

Christmas in Tinsel Town

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Have you heard what Britney got her kids this Christmas? Do you know about the massive party that Kanye threw? Or how Zac spoiled Vanessa? The eyes of the world seem to be fixed on Hollywood, but even more so this time of year as we watch how the rich & famous try outdo one another in extravagant giving.

What Beckham buys Victoria this Christmas will probably be worth more than what you or I will accumulate in a lifetime of stockings! And while many of us can only dream of receiving or buying these gifts, we often write off the value and uniqueness of their gifts, because of their wealth. But indulge yourself for a second, and put yourself in their shoes – how do you buy a meaningful gift for someone who already has everything they want?

It is easy to buy your child the Wii that he has been begging for since he was born, or you fiancé something expensive to let her know how much she means to you. But in the world of red carpets, Botox, and bulging bank accounts, celebs often need to go the extra mile to convey sincere feelings of love, appreciation and generosity. This has caused Brangelina to create a family rule that everyone has to make something for someone else, and invest time – not just money. But for most celebs, they will dip into

their wallets and display extravagant spending to express love. Take the Beckhams for example - refusing to be outdone by her husband, Victoria Beckham gave David a gleaming Rolls Royce Phantom on the same Christmas that saw him bestow a £1.2 million necklace on her neck.

And while it may be over the top, there is something about it to be admired. Celebs will go to extravagant lengths to find a unique, one-of-a-kind gift that will express love to their more-than-happy recipient.

While we think we are living in a unique age where this extravagance takes place, the same thing happened around two thousand years ago. Some wise men - imagine George Clooney, LeonardoDiCaprio, and Will Smith dressed in brown robes - were led by a star to the birth of a boy named Jesus. And instead of giving him a rattler, some puffy toys and a sugar-coated dummy, they lavished, in true celebrity style, gifts of gold, perfume, incense. You might say that's extravagant – but it depends who you're giving to.

Most of us associate Christmas with giving to our families & friends, yet Hollywood goes the extra mile. Take Paris Hilton for example – last year the hotel heiress received delivery of a customised Pink Bentley - a Christmas present to herself worth an estimated \$200,000 - fulfilling a childhood fantasy of owning a vehicle like the children's toy doll Barbie.



The gift: ourselves (the most costly gift we can give); the recipient: Jesus!

The wise men gave their valuable and costly gifts to what appeared to be another baby boy. It's a bit overboard considering He was just a baby, but completely appropriate considering whom He was.

They must have known something more about this Child in order to splash out gifts usually reserved for kings. They must have known that this Child would not only become a

Ruler, but a Shepherd, a King and a Saviour. And the gifts were not given because it was that time of the year, nor because it was the appropriate thing to do. Rather it was given in admiration.

Hollywood has got so much right! They are extravagant in their giving. They're using their wealth in generously - but they're giving so extravagantly to the wrong people. What if the same generosity was channelled to a person who is actually worthy of it - what if it was given in appreciation for something priceless?

Every year this time we have the opportunity to be extravagant in our giving. Yet we get the opportunity every day to give out of gratitude and to One who shows us unconditional love. The gift: ourselves (the most costly gift we can give); the recipient: Jesus!