

Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field



Here are 10 great, enduring, wonderful gifts that I hope every missionary would bring home from the mission field.

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Quite a few years ago I was in an airport and happened to meet some returning missionaries. Their families were there. They were picking up their baggage, and I said to one of them, “What’s all this you have?” He said, “These are gifts I am bringing home.” And that has given me the title of what I would like to share: “Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field.”

1. A knowledge of and love for God our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). There is no greater gift that comes to anyone in this world than a certain, reassuring conviction that God, our Eternal Father, lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I believe that. I think it is so very, very important.

2. A knowledge of and love for the scriptures, the word of the Lord.

As a missionary, I read each evening before going to bed a few chapters of the Book of Mormon, and there came into my heart a conviction which has never left: that this is

the word of God, restored to the earth by the power of the Almighty, translated by the gift and power of God to the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. I thank the Lord for the testimony which I have of the truth of the word of God as found in these sacred revealed books. And I would hope that every missionary would leave his or her field of labor with a conviction in his or her heart that these things are true.

3. An increased love for parents.

I have attended hundreds of missionary meetings over the years. I love to hear missionaries speak of their love for the Lord, but I also love to hear them speak with great appreciation and love concerning their parents. Boys who had been careless and indifferent stand on their feet and with tears in their eyes thank the Lord for their fathers and their mothers. In these days, what a salutary and wonderful thing it is to hear a strong young man stand up and speak with great feeling concerning his father and his mother, saying things he would never have said before in all of his life. Every boy and girl ought to come home with an increased love for parents.



4. A love for the people among whom they labored.

I love the English people. No one can sell the English short in my mind because I labored with them, I lived with them, I was in their homes at their firesides, I learned to know their hearts, and I learned to love them.

I have learned to love the people of Asia. I spent 11 years among them, and I love them. To me, I love them as much as I love anybody because of the experience I have had as a missionary, as it were, among them.

There's something wrong if a missionary doesn't come back with a great love for the people among whom he labored.

5. An appreciation for hard work.

Every missionary ought to come to realize that work, work, work is the key to getting things done, the key to success in life. There is no substitute



for work, for getting up in the morning and getting at it and staying with it to get the job done. I don't know of a greater asset for whatever lies ahead in life than the capacity to discipline oneself to work.

6. The assurance that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is available to each of us when we live for it.

The availability of inspiration—each of us, if we live for it, if we cultivate it, can have it. I love these great words of revelation, these words of promise: “God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 121:26). What a precious gift to bring home—the assurance, the certainty that if we live for it, we have available to us that which comes by the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. An understanding of the importance of teamwork.

No one can do this work alone. We work in pairs. “In the mouth of two or more witnesses shall [all things] be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1). We work together. There is no place for prima donnas in the mission field. Our efforts are largely team efforts, and what a marvelous thing it is to learn to work with other people.

8. The value of personal virtue.

I think there is no greater thing concerning future integrity that a missionary can learn than the value of personal virtue. I think there are fewer words greater than the promise given under the inspiration of the Lord as set forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly.” That’s the commandment. And then the promise: “Thy confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). That’s the promise to those who walk in virtue.

9. The faith to act.

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way . . . that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth” (1 Nephi 3:7).

We ask tremendous things of missionaries. It is so hard for shy and diffident young people to do the things we sometimes ask them to do. But what a marvelous thing that they try. They have the faith to do, the faith to act, the faith to go forward and make the effort. And what a marvelous gift that is to bring home.

10. The humility to pray.

Recognize that there is a power greater than ours, that no matter how good a man is, he is not good enough, that no matter how wise he is, he is not wise enough, that no matter how strong he is, he is not strong enough for all of the things which he will face in life, and that there is a source of power to which he can go with the assurance that he will be listened to and that there will be a response.

These are 10 gifts that I would hope every missionary would bring home with him or her—not a lot of tinsel, not a lot of dolls, not a lot of rugs or furs or dresses or plates, but these great, enduring, wonderful things. God bless you to keep the faith, and while doing so, enjoy with great happiness that which you are called to do. ■

From an address given at a seminar for new mission presidents on June 24, 1983.