

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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What do you want for Christmas? Have you been asked that question yet? Thanksgiving dinner had barely been eaten at our house when I heard that question floated out in the midst of our tribal celebration. Usually we hear that question put forth to children at this time of year. I'm old enough to remember the dog-eared pages of a Sears & Roebuck catalog as we folded down the pages that reflected our desires. Now this Amazon-savvy generation of today may be asking, *who or what is Sears & Roebuck? And what's a catalogue?* To elaborate, the children of my day would look at the pictures of the inventory offerings that were displayed on the pages of a book, or catalogue, of one of the largest brick-and-mortar stores in the world. The Sears & Roebuck Christmas catalogue would circulate annually to help people focus more on Commercialism, I mean Christmastime. Perhaps this was one source that seeded the religion of materialism into the minds of multitudes of people. This religion is not new in the human condition. As old as humanity itself is the embedded covetous thought that says... *What do I really want?*

This material mindset surely has borne great fruit in the digital age... catalogues might be called websites now... and Sears as a corporation is not the powerhouse it once was. But the human condition of covetousness seems to have expanded exponentially. You would think with lightning speed of the information that's offered to meet our expanding desires, and delivery systems that far surpass the ability of the postal service to bring it to our doors, we would be the most contented people on the planet. But the question still remains that will surely be answered... *What do you want for Christmas?*

Consider the child that answers, "I want what my Father wants for me." This child would be not only be a rarity, but quite possibly *unique*... you know, a *one-of-a-kind* kind of child. So how many of those kinds of children, or adult children, do you know that match that description? Now some people you ask may say, *Oh it really doesn't matter!* You know it's the thought that really counts, right? Well, actually, it is. It does really matter what we want. Because it is our thought life that determines whether we are a coveting kind of people or contented ones.

In a book that I keep looking into, I find that the deeper I look into it, the more I am marking the pages... I keep seeing something I want more than what I want. The words in this book are so deep when I think deeply about the idea it communicates, that I can see a picture that the words are crafting. You probably know where I'm heading here. In the book we have come to call the Bible, we find our desires demonstrated from not only a human perspective, but a supernatural source as well.

Consider one of the smartest men in his time and place who came to talk about something he didn't know that he didn't know. Nicodemus commented to Jesus one night about the source of the power and presence of God that Jesus displayed in the midst of God's people. Jesus told this man that he could not see the kingdom of God unless he was born again... born of the Spirit... born from above. It is in this context that Jesus tells this Teacher of Israel the one Bible verse that has endured till our time that almost everyone knows... *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...* (John 3:16). The true meaning of this statement seems to be that Jesus is a unique and one-of-a-kind Son ... because only He is God Himself. He wants what His Father wants... for all of us to become children of God. Do you want what God really wants for you? The only way this is possible is to surrender our desires to what God desires. The Word of God tells us what God desires... the Spirit of God declares His will. If you are truly a Child of God, do you really want what your Father wants this Christmas?

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam