

Christmas 2016

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace to you. Do you have someone in your family that is a ‘wrapper’? You know the kind—the one who so securely and fastidiously wraps their gifts that it gives you a new appreciation for the strength of paper and tape. It frequently is a recessive trait because it drives everyone in the current and following generation nuts. It is not until the next generation that it again can appear to be a good idea.

The level of detail and intricacy in the wrapping frequently affects us differently along the lines of age. What is intriguing and exciting to a child is frustrating and exasperating to a teenager (actually, I think mostly *everything* is frustrating and exasperating to teenagers). The same experience can be mildly annoying and irritating to arthritic fingers.

There are two basic techniques to opening: tearing and deconstructing. Often, this is dictated by age, but it is also strongly driven by temperament.

Deconstructors, are often from among those of us who grew up poor and developed the habit of saving every box and bow and ribbon—painstakingly trying not to destroy anything in the process. These are the people the ‘wrappers’ most drive crazy. (And everyone else, too, as they wait for the extrication process to conclude.) This list often includes engineers, mechanics, or those wired for detail.

Tearers are frequently children and those wired for the explosively dramatic. They just can’t wait to see what is inside and that is half of the joy.

No matter our gift-opening technique, it is the process of unwrapping that increases our joy and excitement and even makes a modest gift wonderful. Our God is a God of details. He has a meticulous plan for our joy. It is wrapped in such a way as to give joy in the process whether we tear or deconstruct. If we are honest, the ‘wrappers’ gifts frequently provide the most excitement because of the process. It is only in our selfish self-consumed perspective that it is annoying.

Have you ever been given a gift of great worth that you did not appreciate at the time and only much later realized its value? Have you ever given someone a gift that they did not appreciate? Being on either side of this equation sucks the joy right out of us. What is God’s gift to you this year? Unwrapping takes time and attention. What have you asked for? Has He given it, but because you are in such crisis-mode you have moved on and not noticed?

In this Christmas season make sure you take time to take an inventory of what God has given you and thank Him. As for me, I am most thankful for the invention of gift-bags...

Merry Christmas.