

A GIFT from the Heart

By Mark Anderson

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this play to my nephews and nieces: Kelly, Chad, Courtney, Brian, Cherie, Kimberly, Tiffany, and Nathan. Also to all members and friends of the Trigg Street (Abingdon.) Church of God. Thank you all for your faith in me.

The Playwright, Mark Anderson

Those involved with the original production included Tony Roberts, Genia Manicure, Mona Lambert, Barry Compton, Judy McSwain, Kevin Lambert, Bobby Inscore, Effie Kinsley, Jeff Russell, Pam Compton, Rhonda McGuire, Susie Testerman, and Sandra Roark.

THE STORY

Here is a modern story of a "prodigal son" and a "prodigal father" as well. Matt McCord left home at an early age because his wealthy father, Sam, who claimed to be a Christian, was so strict. Now, years later, Matt has come home this Christmas Eve, saved and repentant of his earlier, wasted lifestyle and anxious to make peace with his family.

His mother, grandparents, and brothers and sisters welcome him with open arms, but father Sam refuses - at first. But as the family points out, Sam has been a "prodigal father" wasting the love of God and his family in favor of business concerns. His children show him the kind of man he has become, and the kind of man he used to be. He soon realizes that God is out of his life and after accepting Christ again, he begins to mend his broken ties with his family.

Together they give each other the best Christmas gift, a gift from the heart.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6m, 6w)

SAMUEL McCORD: Father of 5 grown children. Owns his own business, holds a grudge against his oldest son for leaving home. Backslidden. He refuses to take responsibility for his attitude toward his family.

REBA McCORD: His wife. A strong Christian, dislikes her husband's attitude toward their children. She is adamant about having her family together for the holidays. Very emotional about Matthew leaving home.

JORDAN McCORD: The youngest son of the McCords. Twin of Bethany. A strong Christian, but when it comes to dealing with his father, he's a little sarcastic and angry at times. He is a social worker and volunteers at the mission.

BETHANY McCORD: The youngest daughter of the McCords. Twin of Jordan, also a strong Christian. She is concerned about her father and Peter. She is a school teacher who takes up for Jordy and watches out for Leah.

LEAH McCORD: The oldest daughter of the McCords. Sees things in a "material sense." Hasn't taken her relationship with God seriously. A little scatterbrained, but means well. She possesses a talent she never uses. A lukewarm Christian.

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PETER McCORD: The middle son of the McCords. Takes part in the family business. He's his father's favorite. Tries to please his father, but doesn't like how his dad treats the other children. Very easy going. Backslidden.

MATTHEW McCORD: The eldest of the McCord children. Left home at an early age, due to the pressures coming from his father. Comes home this Christmas after being gone for 15 years. Considered an outcast by his father, "a prodigal son."

GRANDPA McCORD: Samuel's father, a retired minister. Tries to show Samuel how to reach his family.

GRANDMA McCORD: Samuel's mother. An old fashioned Christian. Keeps her son straight.

BRIAN ANDREWS: Minister of the mission where Jordy volunteers. Very caring about the homeless. Has a great compassion when it comes to dealing with teenagers.

ELLEN ANDREWS: His wife, also is very involved with the youth at the mission. She encourages Matthew to go home and face his family.

DIANA YEAGER: A young woman at the mission whom Jordy has been counseling. A new convert. Is having problems at home with her parents. She is the first to know who Matthew really is.

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Playing Time: About an hour.

SCENES

1. Christmas Eve, just before lunch.
2. Christmas Eve, late afternoon.
3. Christmas Eve, about 9:30 p.m.

COSTUMES

The family and grandparents should dress in winter clothes to reflect an upper-class background while Brian and Ellen Andrews, Diana, and Matthew should dress more plainly. All have winter coats and the ladies have purses. In Scene 2 Leah needs to wear some outrageous outfit with loud colors and the rest of the family members (except Jordy and Bethany) are wearing more dressed up clothes for dinner out.

PROPS

Watch and dust cloth for Reba; newspaper for Sam; bag of costumes and small manger near SL kitchen door; suitcases for grandparents; shopping bags and car keys for Leah; photo album for Reba, wallet with pictures for Matthew.

SET

All action takes place in the upper-class living room of the McCord home. SR is a front door and SL is an exit to the kitchen. UPS is a coat closet and staircase going to upstairs bedrooms. DSR, in front of a picture window, is the family's Christmas tree and a desk containing a phone and note paper and pen. CS is a sofa and comfortable arrangement of chairs and end tables. DSL is a grand piano. Other Christmas decorations give the home a festive feel.

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: SAM is reading the financial section of paper, REBA is dusting.)

REBA: There, I've got the living room finished, now everything is ready for your parents' arrival.

SAM: Honey, you are working too hard. Mom and Dad have been here before, you know!

REBA: I know, but I can't help it if I'm such a perfectionist.

SAM: You can say that again! I can certainly vouch for that.

REBA: *(Throwing dusting cloth at HIM.)* OK! Remember, you better watch out, you better not cry.

SAM: I get the message loud and clear!

REBA: Good! *(There is a knock at DOOR.)* I wonder who's at the door?

(JORDAN and BETHANY enter from front door SR.)

JORDAN: Good morning! HO! HO! HO!

BETHANY: Hey guys, what's up?

REBA: *(Looks at watch.)* What are you two doing out? I thought you were asleep upstairs!

JORDAN: We couldn't sleep, Mother. It's hard to get used to my old room.

BETHANY: Same here! I mean we could have stayed at our own apartments ... *(Taking off THEIR coats.)*

REBA: No! I wanted you all here so I could make sure you'd be here in time for the holidays.

BETHANY: So you did!

SAM: Where have you been?

JORDAN: We took some of our old toys and clothing down to the orphanage. They said they could use anything we couldn't.

BETHANY: So we took them all of our old games and stuff like that.

SAM: What are you two doing? Trying to get the citizenship award of the year?

End of Freeview

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