

A GIFT OF GOD

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

"Wow! What a wonderful gift," Mary excitedly exclaimed. "Mom and Dad, I've always wanted a bike like this! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"We're happy you like it."

"Like it? It's my favorite gift ever! What did I do to deserve it?"

"It's not what you did or didn't do," Mr. Jones explained. "We gave it to you because we love you," Mr. Jones answered.

"Did you ever get a bike like this for your birthday, Dad?"

"Yes, and a lot of other gifts too. But there is one gift I got that is my favorite."

"What was it?"

"The gift of salvation."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Let me explain by reading Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV). *'For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'*"

"What does grace mean?"

"It's like this. Several months ago, we sent

you to your room without supper because you had disobeyed your mother and me. Later, I came in to talk to you and asked what your punishment should be. You answered that you shouldn't be able to visit any friends for two weeks. I thought that was a good answer. But do you remember what I did?"

"Yeah. You took me out to have pizza and ice cream," she answered.

"Instead of punishment, I forgave you. Even though you didn't deserve or earn forgiveness, I gave it to you anyway because I love you. That is grace, Mary.

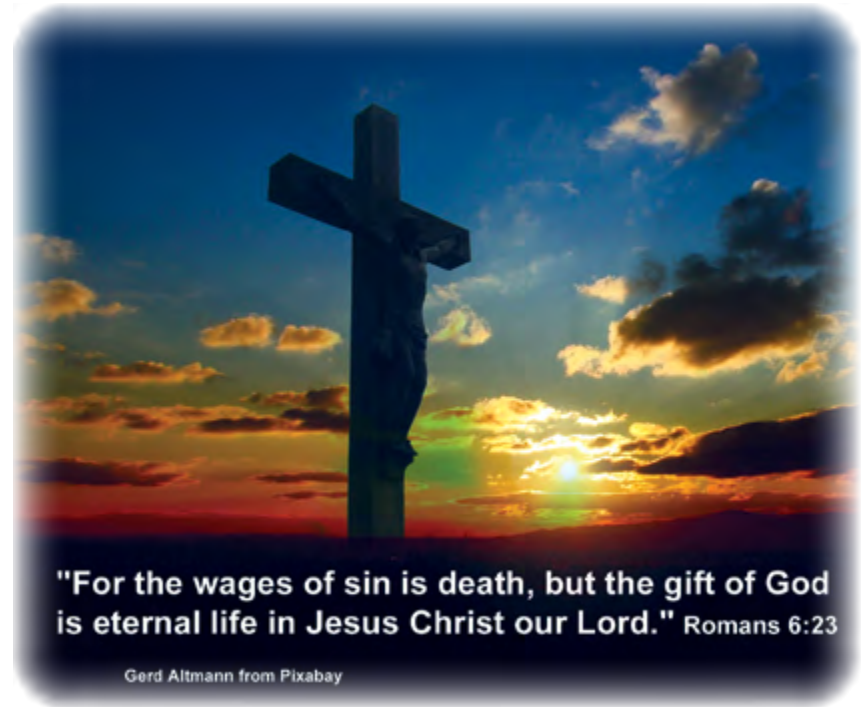
"When we disobey God's word, that is sin. God tells us to obey our Father and Mother (Ephesians 6:1-3), so when you disobeyed us, that was a sin. Sin is something that separates us from God and his love. The Bible teaches that all have sinned (Romans 3:23) and the wages or payment of sin is death (Romans 6:23). So, what do we deserve because of our sin, Mary?"

"Death?"

"That's right. We must all die bodily or physically, but this death means that when we live a life of sin, our payment or punishment is spiritual death. When we die without Christ's forgiveness, we are separated from Him forever. But the good news is that God forgives us of our sins because of our faith or belief in Jesus. That belief is knowing we are all sinners and that Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross to pay for our sins that we could never pay for ourselves. Even though we were created to do 'good works' (Ephesians 2:10), we can't earn salvation by being good or doing

good. Salvation is not a reward for any good things we've done or will do. We can't take credit for our salvation because we could never do enough good or be good enough to earn it. It's not about what we can do but what Jesus did on the cross for us.

"God's grace has saved us because of our faith in Christ. That faith is a free gift of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life in heaven with our Creator. It is the gift of God, and it is given to anyone who wants to accept it. The Bible 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.' (John 3:16). That's the greatest gift for anyone who believes in our Savior, Jesus Christ."

For more about salvation go to:
<https://www.discovercreation.org/documents/kids/JulandAug1998KTB.pdf>

You have probably received many gifts over the years, but if you have faith in Jesus, you have received the best gift of all.

Find the gifts listed below, especially a cross and Jesus!

1. Scarf
2. Guitar
3. Ski Hat
4. 2 Dirty Socks
5. Pop Can
6. Baseball Trophy
7. Polka Dot Ball
8. Archery Bow
9. Spilled Milk
10. Paint Cans
11. Blue Toy Mouse
12. Computer Mouse
13. 2 Cowboy Boots
14. Cowboy Hat
15. 2 Baseball Caps
16. 2 Tennis Shoes
17. Purple Hippo
18. Fishing Pole
19. Alarm Clock
20. Soccer Ball
21. Baseball
22. Robot
23. Rocket Ship
24. Bongo Drums
25. Red Car
26. Football
27. Football Helmet
28. 2 Teddy Bears
29. Rubber Duck



Puzzles by Lanny Johnson © AOI 2025

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