

Enriched in every way

By [Christian Coon](#)

November 24, 2008

My George Foreman Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine is sitting in my basement, serving as a lovely stand for our waffle iron. It still works fine, but I think I've only turned it on twice since I unwrapped it two or three years ago.

My mother bought it for me. Every year in mid-November she calls to ask what I want for Christmas, and every year I try to put her off—but she is not to be denied. So I mentally rummage through my closets and, instead of admitting how much I already have, I try to convince myself that I need something. That's when I ask for a George Foreman grill. Yes. I must have a George Foreman grill.

No matter how Christians juggle Advent and Christmas, many will be thinking that they lack something. Shoppers will start off with empty carts. Gift givers and recipients will make lists and wonder what's missing from their lives. If you focus on Christ's first coming, the days of Advent remind you that although the promise is there, the manger is empty. If you emphasize Christ's second coming, it's clear that the Messiah has not yet returned.

How interesting, then, that the text from 1 Corinthians emphasizes abundance. Grace, as is often the case with Paul, is everywhere: "Grace to you and peace," "because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus." As Marion Soards [notes](#), "The word 'grace' summarizes Paul's understanding of God's *full generosity* in dealing with humanity" (emphasis mine).

But it doesn't stop there. The members of the Corinth church have been "enriched in every way" with the gifts of speech and knowledge. (Paul will take them to task later in the letter for their misuse of these gifts.) [The Message](#) then translates verse 7 as follows: "Just think—you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale."

You don't need a thing. You've got it all. Grace and gifts abound from the generosity of God. As we participate in the Advent theme of waiting and yearning for what has not yet arrived, let's remind ourselves that we truly lack for nothing.

I'm incorporating an [A Christmas Carol](#) theme for my Advent sermons this year, focusing on a different character each week. This Sunday, I'm using the 1 Corinthians text and focusing on Scrooge's initial refusal to acknowledge his abundance—and his inability to find the spiritual benefits of waiting for fulfillment.

As for stories about waiting, I was moved by the many accounts this month of people waiting in line to vote. Andrew Sullivan [posted](#) several wonderful examples on his blog. Here's my [favorite](#), from a voter in Los Angeles:

Got up at 6:00 a.m. to vote. Put on my sweatshirt and my jeans that reek of Korean barbecue. I arrived at my polling place, a church, at 6:15. I counted. I was number 50 in line. We had 45 minutes before the polling place opened. You had to stand. You couldn't sit or even lean against the building. It rained all night. The sidewalk was wet. When the polls opened...there were 200 people waiting. Some in heels. Some in ties. Some in pajamas. Lots of hair pulled back in ponytails. Lots of baseball caps. Dodgers. Red Sox. Indians.

The line stretched from the church to the Burger King around the corner. Kinda fitting. That's America. Faith and french fries. I watched people walk out with their "I voted" stickers. You could see the smiles...and a few tears. An older woman got her ballot and told the poll worker..."I've voted my entire life, but this is what I have been waiting for."