

Volume 3 - Day 7: God Is Not Like Santa Claus

Our minds are often informed by well-meaning but misguided people. Among these are our parents. Other things may be as subtle as the fairy tales we tell our children. A predominant one is told in various forms all over the globe. It is the tale of Santa Claus (St. Nicolas) who brings 'good' children presents every year.

On the surface and with only a casual glance we might conclude that the tale is harmless but also useful. Reinforced by the song, "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," many children learn to fear that misbehaving will cause them to lose some or all of the presents that Santa might bring them at Christmas.

"Oh, you better watch out. You better not cry. You better not shout, I'm telling you why. Santa Claus is coming to town!" He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good. So be good for goodness sake." These words teach us that we must behave well or we will suffer. And often we treat each other and our children in this manner. We may even subconsciously hope to manage our children's behaviors by such tales and songs.

The great tragedy of this is that it also affects how most of us perceive God. We begin to believe that God, not unlike Santa, will give us only dirty rocks if we behave badly. We also tend to believe that He is watching constantly to catch us in wrong doing. And we begin to fear Him. And, although it may be subconscious, this causes us to stay at a 'safe' distance from God.

So what is widely believed to be a harmless tradition, could actually drive a wedge between God and the very children He wants to heap goodness and love upon. To be sure, God does see all and know all. But God is the opposite of Santa. He not only **does not** stand over us waiting to strike us, but rather **struck His very own Son** in His crucifixion so He did not have to strike us. God wants us not to fear Him. He wants always to embrace us with His love!

Stop casting God in the image of Santa! See God for the most loving, tender, caring Father He is! Get up close and personal.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan