

Titus 3:4-5

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Wow, here it is already the middle of January and it seems just like yesterday we were celebrating Christmas and New Year's. With that in mind, let's hold on a little longer to the world's idea of Christmas and let me ask you a question. If Santa was real, and he gave you a new car for Christmas, would you accept it and be simply thankful for it, or would you now think that you owe Santa something or that you would have to do something to earn what he gave you?

We would all say, "No way, if Santa wants to give me a new car, I would take it, there is no reason to work for it because it was a gift."

Really, you feel that way towards Santa and you think he is a good and loving guy who cares enough about you to give you a brand new car for Christmas, yet when it comes to the free gift of salvation, how many times do we think we have to do something to earn it? This is an "ouch" statement, but when we think like this, aren't we putting Santa above God?

We know that the bible says:

† ***Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.***

But then Paul goes on to ask the question: ***This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Galatians 3:2-3***

We sometimes even try to bargain with God, we will pray, "God, if You do this for me, then I'll do this for You" Once again, treating God like Santa Claus, "Santa, if you give me a new pony I promise I will be good all year."

Part of our problem when we read this: ***when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared***, is that we think of the world's definition of love which is to do for someone, so you can get something back in return.

But God's love for us, is towards us, meaning the one who benefits out of God's love is us, because it's His love that saves us from hell. His love is a free gift, and there is nothing we need to do, or can do to earn it.

During Christmas, so many have the mindset that if someone gives them something, then they have to give them something in return. But when you think that way, you are forgetting that the person gave to you because they thought of you, and thought enough of you to give you a gift. But your gift in return would only be out of obligation, and not out of caring for that person. So their gift would be out of love, and your gift would be out of paying them back for their gift. Do we really think there is any amount of money, or any number of hours that we can serve others, or any amount of songs we can sing, or any amount of times we can read the bible to pay back the FREE gift that God has given us, which is eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ?

† **2 Cor 9:15** *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

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