



**By President
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HOW TO **SEE THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS**

When we prepare for Christmas by pondering its real meaning, we prepare to experience the Christ and His message. May I suggest three things we may want to study, ponder, and apply in this season of preparation.

First, rejoice in the birth of our Savior. We celebrate the birth of the Son of God, the Creator, our Messiah. We rejoice that the King of kings came to earth, was born in a manger, and lived a perfect life. When Jesus was born, the joy in heaven was so great it could not be contained (see Luke 2:8–14).

Second, ponder His influence in our lives today. Christmas is a time for remembering the Son of God and renewing our determination to take upon us His name. It is a time to reassess our lives and examine our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Let this be a time of remembrance, of gratitude, and a time of forgiveness. Let it be a time to ponder the Atonement of Jesus Christ and its meaning for each of us personally. Let it especially be a time of renewal and recommitment to live by the word of God and to obey His commandments. By doing this, we honor Him far more than we ever could with lights, gifts, or parties.

Third, look steadfastly for His coming. While the Christmas season is typically a time for looking back and celebrating the birth of our Lord, it seems to me that it should also be a time of looking to the future. Let us look forward. Let us prepare for that blessed day when He will come again. Let us be as wise as those ancients who watched for His coming.

I pray that during this season and always, we will see the purity of the story of the Savior's birth and feel sincere gratitude for His life, teachings, and saving sacrifice for us. May this gratitude cause us to renew our determination to follow Him. May it also lead us to draw closer to our family, our church, and our fellowmen. And may we look steadfastly forward to that blessed day when the resurrected Christ will walk the earth again as our Lord, our King, and our blessed Savior. ■

From the 2010 First Presidency Christmas Devotional.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Several Christmases ago, my grandma asked all her children and grandchildren to serve others on her behalf. My sisters knitted baby hats and served at an animal sanctuary, and my brother put up a widow's Christmas lights. I found family names and took them to the temple. We all wrote Grandma letters describing our experiences—tears shone in her eyes as she read them on Christmas morning. I felt grateful for my grandma's example and realized that as I had “by love serve[d]” others (Galatians 5:13), I had gained more charity and felt closer to family members both living and dead.

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