

The Lord said it is more blessed to give than to receive. We understand that principle. As little children we looked for the thing we were going to receive at Christmas time, but then came the time in our lives when we found more pleasure in giving to someone else. That was when maturity came into our lives and we stepped aside from being self-centered and found it was more blessed to do things for others as the Lord had indicated.

Howard W. Hunter, *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, p. 71

This spirit of Christmas is something I would hope each of us would have within his heart and within his life, not only at this particular season but throughout the year.

Thomas S. Monson, *Be Your Best Self*, p. 185

Despite discouragement and disheartening conditions throughout the world, Christmas is the happiest season of the whole year. But let us ever keep in mind that people are most blessed whose daily conduct most nearly comports with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior

David O. McKay, *Teachings of David O. McKay*, p. 467

We encourage those who recognize the Lord's blessings and great mercy in their lives to reach out and bless the lives of others. By so doing, you can go beyond the mere custom and ritual of the season. You can become instruments through which the Lord blesses the poor, the lonely, the despairing. You will have a greater sense of the reality of the Savior's existence. And your celebration of His birth will indeed be joyous.

Ezra Taft Benson, First-Presidency-Christmas Message, *Church News*, 15 December 1985, p. 3

All must mature in their view of Christmas. It has been said that Christmas is for children; but as the years of childhood fancy pass away and an understanding maturity takes their place, the simple teaching of the Savior that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) becomes a reality. The evolution from a pagan holiday transformed into a Christian festival, to the birth of Christ in men's lives, is another form of maturity that comes to one who has been touched by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Howard W. Hunter, *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, p. 270

I could wish for nothing more for my friends, associates, and family members alike than that they would accept the gift of courage for Christmas--the courage to be Christlike; the courage to be childlike in faith, in belief, and in joy, anticipated and real; the courage to be honest with God, with self, and with all humanity; and the courage to place others ahead of themselves. How wonderful it is when we have the courage to declare, without hesitation and with real conviction, "Him only shall I serve." (See Luke 4:8.)

Marvin J. Ashton, *Be of Good Cheer*, p. 94

To catch the real meaning of the "Spirit of Christmas" we need only to drop the last syllable of the word, and it becomes the "Spirit of Christ." It beckons us to follow Him and become worthy of the blessedness which He promised to the most unlikely people--the poor in spirit, the sorrowful, the meek, the seekers after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers, and even the persecuted and the oppressed.

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 306

Of all the people in Christendom, we are the only ones in a position to reap the full blessings of the Spirit of Christ in our lives, to know what actually is involved in his ministry, to partake in full measure of that spirit which goes with the Christmas season. We have everything that the world has; we have the historical accounts of his coming onto the earth; we are aware of the traditions that have been woven around his birth, many of which have little substance in reality and fact. But the thing with which we are particularly blessed is the knowledge, gained by latter-day revelation, of his divine sonship.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, p. 36

The compass of the spirit of Christmas points constantly toward others, never toward ourselves, except to beckon us into the realm of service and comradeship. The spirit of Christmas is ever buoyant, never earthbound or grounded by accumulated mundane things. It soars by the lifting wings of love and distills its blessings, even as the dew from heaven.

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 306

I can think of no more wonderful message to carry forth at this Christmas time than this message that, right in our midst, right in our homes, all our lives if we but magnify the priesthood, we have the authority of God with us. Therein lies the challenge of the Church today, as it has always been. It is the fact that this power of the priesthood has been magnified by each succeeding generation to a greater degree than it was by the previous generation that we have now arrived at a generation in the Church which is more blessed, by and beyond all measurements, than any other generation in the history of man.

Henry D. Moyle December 13, 1961, *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1961*, p. 8

Bringing happiness to others without their knowing the identity of the giver is, as Portia says in *The Merchant of Venice*, "twice blest; It blesseth him that gives and him that takes." (Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, iv.i. 186-87.) [But] we celebrate Christmas principally to commemorate the birth of our Lord, Redeemer, and Savior, who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In doing so we also open our hearts and souls to show our love for our families, friends, strangers, and all creatures of God. In this way we honor Him in the most important way we can—by keeping his commandment to "love one another" (John 15:1.2 for He has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.)

James E. Faust, *The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust*, p. 271

Times change, years speed by; but Christmas continues sacred. It is through giving, rather than getting, that the spirit of Christ enters our lives. God still speaks. He prompts. He guides. He blesses. He gives.

Thomas S. Monson, *Live the Good Life*, p. 54

Frequently the love of a child can stir a man's heart to action and bring a change into his life. Last winter in a large department store, a little boy walked hand in hand with his mother and father to the toy department to see Santa Claus. The parents had not been getting along. As the little one climbed upon his knee, old Santa cheerfully asked, "What do you want for Christmas?" Santa had no ready answer when the lad replied, "Just for my daddy to love my mommy like he used to." Could a father hear such a plea and not be moved? Could a mother? "

Elder Thomas S. Monson, *Conference Report*, April 1965, 2nd Day—Morning Meeting, p. 46

All of us enjoy wonderful gifts from God that, if developed, can be enjoyed by others. For example, at Christmas time many of us enjoy the musical gifts of Handel, the literary gifts of Dickens, and the talents of many others. The sharing of these natural gifts blesses both the giver and the receiver. Every Christmas can be richer when we share and enjoy gifts that cannot be held, but only felt.

James E. Faust, *The Greatest Gift*, p. 5

Heavenly Father is ever mindful of those who need, who seek, who trust, who pray, and who listen when He speaks. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's gift becomes our blessing. May every heart open wide and welcome Him-Christmas day and always.

Thomas S. Monson, *Christmas Gifts, Christmas Blessings*, p. 12

It would be well for each and every family during the Christmas season to read Luke, chapter 2, and Matthew, chapter 2, and to reflect not only upon the "good tidings of great joy," but also upon the Savior's atonement for us. It would also be well to foster family programs of assisting those in need at this time of year, and then to express prayers of gratitude for our own blessings. Christmas is, indeed, a time of "good tidings of great joy," but it is also a time to "let the solemnities of eternity rest upon [our] minds" (D&C 43:34).

Spencer J. Condie, *In Perfect Balance*, p. 182

Love for God and for one another should be the Christmas theme. Such was the divine announcement by the heavenly host that first heralded the "glad tidings of great joy!"

David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals*, p. 36

Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Christmas Devotional*, Salt Lake City, December 7, 1986

I read the other day a story written by a little girl whose father was on a mission in Denmark when she and her mother lived in Parowan. She writes:

"My little mother had to work like a slave to keep her children while Father was on his mission. I remember how every night she would spin, and how in the daytime, I would split fine splinters off from the pitchy wood, and at night I would sit with her and tend the baby and keep holding and lighting these pitchy sticks for her to see to spin by, and how I would cry when I went to bed to think my sweet little mother had to work so hard...."

"I remember the Christmas of 1862. All of us children hung up our stockings. We jumped up early in the morning to see what Santa had brought, but there was not a thing in them. Mother wept bitterly. She went to her box and got a little apple and cut it in little tiny pieces and that was our Christmas, but I have never forgotten to this day how I loved her dear little hands as she was cutting that apple."
(Hannah Daphne Smith Dalton)

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Conference Report*, April 1959, Afternoon Meeting, p. 119

Love for God and for one another should be the Christmas theme.

David O. McKay, *Teachings of President David O. McKay*, p. 440

Despite discouragement and disheartening conditions throughout the world, Christmas is the happiest season of the whole year. But let us ever keep in mind that people are most blessed whose daily conduct most nearly comports with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, at whose birth was proclaimed: "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Thomas S. Monson, *Favorite Quotations*, p. 185

If at any time during the year our hearts are susceptible to the teachings of the Master and our feelings responsive with appreciation for our blessings, it should be at Christmas time. Regardless of the season, I ask this question: How often do each of us take time to meditate on the numerous blessings that we continue to enjoy and with a full measure of appreciation in our hearts express gratitude to the source of those blessings—even unto God?

President Milton R. Hunter, December 15, 1964,
BYU Speeches of the Year, 1964, p. 2

Good old St. Nicholas has long since gone the way of all mortals, but the joy he experienced in doing kindly deeds is now shared by millions who are learning that true happiness comes only by making others happy—the practical application of the Savior's doctrine of losing one's life to gain it. In short, the Christmas spirit is the Christ spirit, that makes our hearts glow in brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service.

