

Negotiating Black Friday

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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For more than a decade, *Adbusters* magazine has been promoting [Buy Nothing Day](#), an anti-consumerist alternative to hitting the malls on [Black Friday](#).

The values behind Buy Nothing Day impressed [Ecclesia Collective](#) co-founder Jason Evans and his wife, but the event itself clashed with their belief that gift-giving has a proper place in Christian community. So in 2003 they hosted their first Make Something Day gathering, at which friends taught each other art, craft and cooking skills. The idea has caught on a bit, and Evans continues to spread the word [online](#). (Via [Eliacín Rosario-Cruz](#).)

My

own family members know they can count on some homemade Christmas gifts from me. (I spend a lot of my free time playing around with audio recording and food preservation—separately, that is, though sauerkraut does make a lovely gurgling sound as it ferments.) But I haven't been able to bring myself to eschew store-bought gifts entirely: it seems stingy to receive such gifts without reciprocating and rather bombastic to insist that my family end a long tradition. I [read](#) recently of a young Christian couple that avoids Christmas gifts entirely by declining to spend the holiday with either family—a story that impressed but failed to convert me.

Tomorrow I'm heading to

Pittsburgh to spend Thanksgiving with my girlfriend's family. While I'm not going anywhere near the mall Friday, I also won't be making anything or taking a hard line against spending a few dollars if it comes up. Time with potential in-laws, even more than time with one's own family, requires plenty of compromise and flexibility. But I'm thankful for it just the same.