### **Proper etiquette for returning Christmas gifts**

The Christmas frenzy is over, and the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and Yours Truly are sitting back surveying our Christmas plunder. Only a few days ago, the house was ablaze with Christmas lights, and the rafters were echoing with Christmas delight. Now, much to my delight, quietness is tiptoeing through our house.

In surveying my Christmas plunder, several thoughts, like sugarplums, are dancing in my head. The primary thought is simply, what am I going to do with all these gifts?

My gifts range in several categories.

In the first category, there is aftershave, cologne and deodorant. Obviously, those who know me the best think I stink. The first thing that comes to their mind when they think of me is the Bible verse, "by now he stinketh" (John 11:39). At least they are

The second category of Christmas gifts is clothing. This covers a large area ... I'm a big man. Two sizes are associated with the Christmas clothing I get each year. Either they are too small or too big. None of my relatives knows me that well.

This brings me to my current dilemma. What can I do with all these Christmas presents, especially the ones I cannot wear or use? What is the best thing to do, re-gift, or return these Christmas

I like the idea of returning presents I cannot use or wear in exchange for something I can use or wear. It is a simple matter of going back to the mall and negotiating the exchange.

If you think the mall is a dangerous place prior to Christmas, try going there the day after Christmas. It never fails, by the time I have waited in line for my turn to do the exchange; they no longer

have my size and give me a rain check. I really hate it when it rains on my parade.

By: Dr. James L. Snyder

Then there is the idea of re-gifting. I am beginning to like this idea more and more. For this reason, when I unwrap my presents, I am very careful not to tear the wrapping paper. This way, I not only have next year's Christmas present, but I have the wrapping paper to go with it.

The first Christmas I thought of this was a high watermark day in my life. I was proud of myself to be able to kill several birds with one stone. Unbeknownst to me, the biggest bird I killed was my-

This did not show itself until the following Christmas when, by not giving this proper thought, I gave people the gift they gave me the previous Christmas. Believe me; I had a lot of "splaining"

Nobody tells you this about Christmas in those etiquette books, but if you are going to re-gift a Christmas present, make sure you remember who gave it to you in the first place.

It is difficult trying to find the perfect gift as only one person has mastered the finesse of it. The Bible says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17).

The gift God gives is one that you will have no reason to return.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail jamessnyder2@att.net. His web site is www.jamessnyderministries.com.

#### The Not Rabbit Coat

We were living on love

(and chicken pot pies).

One day, just before

Christmas, my new be-

loved brought in a big

present that was just for

me. He put it under the

tree right away with in-

structions not to touch

The next day, while

he was away, the gift

caught my eye. I tiptoed

just a little. In my en-

tire life I had never, ever

present early. But just

I held it in my lap,

for a moment. It was

so soft and puffy. I un-

taped the edge to take a

little peak and saw fur.

I nearly squealed with

delight. I knew exactly

It was the era when

Oh, I

rabbit fur coats were

loved those coats and

was sure that I'd never

have one until NOW... THIS year! I was really

getting a rabbit coat! It

was a dream come true!

How on earth had he

been able to afford it?!

Oh, my new husband

I wrapped up the

business trying

package and went about

NOT to picture myself

in the awesome rabbit

was a treasure!

this once...

what it was!

really popular.

By: Dawn Reed

In 1981, we had only fur coat that would be been married a year. ALL MINE! Money was really tight. And

then...Christmas morning came. I couldn't wait! I can't remember what I got him; all I remember was being excited about MY COAT! We opened other gifts from family and then...finally...after years of waiting to be cool in a rabbit fur coat, it was time to open my perfect present!

My new beloved said, over to it and touched it "I bet you don't know what your present is... I smiled as if I didn't sneaked and opened a

have a clue.

I pulled off the edge of the tape, acting like I was saving all the paper. I opened the other end very carefully. And suddenly, there it was... a BIG TEDDY BEAR! Imagine my surprise!

It really was the perfect gift-for me-anyway. Sometimes we want things that really don't I never make sense. ever got a rabbit coat but kept that Teddy bear for a very long time.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He didn't come at all as expected. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, was the gift of all gifts...the promised Messiah. "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift," 2 Corinthians

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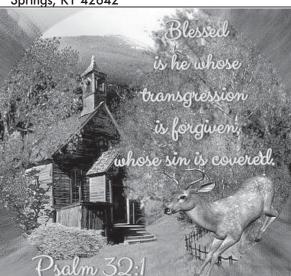
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