

Simply One Page-Asking Within Reason

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision and my own editorial hand. Mike Haddorff-2522

I must have been about eleven that Christmas. My brother was seven, and together we formed what we believed was a foolproof strategy. Instead of each asking for our own gift, we'd combine our request, go big but not too big, and surely end up with something special.

We pored over the Christmas catalogs that showed up in late November, turning glossy pages filled with treasures beyond reach. That's when we found it, the Daytona Race Car Set. Two cars, twenty feet of track, and just enough excitement to fill our imaginations. It wasn't the deluxe version, but it wasn't the bottom one either. We reasoned that "middle of the line" might improve our odds. So we carefully left the catalog open for our parents to "happen" upon, fully confident that our subtle plan would work.

Christmas Eve finally came. After the candlelight service at First Presbyterian, we raced home, tore through the usual sweaters and socks, but saw nothing that resembled the box we'd memorized from the catalog. Disappointment settled in until Dad said, "Boys, go look around the corner."

There it was, a large, wrapped package waiting in the sitting room. We tore into it and gasped. It wasn't the Daytona set. It was the Premier version: more track, electronic controls, bridge columns, and even a little man with a lever arm to start the race. It was beyond what we had imagined. We played well into the night, and for weeks afterward, building and rebuilding new layouts, our imaginations running wild.

Looking back, that Christmas still speaks to me. We asked within the limits of what we thought possible. But what we received far surpassed those limits. That's what grace is like. We ask for what fits our measure, but grace has no measure. It arrives wrapped in surprise, abundant and undeserved.

Even amid the world's pain and suffering, I've seen it again and again. God's grace outpaces my expectations, just as that Christmas gift did so long ago.

Reflection:

When have you asked for something "within reason," only to discover that grace gave you far more than you thought to imagine?