David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals*, p. 551

True love is a reflection of Christ's love. In December of each year we call it the Christmas spirit. You can hear it. You can see it. You can feel it. But never alone.

Thomas S. Monson, *Live the Good Life*, p. 77

Try as you may, you cannot put the Lord in your debt. For every time you try to do His will, He simply pours out more blessings upon you. Sometimes the blessings may seem to you to be a little slow in coming—perhaps this tests your faith—but come they will and abundantly. It has been said, "Cast your bread upon the waters and after a while it shall come back to you toasted and buttered."

Ezra Taft Benson, *Christmas Devotional*,
Salt Lake City, Utah, 7 December 1986

No worry or anxiety over the choosing and giving of gifts; no enjoyment of holiday feasts; no decorations however modern or attractive; no social parties however jovial, should ever overshadow the fact that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ who came to give life, light, and peace to all mankind, and who marked the way by which these eternal blessings may be obtained. Let us ever remember that "...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

David O. McKay, *Teachings of President David O. McKay*, p. 434

Brotherhood involves service, not conquest. It involves confidence in man, in your brother; not suspicion and hatred. It involves truthful dealings; not chicanery and fraud.

Brotherliness is but the manifestation of the spirit of Christ. Thank heaven for the spirit of Christmas that brings us closer to each other in expression of such brotherhood! It is the duty of us all to manifest brotherly love, first toward one another, and then toward all mankind; to seek unity, harmony, and peace in organizations within the Church; and, then, by precept and example, to extend these virtues throughout the world.

David O. McKay, *Teachings of President David O. McKay*, p. 440

We send Christmas cards to numerous friends and relatives, pulling back into happy memories the loved ones who have moved out of our immediate association. Like the wise men who opened their treasury and presented to Jesus gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, we present to our loved ones things to eat and wear and enjoy.

Though we make an effort to follow the pattern of gift giving, sometimes our program becomes an exchange-gift given for gift expected. Never did the Savior give in expectation. I know of no case in his life in which there was an exchange. He was always the giver, seldom the recipient. Never did he give shoes, hose, or a vehicle; never did he give perfume, a shirt, or a fur wrap. His gifts were of such a nature that the recipient could hardly exchange or return the value. His gifts were rare ones: eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. His gifts were opportunity to the down-trodden, freedom to the oppressed, light in the darkness, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing. His friends gave him shelter, food, and love. He gave them of himself, his love, his service, his life. The wise men brought him gold and frankincense. He gave them and all their fellow mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life. We should strive to give as he gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 246

Christmas is intended to be a joyous time, a time for all to reflect upon the fact that the Lord has come. We have the opportunity to repeat and share the joyous news of the birth of the child Jesus, our Savior, Friend, and Redeemer. We are beneficiaries of His priceless gift: His life, His example, His love, and His redeeming grace.

Marvin J. Ashton, *Be of Good Cheer*, p. 94

Good feelings at Christmas approach the ideal. Christmas comes once a year to reveal to us the beautiful and near approach man can make to the divine, to the ideal, to the Christlike life.

Once a year on this day we raise the flag of truce. All men are friends. We are our "brother's keeper." It comes so clearly to us that all mean well, that their greetings are sincere. We lift high the open hand of fellowship. There is no race, no color, no rich or poor, no bond or free. Christmas comes to remind us of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It comes to show us the real progress we would make, could all our days be unselfish, friendly, helpful, and clear of bitterness and strife. (34-01)

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 247

The real purpose of Christmas is to worship Him whose birth is commemorated during this season. How might we do that? By giving. Certainly there are genuine feelings of love and friendship wrapped up in the beautiful packages we exchange with those dear to us. But I'm concerned about another kind of giving. Considering all that the Savior has given and continues to give us, is there something we might give Him in return this Christmastime?

Christ's great gift to us was His life and sacrifice. Should that not then be our small gift to Him—our lives and sacrifices, not only now but in the future?

Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ezra Taft Benson Remembers the Joy of Christmas*, p. 11