By GARY ANDREWS
Editor and Publisher

Holidays are special to me, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas. I think long and hard about how many great Christmases I have had. I have really been blessed by having loving parents during my formative years and now a loving wife, four children and five grandchildren.
My wife and I worked hard over the years establishing our family unit. Yes, we have had some difficult times and there have been times when even the smallest problem seemed larger than life, but we have endured because of our faith and trust in God and we have tried to pass this on to our children.
All of my life I have categorized the holidays as a tremendous family time for sharing and being together. Over the years I have seen far too many people that hated to see the holidays come because of family problems and the uneasiness of being around, supposedly, loved ones.
The family unit is the backbone of this great country of ours. It was built on Biblical principles and strong moral values and thanks to our many, many veterans of military service we have been allowed the opportunities and freedoms to enjoy life in America. We need to all remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 30: 5. "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."
Below is another story that I received by email from a friend. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in what we are doing that we don't realize what we are doing.
The story goes that some time ago a mother punished her five year old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and she became even more upset when the child used the gold paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree.
Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother the next morning and then said, "This is for you, Momma."
The mother was embarrassed by her earlier over reaction, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty. She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner.
"Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?"
She had tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Momma, it's not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full."
The mother was crushed. She fell on her knees and put her arms around her little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtless anger.
An accident took the life of the child only a short time later, and it is told that the mother kept that gold box by her bed for all the years of her life.
Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems she would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.
In a very real sense, each of us, as human beings, have been given a Golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and GOD. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.
Prayer: Father, thank you for my family. Thank you for the love you allow us to share with each other. I pray that all of us can be a witness for you wherever we are and in whatever we are doing. Amen.
(Suggested daily Bible readings: Sunday - Psalm 19:7-11; Monday - Matthew 7:7-8; Tuesday -

Numbers 14:17-18; Wednesday - Proverbs 15:1-2; Thursday - Luke 6:37-38; Friday - 2 Corinthians 8:7; Saturday - 1 Peter 5:5-7)