

You can find the true spirit of Christmas by turning your heart to God. If you desire to find the true spirit of Christmas and partake of the sweetness of it, let me make this suggestion to you. During the hurry of the festive occasion of this Christmas season, find time to turn your heart to God. Perhaps in the quiet hours, and in a quiet place, and on your knees—alone or with loved ones—give thanks for the good things that have come to you, and ask that his Spirit might dwell in you as you earnestly strive to serve him and keep his commandments. He will take you by the hand and his promises will be kept.

Howard W. Hunter, *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, p. 271

Somehow in the magic of [the Christmas] season, there is less of hate and more of love, there is less of greed and more of giving, there is less of indifference and more of gratitude. If only for a brief season, we are inclined to lay aside our selfishness and reach out to help others. We see this all around us in the generous outpouring of kindness in behalf of those in need and pain and distress. We are more inclined to step beyond the narrow confines of our self-centered routines and reach out to help others less fortunate.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings*, p. 60

Christmas is the celebration of an event, the full import of which will only be realized when he comes again to rule and reign, when peace shall be permanently established in the earth, and when he shall take his place as King of Kings. He will reign in a kingdom whose entire legal code will be compressed into the three simple words, "Thou shalt love." We, with the Apostle Peter, declare to all the world, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Hugh B. Brown, *Continuing the Quest*, pp. 461–462

What a glorious and wonderful season of year this is. Our hearts change. Our attitudes change. Our way of thinking changes. There is a little more forgiveness in us. A little more of kindness. A little more of love. A little more of patience. A little more of understanding at the Christmas season of the year. What a glorious thing it is that at least once in twelve months we can become a little better than we have been during the remainder of the year. Thanks be to God for the gift of His son, and thanks be to His Son for the gift of His life. How grateful we are at this Christmas season.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, pp. 60-61

We were in Jerusalem last year. We went to Shepherd's Field, in the evening after the sun had set, and looked out across those fields to Bethlehem and relived again the timeless and beautiful story of the birth of the Son of God, He who condescended to come to earth, He the Son of the Father, He the Prince of Peace who left His heavenly home to be born into mortality in a simple manger in a vassal state among a hated people. No man who ever walked the earth has touched more lives for greater good than has Jesus of Nazareth. He is our Savior, our Redeemer. He is the Prince of Peace, the Holy One. We love Him. We honor Him. We respect Him. We worship Him. And at this Christmas season, in His holy name, we extend our blessings to people everywhere for peace on earth and good will to men. I like to interpret that as peace on earth and blessings of peace to men of good will. That, I believe, is the essence of the whole thing. How grateful I am for Christmas. How grateful I am for the Son of God, of whom we sing and praise during this season.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 61

If this formula for happiness—love one another—is effective for one day, may it not work at other times, at all times? If by giving we receive, and by dividing we increase, why not make happiness permanent by carrying the Christmas spirit throughout the year? May we all enjoy the spirit of Christmas for the next 365 days.

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 307

More presents were likely put under the tree than there were gifts placed in others' storehouses of self-esteem. More bright wrappings may have been scattered about than bright words of good cheer.

Neal A. Maxwell, *The Christmas Scene*, p. 1

Christmas time with its cargo of love is the greatest of all anniversaries for those who worship the God of love. It brings peace of mind to millions who, for one day at least, think more of others than of selves; more of giving than of getting.

This is the secret of the popularity of Christmas. It is the best day of the year, the most joyous because we seek the happiness of others rather than of ourselves. It is the day when love takes command, and men, women, and children, by losing themselves, find joy and peace. For one day, at least, Christendom practices Christianity.

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 305

God's gifts, unlike seasonal gifts, are eternal and unperishable, constituting a continuing Christmas which is never over! These infinite gifts are made possible by the "infinite atonement."

Neal A. Maxwell, *The Christmas Scene*, p. 4

I testify that the greatest gift of Christmas is the atonement of Jesus as the Redeemer, the Son of God. Paul said this was a free gift. (Romans 5:15.) It is a gift we cannot handle or touch, but we can feel the immeasurable love of the Giver. And through this gift we may find the pathway to eternal life. My testimony of this is sure, real, and absolute, as is my sacred testimony of him.

James E. Faust, *The Greatest Gift*, p. 6

Let each man examine his own heart as he gives thanks for the peace of this Christmas and try to discover his true feelings toward his fellow men, toward those who are his neighbors, his brothers in the Church, his new friends of an allied country. Let him vigorously weed out all envy, jealousy, greed, and hatred and undertake to radiate the spirit of goodwill, of love of fellow men, not for the season only but throughout the year.

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 307

The world is still full of kindness, charity, helpfulness, love, honesty, sincerity, sympathy, and faith. These priceless gifts of the spirit may be ours on this Christmas day and throughout the coming year despite the efforts of all the modern Herods who would destroy them. But ours only on condition that we increase and share them.

Hugh B. Brown, *Continuing the Quest*, p. 455

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.

