

MY CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR ... JESUS

Last year, Ed's message came with a warning: **We must be transformed!** God told us, "I will not love the sin that takes up residence within you. Only when you truly repent in humility before Me will I be able to claim you as My own. You must be made anew, transformed, cleansed, before I allow you to be worthy of My celestial chambers to meet Me your God and [be] My Bride at the marriage supper, My celestial and holy table."

My sisters, here it is now a year later. Ask yourself, have I repented and made the changes Christ is calling me to make? Have I grown closer to the Lord in deed and purpose? Am I ready right now to go into the marriage supper of the Lamb, if the call went forth today? All of these questions are certainly something we should be considering. Hopefully, these questions will cause us to rethink some of our actions and commitments.

Here at this Holy Christmas season, what better gift can we offer to the Christ Child than a truly broken, repentant heart, a contrite spirit and a new commitment to obey all His Commandments in the coming year? Is not the offering of a repentant, humble and pure heart, dedicated to His Work the best gift of all to give to the Christ? What gift will you offer the Christ this Christmas?

D&C 59:2a, e-f Wherefore I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve Him. Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness; even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon My holy day; for verily this is a day appointed unto thee to rest from thy labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High.

We hope you will actually be inspired to re-read the full devotionals from last year. See www.ogrb.org Resource Page. May we continue to put the actions the Patriarchs recommended into our daily lives--for the cause of Zion!

by Pat Chadwick, Women's Leader, 2010-2016

Stepping Stones for Spiritual Growth



Preparation Guide for December Women's Devotionals: Last year, in September 2014, Elder Ed Story brought an inspired message to the Church of Jesus Christ--Oak Grove Restoration Branch. (If you don't have a copy, you can find it on the back of the 2015 women's calendar.)

The message brought by Ed started with this: "My children, who are willing to serve Me, listen to My word. **I am offering you another invitation to come unto My fold for the last time, in these the last days and age to do My will.**" The Lord also told us, "**You must obey, and be cleansed, and made new creatures before I allow you to be worthy of My invitation.**"

Are we worthy of the invitation? Can we really say we are on our way to becoming "new creatures"? If not, why not? Ladies, let's step out in faith and truly obey all God's commandments and see what happens. We can start by changing little things in our lives and setting our homes in order. Ask God to assist you in this very thing. By the very power of His Holy Spirit, He can and will assist us. We, of ourselves, are unable to overcome the sins in our lives and become transformed, but with God's help we can do it!

Third thing listed in the guide prepared by the Patriarchs of the church: "Is my house in order?"

Action = "Sit down as a family and discuss the needs of the family. Pray earnestly together for each other, having family prayer each day."
Read D&C 90:6f

Week #1 December

When you read the story of Christ's birth, do you ever wonder why the wise men were the only ones searching for Him? Why were there not more people actively watching for Him? Do you think those same possible reasons apply today as we watch and prepare for His Second Coming?

1. Will WE forget or misunderstand the latter day prophecies, due to our own lack of study?
2. Will WE give up hope or decide WE don't care?
3. Do WE think it won't happen in OUR day?
4. Are WE too busy to actively seek Him?

Ether 5:41 And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be, and abide in you forever. Amen.

The Wise Men had to actively accept the invitation to go find the Christ child. Let us begin our journey and step out in faith to prepare ourselves for the Coming of our King!

Week #2 December

Read Hymn #180:

“Admonition”

“Time is ripe, My work must hasten! Who so will, may bide the hour. Naught can harm who God protecteth, elements confess His power. Up ye, then, to the high places I have bid you occupy! Peril waits upon the heedless, Grace upon the souls who try.”

D&C 135:2b The hastening time is here and greater unity than ever before is necessary if the forces of opposition are to be met.

We are called to wait for Him and never give up; endure to the end and never waver.

God promises to one day wipe all tears from our eyes and to fill our hearts with peace and eternal joy.

Hold firm to His promises, dear sisters! He is coming!

Let us rejoice in the Christmas season, looking forward with joy and hope to that which is yet to come, even the return of our Lord and Savior as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Also read D&C 108:10d

Week #3 December

Read Hymn #63:

“Let Us Pray for One Another.”

“Pray in faith and pray unceasing, to the God we love and trust. For our prayers are much availing, if we walk upright and just. Be not weary of exhorting, heed the lessons of each day; and that we may be unwavering, for each other let us pray.”

Psalms 40:1 I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Death could not hold Him. He dwells in heaven and hears our prayers!

Consider the direct line to heaven that is ours--it is never busy! Yes, we have access to instant messaging (think a prayer) and texting (write down a prayer). He always answers our prayers. We all love those “yes” answers, but sometimes He will say “no” or “wait” and then our faith is tested.

Prayers are powerful and God says they come up before Him as a sweet incense.

Also read Revelation 8:3-4

Week #4 December

D&C 85:36b says that our incomings, our outgoings, and all of our salutations shall be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High.

1. What if during this Christmas season everything we did would be done in the name of the Lord?
2. What if we carried that on into the coming year?
3. What if every day we arose with the intent to let all our actions that day glorify God?

Yes, surely, these actions will transform our lives! What a gift we will give to the Christ -- even that of a transformed life for Him!

D&C 77:2a And now, verily thus saith the Lord, it is expedient that all things be done unto My glory.

Again, as surely as we move forward to offer ourselves to Him, through spiritual improvements and renewed commitments, He blesses.

Mosiah 1:56-57 And He never doth vary from that which He hath said; therefore, if ye do keep His commandments, He doth bless you, and prosper you.