



3 Reasons Why The Best Gift at Christmas is Forgiveness

Diane Laffoon 0:00

Stress, anxiety and tension rise quickly this time of year. It isn't difficult to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. It is easy, however, to forget what is most important family and friends. And with so much going on, we can't forget our family and friends. And you know, I want you to know the greatest gift that you can give this Christmas is forgiveness. Watching my 18 month old great niece is how I realized that now is the perfect opportunity to give up grudges let go of resentments and forgive one another for past wrongs. So if you're feeling stressed out with all the preparations for the season, or unwanted emotions that Christmas can bring up, it might be helpful to take some time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. So let's talk about three reasons why forgiveness is the best gift that you can give at Christmas.

Hi, if we've never met before, I am Diane Laffoon. And I'm here with your Joy Tip of the Week. I help stressed out women make minor changes in their lives. So they can feel less anxious, more fulfilled, so that they can choose joy each and every day.

My nephew and my niece, his wife are terrific parents. Recently, we were all gathered around the family table for a big family dinner, I believe it was a birthday dinner. And my niece Graelyn was sitting next to her grandma. And for no apparent reason. She just kept hitting her grandma just kept hitting her. And so Graelyn's mom quickly stopped the situation. And she told the 18 month old Graelyn we don't hit people. Then Shana said to her, what do you say to your grandma? It was the sweetest look of remorse on that little girl's face. I wish I had a video rolling as she turned to her grandma. And she sheepishly said, Sorry. I t was so sweet. And what that taught me is that giving and receiving forgiveness can happen at any age, can't it?

You won't find the best gift wrapped under a Christmas tree. Instead, it's found inside your own heart when you decide to give up the things that keep you from having peace with God, and peace with the people around you. Forgiveness is one way that you can show your loved ones and your friends how much you care about them this Christmas.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, I'm not sure if I'm saying his name, right. He was a Russian author who actually defected to the United States when Russia was still the Soviet Union. And he said that we differ from all animals. And it's not in our capacity to think differently that makes us different, but our capacity to repent and to forgive. Only humans can perform that most unnatural act. And by doing so they can develop relationships that transcend the relentless, relentless law of nature.

So only when we can forgive, can we set ourselves apart from the animal kingdom, right? With that in mind, here are three reasons why the best gift that you can give at Christmas is forgiveness. So reason number one first, forgiveness breaks that never ending cycle. When we don't forgive, we carry a weight that just gets heavier and heavier every day, the pain of the past and it's never ending, and unforgiving people tend to be miserable people. When we focus on the history, it's hard to move on forward with our lives. Forgiveness is not easy, but it is the only way to break free from the chains that keep us bound to that pain. We free ourselves from the anger and the resentment that is eating away at our soul when we choose to forgive. Forgiveness allows us to move on and have a fresh start. And the only way to break that cycle of blame and pain in a relationship is forgiveness. While it doesn't necessarily answer all the questions of justice and fairness, it stops that process so that connections may begin again.

So next, forgiveness eases the guilt that can strangle us. The guilt is often worse than the anger that caused the unforgiveness in the first place. Right? That cold hard lump in your chest is leftover from not forgiving someone for their actions. So rather than deal with the hurt and pain, we try to mask it by isolating ourselves or turning to drink or shopping and spending too much money or other forms of escapism. There's all different ways to have this escapism to kind of run from that pain. Forgiveness is an act of humility, that allows us to ease our consciousness because when we forgive, it's like saying, I'm doing my best to let this go.

You may or may not remember, back in 1990 there was something that took place in Germany called the reunification of Germany. The news was full of images and videos of the Berlin Berlin Wall coming down. And after East and West Germany united once again, the Germans as a whole community formed a unified parliament. For that very first official act of that new government, they issued a powerful statement. It said, we the first freely elected parliamentarians of the GDR, on behalf of the citizens of this land, admit responsibility for the humiliation, expulsion, and murder of Jewish men, women and children. We feel sorrow and shame and acknowledge this burden of German history. We ask all of the Jews of the world to forgive us.

Wow, what a first official statement of that Parliament. Right? Did that justify the Holocaust? Absolutely not. Did it bring to life the millions of Jews that died? No. You know what it did, it relieved the heavy, heavy burden of guilt from the people of Germany. It just released that guilt. It didn't make it just didn't make it fair. But It relieved the guilt of the people.

So finally, forgive us. Forgiveness helps us realize that we are sometimes in need of forgiveness. When we forgive someone else, we realize we're not as different from that wrong person as we would like to think. I mean, can't we all think of a time when someone had to forgive us, even 18 month old Graelyn had to be forgiven for hitting under grandma right? Still, it doesn't make it easy. It is hard to swallow our pride and admit that we need to ask for someone else's forgiveness. But it is a decisive first step, when we can put ourselves in the person's shoes that we need to forgive. It is a sign that we are becoming stronger emotionally, we are becoming more compassionate and understanding. We are headed in the right direction.

Christmas is when we often reflect on the year that has gone by. It is a time when we look at the relationships in our lives. And we consider where there might be some room for growth. And if you're feeling stressed out with all the preparations for Christmas, or with unwanted emotions that this season can bring up, it might be helpful to take some time to reflect on this true meaning of Christmas. Ask yourself, why do we celebrate the birth of Jesus? Why did God sent His Son to take the form of man? I want you to know it was so that you and I could experience God's forgiveness? Yes, Jesus came quietly and humbly to live as a man and to take the punishment for our sin, so that we could be in a holy and righteous relationship with Almighty God. That's powerful.

There's a very familiar verse found in John 3:16. And it sums it all up. It says, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but will have eternal life. And it's important to go on to the next verse, because the next verse says, For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world. But in order that the world might be saved through Him.

You know, we embrace a more extraordinary gift than anything wrapped under the Christmas tree this year, when we choose to forgive. Jesus died on the cross so that we could all experience God's forgiveness. He gave us that gift through his son Jesus, and He wants us to live a life of forgiveness. So think about it is there someone in need someone that you need to give the gift of forgiveness this year? The greatest gift that you can give is forgiveness not only for them, but for your own self or that guilt that just robs you of joy. It is the perfect way to give up grudges let go of resentments and forgive one another for past wrongs. If you're feeling stressed out with all the preparations and unwanted emotions of this season, you might, it might be helpful to take some time and reflect on this true meaning of Christmas.

Thank you for watching. I pray you have a very blessed and very merry Christmas. And I'll see you next Tuesday for your Joy Tip of the Week. For now I pray that you seek faith. Give love, find hope and choose joy.



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