

Extreme
MAKEOVER
CHRISTMAS EDITION

What Do You Treasure

Luke 2:8-20; Habakkuk 3:17-19

1 of 5

In his book *Things Unseen: Living with Eternity in Your Heart*, Mark Buchanan points out how we all continually live for the "Next Thing"—the next item on our checklist of luxuries, the next job, the next adventure. As Buchanan notes, "this becomes so obsessive that we lose the capacity to enjoy and to be thankful for what we have right now. [And] this is never more apparent than at Christmastime." He writes:

I saw this close-up ... when my children first got to that age when the essence of Christmas becomes The Day of Getting. There were mounds of gifts beneath our tree, and our son led the way in that favorite childhood (and, more subtly, adult) game, *How Many Are for Me?* But the telling moment came Christmas morning when the gifts were handed out. The children ripped through them, shredding and scattering the wrappings like jungle plants before a well-wielded machete.

Each gift was beautiful: an intricately laced dress Grandma Christie had sewn, an exquisitely detailed model car Uncle Bob had found at a specialty store on Robson Street in Vancouver, a finely bound and gorgeously illustrated collection of children's classics Aunt Leslie had sent. The children looked at each gift briefly, their interest quickly fading, and then put it aside to move on to the Next Thing. When the ransacking was finished, my son, standing amid a tumultuous sea of boxes and bright crumpled paper and exotic trappings, asked plaintively, "Is this all there is?"

Using this all-too-familiar Christmas scene, Buchanan shows how we are taught "not to value things too much, but to value them too little. We forget to treasure and to savor. The pressure of constant wanting dissipates all gratitude. The weight of restless craving plunders all enjoyment." But he adds a surprising thought—one that points to a deeper reason for our Christmas greed. He writes:



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Growing Closer To God

Hebrews 5:11-6:1a; 2 Peter 3:18

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God made us this way. He made us to yearn—to always be hungry for something we can't get, to always be missing something we can't find, to always be disappointed with what we receive, to always have an insatiable emptiness that no thing can fill, and an untamable restlessness that no discovery can still. Yearning itself is healthy—a kind of compass inside us pointing to True North.

It's not the wanting that corrupts us. What corrupts us is the wanting that's misplaced, set on the wrong thing.

[Mark Buchanan, Things Unseen: Living with Eternity in Your Heart (Multnomah, 2006), pp. 50-51]

December's Daily Bible Reading will cover the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke which is a birth narrative about Jesus.

- DAY ONE – Luke 1:1-4
- DAY TWO – Luke 1:5-10
- DAY THREE – Luke 1:11-17
- DAY FOUR – Luke 1:18-25
- DAY FIVE – Luke 1:26-28

Memory Verse:

“And he will go before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17)



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