

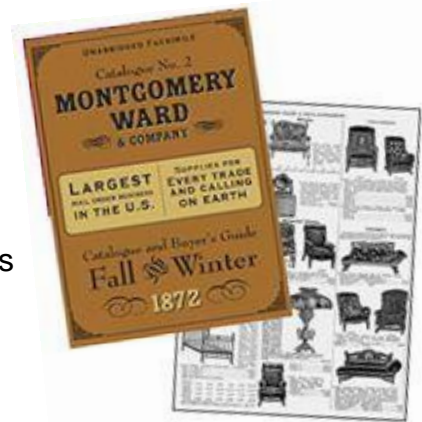
# The Mail-Order Catalog

Aaron Montgomery Ward and his partner offered their first mail-order catalog on this day in 1872. It was a single 8-by-12-inch sheet showing a few dry goods items and instructions for ordering.

By 1904, the company was mailing out 3 million catalogs weighing four pounds each. Beginning in 1926, the company added Montgomery Ward retail stores. The catalog ceased to exist in 1985, and the company announced in 2000 that it was closing.

Previous to 1872, Ward had been working as a traveling salesman when he developed a revolutionary concept. After listening to farmers complain about high prices and middlemen's profits, Ward conceived the idea of purchasing large quantities of merchandise directly from manufacturers for cash and selling to customers on a cash basis. He also offered a "satisfaction guaranteed" return policy.

Sometimes we treat prayer like a mail-order catalog. We follow the instructions, presenting our requests with praise and thanksgiving and asking in Jesus' name. But sometimes our order is not filled, or we get something different. We could understand if the items were out of stock, but God owns the cattle on a thousand hills and His resources are limitless. Why aren't our desires granted?



Ordering from a catalog involves *our* will only, but prayer involves God's will, too. He wants what is best for His children, and He's the only one who knows what that is. Sometimes the things we ask for would be detrimental to us or other people. Jesus said that our heavenly Father gives us good gifts, more than any earthly parent gives (Matthew 7:11).

Prayer is a more revolutionary concept than a mail-order business. God doesn't give us what we want; He gives us what we truly need.

*Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly (Psalm 5:3).*

– Beecher Hunter