

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

I bought almost thirty presents in less than 24 hours - the ultimate shopping spree! It was fun having a list of the people I love and running around finding each a perfect gift.

I know you might be thinking, "Give me a break, Lucy! Oh sure, you were really able to give a lot of thought to what you were doing!" A professional shopper would have been horrified. I know, because for the first time in my life, I recently used one. For you see, my world has become so busy this year that I've had to delegate some jobs, one of which was wardrobe shopping.

This very nice lady used her time and energy to help get my apparel act together. It was wonderful! The ultimate luxury! (Now I've got my mail, meals, mothering and money to go.) To be able to pull out my chest of drawers and find a pair of stockings with no runs, which would go with a skirt that was hemmed, which would go with a blouse that had all of its buttons, has been "mah-velous, dahling, absolutely marvelous!"

But much to my surprise, it did take time, the very luxury I was trying to save - not shopping time, but selecting time. For you see, June didn't really know me. She didn't know my likes and dislikes, my favorite colors, styles, fabrics, textures, trims. She didn't know my physical shortcomings (bunions don't like

spiked heels!) She didn't know how to accent my positive and eliminate my negative. So she'd bring things for me to try on and it took time to sort through and select.

Whereas I bought thirty presents in less than 24 hours for the people I love. I was able to do this because I know them. Part of loving is knowing, don't you think? Knowing every single little detail, someone's likes and dislikes, quirks and qualms, what makes them happy, what makes them sad, what makes them laugh, what makes them cry, where they're most sensitive, where they're most insensitive, the hard and the soft of them, their birthmarks and blemishes and beauty spots.

Goodness gracious, come to think of it, I need to do a few recalls - for the presents were pretty good matches based on the information I've thus far acquired, but I've got a long way to go in really knowing them, really knowing them. In Psalm 139 it says:

- O Lord Thou hast searched me and known me.*
- 2. Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up
Thou dost understand my thought from afar*
 - 3. Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down,
And art intimately acquainted with all my ways.*
 - 4. Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O Lord, Thou dost know it all.*
 - 5. Thou hast enclosed me behind and before,
And laid Thy hand upon me.*

6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is too high, I cannot attain to it*
7. *Where can I go from Thy Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Thy presence?*
8. *If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.*
9. *If I take the wings of the dawn,
If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,*
10. *Even there Thy hand will lead me.
And Thy right hand will lay hold of me.*
11. *If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,
And the light around me will be night.*
12. *Even the darkness is not dark to Thee.
And the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are alike to Thee.*
13. *For Thou didst form my inward parts;
Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.*
14. *I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made.
Wonderful are Thy works.
And my soul knows it very well.*
15. *My frame was not hidden from Thee,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth.*
16. *Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Thy book they were all written,*

- The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them,*
17. *How precious also are Thy thoughts to me, O Lord!
How vast is the sum of them.*
18. *If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.
When I am awake, I am still with Thee.*
19. *O that Thou wouldst slay the wicked, O God;
Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed.*
20. *For they speak against Thee wickedly,
And Thy enemies take Thy name in vain.*
21. *Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee?*
22. *I hate them with the utmost hatred
They have become my enemies.*
23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart,
Try me and know my anxious thoughts,*
24. *And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way.*

The only perfect "Gift Giver" is our Lord God, who knows each one of us completely. As the psalm indicates, He knows exactly what we need and want and yearn for. He knows exactly what you need and want and yearn for, Precious Pilgrim.

He knows (shout it).

He knows (whisper it).

He knows (think it).

He knows (pray it).

HE KNOWS

Your known sister in Christ,

Lucy

P.S. The perfect gift is God's gift to mankind, but more importantly and personally and intimately given to me and given to you, individually: Our Lord Jesus Christ.

So find yourself a crèche today. Shut your eyes and creatively imagine one. Build it rock by rock or brick by brick or board by board; any imaginary material will do, and no wolf or worldly woe can blow it down as long as Christ the Incarnate dwells within. Be still, Precious Pilgrim, in the presence of the Almighty God, the Gift Giver.

I close my eyes on this day and "bend the knee of my heart" and say thank you. Thank You, Lord God, Abba, Father, for Your Son, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Amen.