

Okay, let me take a few minutes and talk with you about a very important subject, a subject that is especially relevant during the holiday season. I want you to think very carefully with me about...*socks and underwear*.

Since you were once a kid, then you know the connection between Christmas and *socks and underwear*. Like cold water poured on the joyful and warm heart-fires of Christmas, is opening a present and finding, not a toy, not a book, not cash or a gift card, but...*socks and underwear*.

I know you know what I'm talking about. We've all been there. And all of us were taught how you are supposed to look and respond when Grandma gives you *socks and underwear*: In fact, there's no faster 'gift transition' than moving on to the next present after opening a box of *socks and underwear*.

But have you ever thought about what grandmas know that kids do not? They know that *socks and underwear* might not be the gift any child **wants** (or puts on their Christmas list), but in most cases, they are the very things every kid **needs**.

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So why are we thinking about this topic? Because it's a great example of how all of us are born 'visually impaired' when it comes to recognizing what we really *need*.

### The "Despised and Rejected" Gift

Listen for a moment to a prediction from the Hebrew prophet Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is filled with some classic Christmas predictions ("...the virgin shall conceive..." (7:14), "Immanuel" (7:14), "unto us a son is given..." (9:6)), but this one is not traditionally thought of in that way. This is from Isaiah 53:1-3...

*Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground...*

Who is this talking about? Over 700 years before his birth, Isaiah is talking about Jesus. The rest of the chapter and the New Testament confirm this (for example, read Acts 8:26-40)! This is the baby of Christmas, growing up like a "young plant". But the prophet goes on...

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*... he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

The baby Jesus is usually a real cutie, isn't he? People typically "ooo" and "aww" over him. But for human beings, in terms of our natural eyes, the grown-up Jesus is more like *socks and underwear*... "*...no form or majesty that we should look at him...no beauty that we should desire him*". And Isaiah's prediction was accurate. Jesus was "despised and rejected". He was even handed over to death, just for speaking the truth in love.

You see, none of us naturally desire Jesus because we're naturally attracted to the things of this world; things for the here and now. We're more interested in things like touchscreens and cars and vacations; in money, in pleasure, in prestige, in power. We *want* to open a box and find comfort, security, happiness, and love...and we want it all on our terms.

(continued on back)

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(continued on back)

## Seeing through Christmas-Tinted Eyes

Let me let you in on a secret. Do you know what happened to me when I got older? I began to realize how much of what I *wanted* had nothing to do with what I really *needed*. And when that change took place in my mind, I began to see *socks and underwear* in a whole new light.

My prayer for you is that God, if he hasn't done so already, will change your mind when it comes to HIS gift to us (which is far more important than *socks and underwear!*); that God will give you the eyes to see what we really *need* as *me-centered* people living in a *God-centered* universe; eyes to see what we really *need* as those who are spiritually starving, but still infatuated by the 'plastic fruit' of this world.

Just listen to the next two verses from Isaiah 53:

*Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering...he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.* (53:4, 5)

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This Christmas what we really *need* is Jesus and the healing only He can bring. Because he died in our place, because he took the just verdict we deserved, because he rose again and defeated death, only he can give us what we truly *need*: forgiveness, belonging, love, purpose, and peace with God (read Romans 5:1-11 to learn more). And the gifts that God gives last forever. Not even death can diminish them or take them away (see John 3:16)!

How can God's gracious and loving gift be yours? By faith. That's it! What is faith? Faith is the empty hand of the heart. It is trusting or believing that Jesus was born to die, and that he died for all of our misguided *wants*. Why? In order to give us what we *need*: GOD. Above everything else, we *need* God. Will you reach out for him today?

Maybe this Christmas someone who knows what you *need* will give you *socks and underwear*. But this holiday season, my prayer for you is that God would meet your deepest *need* and give you the inward eyes to see how good His Christmas gift really is. **Merry Christmas!**

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What You Really Need  
This CHRISTMAS



by Bryce Morgan

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