

## A CHRISTMAS GIFT

God loves us. He really, really does. That's a key part of the Christmas message. Why else would He ever have sent His son here to go through what he went through? And why else would Jesus ever have willingly gone to the cross?

I was reminded of that this past weekend in a way only God can arrange.

Sunday afternoon a friend was coming to visit us at home. Late in the afternoon the doorbell rang, and I opened the door. There stood our friend, holding out a box of clementines. For those of you who do not know, clementines are small citrus fruit, like small oranges, and they seem to make an appearance in grocery stores about this time of year. They come in small but clearly distinct boxes.

Our friend handed me this box of clementines. "God told me to get this for you," she said. And she went on, exclaiming that God was very specific and strong about it. "So I went into a grocery store and I couldn't find them. I thought that I would just get a poinsettia, but well, God said to get clementines." So she stuck with her search, and she found them.

Later in the kitchen she spoke with Cathy and asked if clementines were my favorite. Our friend couldn't get over how insistent God had been.

Later I thought more about this. I remembered how as my children grew up we would always get a box of clementines sometime around Christmas. It was a regular feature in our house. The box could always be found sitting somewhere in the kitchen. Everyone liked them. To this day when I see a display of clementines in a store, I want to buy a box.

And I thought some more. Here we are in the ministry involved in our usual activities and praying for guidance from God on key issues, like where and how to proceed in the

expensive television ministry, where and what meetings to arrange, whether to begin another regular meeting in southeastern NC, and more. For months, even years, we have been going steadily forward, always fighting and overcoming attacks of the evil one which do come whenever anyone steps out for God.

Into the midst of all that God sent an obedient woman friend to bring a box of clementines. Even when I write this the Holy Spirit is so strong in the office I keep stopping and reflecting. Is that love? Yes! And much more. That is God saying - John, even in the midst of all this, I'm still here, and I love you, and look, I even know little things about you, like how you like a box of clementines and what that means to you.

So I've been feeling really warm every since. God sent me a box of clementines for Christmas.

God knows where you are and what you're going through. He knows every hair on your head. Every day, if we'll just look around and take time to see with spiritual eyes, we'll see God directing our paths. What a heavenly Father we have!

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