

# The Christian Store

by Ron Benson

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**Y**esterday I went with my wife to the local Wal-Mart. Actually, she went to Wal-Mart. I sat in the car. After a few minutes listening to Limbaugh, I looked around the shopping center and spotted a Christian Store. It had been a while since I went to a Christian Store, so I went in to kill some time while my wife spent all my hard-earned money.

I wandered in casually and started to do some browsing. It occurred to me that I needed to pick up a few gifts, and since I am a Christian, and most of the people I have any kind of relationship with are also Christians, I figured the Christian Store would be the place to do it. And besides, it's a Christian Store; you can't waste money in a Christian Store.

I started with my wife. An anniversary was coming up, so I thought I'd get some advance shopping done. I saw a Christian Tea Set, four plates, four cups, four

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saucers and a pot, all with gold around the edges. Each plate had a different Scripture verse. One of them said, "Give us this day our daily bread." I thought to myself how cool it would be to have my daily bread on a gold-trimmed plate. I bought the set, \$59.95, and went on to the books. You just can't have a Christian Store without a lot of books.

My mother-in-law has a birthday coming up soon. She's a hard one to buy for since she doesn't spend any money on herself and thinks that no one else should either. She will invariably complain no matter what you give her. Whatever you buy has to be inexpensive but not cheap, practical but not dull, nice but not above \$1.50. A book just might fit the bill.

I came across a whole rack of books—*Hugs Books*. There was *Hugs for Teachers*. There was *Hugs for Nurses*. There must have been fifty different *Hugs* books. I figured these would be fairly inexpensive, small for shipping and would reflect a thoughtful purchase. If I could find the right one. *Hugs for Teens*, *Hugs for Rebellious Teens*, *Hugs for Strung-out Parents of Rebellious Teens*. There seemed to be a *Hugs* book for everybody. After combing through the *Hugs* for a while, right between *Hugs for a Conniving Brother* and *Hugs for Personal Injury Lawyers*, I found it: *Hugs for a Tightwad Mother-In-Law*. Perfect.

Next was my boss. It was Boss' Day in a week, and I was looking for a raise this year, so it had to be



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*Left Behind: A Reprobate's Survival Guide for the Great Tribulation.* It came with a free CD: *Left Behind: Sound Effects That Will Scare the Magog Out of You.* For my pastor I found a bright pink kazoo that had John 3:16 on it.

I took it all up to the cash register. I didn't bring enough cash to pay for my gifts, but the Christian Store takes Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express. I put half of it on Discover for the Cash-Back advantage, the rest on my special 700 Club Visa Card since the Discover was maxed-out.

"Paper or plastic?" the lady asked. She told me that for \$5.00 more she could wrap the presents with my choice of special designs. I could pick from options like "Rose of Sharon," A Road to Emmaus print with a big bow or a clever paper with the entire book of Leviticus written out in the original Hebrew. I had three of the presents wrapped up.

It was great! I've done all my gift shopping for the next year and a half. I spent \$478.33. But it was worth it. (I do regret the kazoo; it should have been sky blue). All the same, every penny was well-spent. And besides, it's a Christian Store. You can't waste your money in a Christian Store. □

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something good. Impressive. Something he could not forget. Something Christian, but not too Christian. I went over to the Bible row.

Since my boss was a Christian, I figured he probably owned a Bible or two already. But the Christian Store had more Bibles than I ever knew existed. I was sure I could find one for him that he didn't have. I picked up a "Couples' Bible" which included a special illustrated section for the Song of Solomon.

I glanced at the "Women Over Sixty-Five" Bible which included bold type and a large Family Tree Pull-Out Poster. I finally settled, however, on a New Modified Revised Living Standard Baptist Anti-Cult Politically Incorrect KJV—the one with the gender-exclusive language. He's gonna love it. I went the extra mile and got a nice cover for it with an embossed fish sign on one side and praying hands on the other.

Looking over more aisles in the Christian Store, my head started to spin. Here was a whole section of Jabez stuff: Jabez coffee mugs, Jabez baseball hats, Jabez jewelry. I picked up a "Prayer of Jabez for Pets" book set. It came with a combination food and water dish that had "Bless Me Indeed" painted on the side. I have a dog at home that just longs for expanded borders. It was pricey, around \$30, but how often do you get a chance to make your dog happy like that?

Further on in the book section I saw the famous *Turkey Soup* books. They had *Rich and Creamy Turkey Soup*. They had *Turkey Soup with Mushrooms and Barley*. For my Dad, who is always fussing about the food at the old-folks' home, I picked up *Turkey Soup with Homemade Dressing*. The instructions on the book cover said that you just add water, zap it in the microwave for 90 seconds, and presto! It's soup!

I thought to myself that I should come in to the Christian Store more often. I just didn't know what was available in there. It was amazing.

For my kids I bought *WOW Worship: The Hip-Hop-Till-You-Drop Sessions*, Crimson Edition. For my grandad I picked up *Gaithers: "Yes, We're Still Alive!"* For my next-door neighbors I found a book called