heavenly Father does not disown us (Eph. 4:30; John 10:27-28).

An Intercessor: Scripture tells us that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, where He makes intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). In other words, because Christ paid the penalty for our sins, the Father accepts us. We can have confidence that the Lord hears our prayers.

A Friend: Our Savior is a faithful, loyal, devoted, trustworthy companion (John 15:14). He's available in times of need and heartache—and in seasons of rejoicing and celebration. Although Jesus is not looking for perfection, He wants our sincerity, commitment, and obedience. Unfortunately, many believers never realize the wonderful Friend they have in Him.

A resurrected body: God is going to transform our earthly bodies so they will be ready for our eternal existence (1 Cor. 15:51-52). They will be like Christ's—limited neither by time nor by space. They will last forever (1 John 3:2).

An eternal home: In John 14:1-3, Jesus promised His disciples that He would prepare a place for them in the Father's house. We will live forever with the Lord, the Old and New Testament saints, believers from every generation, and our loved ones who died in Christ.

Conclusion:

In God's Son, believers have an amazing gift. But many of them will not take the time to "unwrap" salvation to discover what they have. Don't be a Christian who fails to explore and experience all the benefits of being God's child.

If you have never received salvation, I encourage you to do so. Admit your guilt before

the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. Confess that Christ's death on the cross paid the penalty for your sin and acknowledge that He rose from the dead. The Lord will cleanse you of wrongdoing and seal you eternally as His child. Then you can begin to enjoy the greatest gift of all time—your salvation. 🙏

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