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

On Christmas Eve we all gathered around the wood-burning stove, enjoying the warmth and the pleasant aroma of the burning cedar. One of the uncles offered an opening prayer. We sang carols and hymns. One of our aunts read of the birth of Jesus and of the "good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11.) Then Grandfather and Grandmother told us how much they loved us.

...

As I look back on that special Christmas, the most memorable part was that we did not think about presents. Presents are wonderful, but they are not essential to our happiness. I could not have been happier than I was then. While we had no presents to hold and fondle and play with, there were many wonderful gifts that could not be seen but could be felt. There was the gift of boundless love. We knew God loved us, and we all loved each other. It made us feel so wonderful and secure to belong and to be part of all that went on. We wanted nothing else. We did not miss the presents at all. I never remember a happier Christmas in my childhood.

We all enjoy giving and receiving presents, but there is a difference between presents and gifts. The true gifts may be part of ourselves giving of the riches of the heart of mind, and therefore more enduring and of far greater worth than presents brought at a store.

James E. Faust, *The Greatest Gift*, p. 3

Christmas means giving—and "the gift without the giver is bare." Giving of self; giving of substance; giving of heart and mind and strength in assisting those in need and in spreading the cause of His eternal truth—these are of the very essence of the true spirit of Christmas.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings*, p. 59

Christmas and the holiday season is a wonderful time to help us to forgive and forget. We become our better selves and rise above the shackles that seem to bind us as we meet the concerns of the eternal every day. The holiday season is a wonderful time to find peace. It is a time to make new resolves and to hope for better days. The holiday season is a special time because we make time for family, loved ones, and friends. We seem to turn outward rather than inward. We think more of others, including strangers. We have the spirit of giving. The heavenly hosts who proclaimed the birth of Jesus declared, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). The good tidings of Christmas "shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

James E. Faust, *The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust*, pp. 270-271

We give at Christmas not only because it is traditional but also because it makes us feel good. This giving represents something elemental in our concept of the Christ's life and virtue. It is an expression of our esteem for his altruism, his self-denial, and his benevolence. Our giving, petty as it may be in comparison with his, serves to keep alive in men a virtue which is essential in the whole Christian philosophy. Perhaps every Christmas we should review the gifts of the Savior to humanity.

Stephen L Richards, *Where Is Wisdom?*, p. 316

It is the spirit of Christmas that counts; it is the feeling that we are his brethren, and that we want to live to come back into his presence so that we can go, as the shepherds went, right into the very presence of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. We do not want to live a life that will lead us away from the Christ.

David O. McKay, *Teachings*, compiled by Clare Middlemiss, p. 444

As we remember that "...when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiiah 2:17), we will not find ourselves in the unenviable position of Jacob Marley's ghost, who spoke to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' immortal A Christmas Carol. Marley sadly spoke of opportunities lost. Said he, "Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"

Marley added, "Why did I walk through the crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raised them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me?"

Fortunately, the privilege to render service to others can come to each of us. If we but look we too will see a bright, particular star which will guide us to our opportunity.

Thomas S. Monson, Conference Report, October 1965, Afternoon Meeting, pp. 143-144

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

Franklin D. Richards, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1965, p. 2

The Sabbath should be like a secondary Christmas. One of the greatest needs of our personal lives is to get closer to the Savior of the World, and this is one of the primary reasons we commemorate Christmas. This is also why we set apart one day out of each seven as the Sabbath—a holy day—a day which becomes like a secondary Christmas in which our thoughts should turn to the Master, and his Spirit be invited into our lives.

Howard W. Hunter, Teachings, p. 112

We sometimes sing of the twelve days of Christmas; here are... thirteen gifts...

- The gifts of an issue of blood and an issue of tears
- The gift of testing
- The gift of having "a way to escape"
- The gift of the opportunity to start over and be clean
- The gift of hope
- The gift of self
- The gift of being free from guilt that others try to place on us
- The gift of life itself
- The gift of sight to see the things of God and to read
- The gift to communicate and to bless through our words
- The gift of having traditions, both listed and unspoken
- The gift of rest for those who deserve it
- The gift of friends

These are thirteen gifts of Christmas we might consider this year, but the greatest of all God's gifts is eternal life. And that gift is available to all who ever have, do now, or will yet walk the earth.

Vaughn J. Featherstone, *The Incomparable Christ: Our Master and Model*, p. 148

And at this Christmas season, in His holy name, we extend our blessings to people everywhere for peace on earth and good will to men. I like to interpret that as peace on earth and blessings of peace to men of good will. That, I believe, is the essence of the whole thing. How grateful I am for Christmas. How grateful I am for the Son of God, of whom we sing and praise during this season.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Washington Temple Christmas Lighting Ceremony*, December 2, 1996

I'll never forget one Christmas, the Christmas of 1923. I returned home on Christmas Eve to my parents and ten brothers and sisters after serving two-and-a-half years as a missionary in England. Earlier that day, while traveling through Salt Lake City, Church Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith conferred upon me a blessing in which he counseled me to be devoted to the Lord, and then promised that, in turn, the Lord would make me equal to my labors.

