

A New Meaning for Christmas “Coal”



Christmas can turn even the most hardened Scrooges into generous spirits. The joy of the season brings people together to rise above petty problems as we celebrate gifts of life, family, and love.

Hopefully, this wondrous joy will draw people to seek the true reason for Christmas — God’s gift of Jesus Christ to us who do not deserve such love.

This understanding of grace — a gift given to wholly undeserving people that brings joy and turns hearts around — sheds light on a strange and unappreciated Scripture.

“If your enemy hungers, feed him; If he thirsts, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:20).

In ancient times, fire sustained life and coals kept a fire burning. Without fire for heating or cooking, a person or family could die.

Just like in third-world countries today, people in Biblical days carried loads on their heads — even burning coals.

To heap burning coals on the head of a person whose fire had gone out was to offer a life-giving gift.

When we encourage, forgive, and give to those who do not “deserve” it, we imitate what God has done for us. That unexpected gift, like a letter to a legislator letting them know we’re praying for them, can help fill people’s hearts with the joy that comes from grace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy Wright".

Wendy Wright

President

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