



By Elder
Terence M. Vinson
Of the Seventy

The **SPIRIT** of



We can feel our Savior's love each day of our lives.

When I was a boy, my father gave me a Christmas present I will never forget. It was a green Matchbox® racing car, which I absolutely loved. This car was the favorite thing I received that year. I played with it all the time. Then one day I got angry—I now can't even remember why—and I threw my cherished car in a fit of anger. It landed in a wisteria bush.

In Australia, Christmastime is in the summertime. These were long, hot days and the wisteria bush was thick with its full summer growth.

I soon calmed down enough to realize I had better find my car. I looked for hours. Days. Weeks, even. But I never saw my car again. It was forever lost in the tangles of the thick bush. I felt terrible! My father gave me something because he loved me, and I threw it away. Even today, when I think about this experience, I feel distressed at how I rejected this gift given in love.

Sometimes it helps to center our thoughts on what we're thankful for. Every so often I remind myself to offer a prayer of nothing but gratitude. These tend to be the longest prayers that I offer. As you consider the blessings you have received, the loved ones in your life, and the Savior's Atonement, you think of more and more things to be grateful for. This process does something to you too. It turns your heart away from yourself and toward others.

DAILY SCRIPTURE STUDY

Studying the scriptures each day helps to center our thoughts on Jesus Christ. There is a difference between reading the scriptures and studying them. If our intent is to know what the Lord wants to teach us, we learn more. Our Father in Heaven can still teach us new things even as we read familiar words. Often an answer will come from a verse we've read 100 times before.

There have been many occasions when I'll think, "I've read this verse so many times in the past, but it wasn't marvelous before. Now it's marvelous!"

When it comes to scripture study, we can sometimes make a mistake by always setting an arbitrary goal. Then our focus becomes reading a certain number of verses or pages a day. For me, I get more out of the scriptures when there's no deadline. Sometimes I'll take several days on a chapter. Or sometimes I'll use a whole study day on only a few verses. We need to think about why the words are there, and why they are important to us as individuals.

DAILY FOCUS

Daily prayer and daily scripture study are only two tools among many that can help us to remember our Savior, which we covenant to do as we partake of the sacrament each week. As we strive to remember Jesus Christ always, we treasure the precious gift of His Atonement instead of rejecting it. May we keep our daily focus on the Savior sharp, at Christmastime and throughout the year. **NE**

CHRISTMAS

Similarly, we sometimes reject a gift from our Heavenly Father or from our Savior. We can in particular reject the Savior's atoning sacrifice in small ways.

In order to not reject this priceless gift, we must keep our focus on the Savior at all times and not only during the Christmas season. Here are some suggestions for how you can keep your focus sharp throughout the year.

DAILY PRAYER

One way to keep our focus on the Savior is by communing with our Heavenly Father. Our daily prayers must be more than merely speaking words. You need to *really* talk with your Heavenly Father. In your daily life, when you talk to a friend or family member every day, the closeness you develop is natural and deep.

It's the same with our Father in Heaven.

Ask God what He wants you to do that day. Ask Him who needs your help. Listen for responses and promptings, both during your prayer and throughout the day. Then act accordingly.

