



## Three Gifts I Wish for You This Holiday Season

This past month I had the opportunity to watch the movie, *The Ultimate Gift*, starring James Garner and Oscar-nominated Abigail Breslin. I enjoyed it so much that I decided to read the book written by Jim Stovall.

The story is about a young man (Jason Stevens) and the year-long journey he must undertake in order to earn an inheritance left to him by his great uncle. Jason 'earns' his inheritance through a series of 'gifts' or challenges that his uncle leaves to him. Through the process Jason evolves from a belligerent, spoiled young man to the kind of person that we can all strive to be, with or without an inheritance.

There are twelve gifts in the book. Here are three gifts that I wish for all of you this holiday season.

1. **The gift of work.** During these challenging economic times there are many hard-working individuals that have lost their jobs, taken a cut in pay or had their hours reduced. If you are gainfully employed, focus on all the great things that your job provides for you and your family. At a minimum this includes your income and likely includes many other perks like health insurance, a 401k and other types of employee benefits.
2. **The gift of gratitude.** Often when times are flush with funds and opportunity we focus our energy on those things that we want rather than taking time to appreciate what we already have. This year many companies have had to eliminate holiday parties, year-end bonuses and other perks that many of us have come to expect. Instead of focusing on what is missing, focus on what you have to be grateful for: good health, a loving family or a warm home.
3. **The gift of laughter.** When times are tough you can do one of two things – laugh or cry. There is obviously a time and place for both but whenever possible choose laughter. Why? Because studies have shown that people who laugh have increased hormones that alleviate depression, enhance immunity, and reduce stress. Plus, it's contagious, so laugh and feel free to spread it around!

I hope that you will take the time to appreciate the gifts you have in your life. If you do, you may just find that your cup is already running over.