Then it was on to Whitney for a joyful reunion with my family. That evening Mother and Father took me into their confidence, letting me help them fill the stockings after going to the granary and elsewhere to gather presents they had hidden. This took a good part of the night. We spent the rest visiting, with me reporting on my mission and Mother and Father telling me about the things that had happened while I was away. It was a choice evening.

My brothers and sisters arose early Christmas morning. After having a glass of milk and a piece of bread in the kitchen, they hurried into the living room to see what goodies Santa had brought them. It was a happy morning. I couldn't hold back the tears as I felt the joy and love in our home. It seemed that we were hugging and kissing each other throughout the day. It was a wonderful reunion. Being away from home had only intensified my deep feelings for my noble parents.

Such experiences are sweet and binding, and tend to remind us of the things that are really important.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ezra Taft Benson Remembers the Joy of Christmas*, p. 5

Acts of service are the best and most complete way to really put Christ first in Christmas.

*Church News*, December 20, 1997/

Another example of President Kimball's discipleship occurred one Christmas Eve several years ago. He called and asked if I were busy. I quickly responded, "Not at all. What can I do for you, President Kimball?" He told me he needed a companion to go with him to the Primary Children's Hospital to give a few blessings. It turned out that he had heard of several children from South America, as well as some American Indian children, who were in the hospital. We went from floor to floor giving blessings to all the Latins and Lamanites and many others too. I was deeply affected by the love of President Kimball and his tender friendship with each child. He was a friend to the sick—a friend to those far from home. He exemplified the tender, loving friendship that the Savior would give. It was easy to see how he could say, "The Savior is my best friend."

Elder Robert E. Wells, *Ensign*, November 1982, p. 69

We are each one on a road going toward home, but we're not trying to get there for Christmas. We're trying to get there for eternity. We want to arrive home safely to our loving Father in Heaven. He wants us to make it safely there, so He has sent a guiding light for us to follow: a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect example. He knows the way. He lights our path in the dark of night, in storms, at crossroads, and in the daylight. He is always ready to show the way back home.

Margaret D. Nadauld, *Ensign*, May 1999, p. 94

At this Christmas season we rejoice in the blessings that come of membership and activity in this Church whose head is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Adney Y. Komatsu, *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 29

December of 1945 and 1946 will forever live in my memory. It was just three days before Christmas in 1945 that President George Albert Smith convened a special meeting of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. With World War II finally over, President Smith announced it was time for the Church to reestablish contact with the Saints in Europe and distribute much-needed welfare supplies. In that meeting I was called to go to Europe as president of the European Mission to handle those assignments.

The call came as a complete surprise. Because of conditions in Europe, it was not possible to take my family with me. I had no idea what I would find when I got there, how I would arrange for travel throughout a continent that had been devastated by war, or how long the First Presidency would require me to stay. I was told that I should prepare to leave as soon as possible. This unexpected development affected greatly our preparations for Christmas and created an unusually sentimental and loving atmosphere in our home. Flora and I realized we would be separated for a period of time, and our feelings were tender at the prospect.

How grateful I was for her support, and for the knowledge we shared that this was the Lord's will for our family at this time. As the Christmas season drew to a close I recorded in my journal: "The next year will no doubt be spent, in large measure and possible in its entirety, abroad. It will mean some sacrifice of material comforts. I will miss my wife and sweet children and the association of the brethren and the visits to the stakes. I go, however, with no fear whatsoever, knowing that this is the Lord's work and that He will sustain me. I am grateful for the opportunity and deeply grateful that my wife, who is

always most loyal, feels the same way. God bless them while I am away."

The following ten-and-a-half months were among the most challenging and yet rewarding I or my family had known. The separation tested our faith and endurance and physical energy to the limit, but helped us grow as never before.

I'll never forget the thrill of stepping off the airplane in Salt Lake City the following December, in 1946, and finding Flora waiting for me. That Christmas was among the most poignant I have ever spent. Perhaps there had been no year in my life when my soul had been so stirred or when I had faced such challenges. I had been forced to rely completely upon the Lord, and my gratitude for His goodness and watchcare filled my soul and brought me easily to tears. I had come to love deeply the Saints in Europe, and leaving them had been a bittersweet experience.

But being home again brought such deep and fulfilling joy. While the separation had been difficult for us all, we had grown even closer to one another. And as we realized how many blessings the Lord had given us throughout the year, tears flowed freely.

After the children had opened their presents on Christmas Day, I wrote in my journal, "The children were most happy and appreciative. There has not been an unkind word all day. In fact, we seldom hear arguments in our home. But this day has been especially blessed. It has been such a joy to sit with my angel wife and review the past, devoid of regrets, anticipate the future joyously, and count our many blessings gratefully. I shall never forget this glorious Christmas."

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ezra Taft Benson Remembers the Joy of Christmas*, pp. 7-8