

Memories

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It is January 1996. It is the beginning of a new year and a new semester at BYU. The old year, 1995, will not be forgotten, but it is never to be relived again except in our memories. Events of the past year came and went. They were special, they were hard, they were sad, they were joyous.

In retrospect, the past year has flown by. All we have left of it are the memories. The events and the memories of our lives are a composite of who we are—of what makes us tick. But it is interesting when you think about it—our memories can play tricks on us. Consequently, it behooves us to be positive in our approach to life; otherwise our store of memories will have a negative balance rather than a positive balance of happy memories. *Good* memories become sanctified in our minds!

Elder Neal A. Maxwell made the statement in a mission presidents' seminar in Japan during my husband's assignment in the Asia North Area Presidency that the "ultimate emancipation" will be "one day to live in the presence of God with the past, present, and future, which have become an eternal now." When that day comes, we will see things as they really are. We won't see through a glass darkly. My guess is that we will be overcome

with joy and gratitude for our beautiful lives. We will be grateful for the challenges that we have had and will have in our "past, present, and future" existence. We will praise God for his goodness to us.

Make happy memories. Make each day a happy one. Goethe said, "Happiness is a choice." Choose to make this year and this semester a happy experience—a happy memory.

The beginning of a new year is traditionally when we make our resolves for the months ahead. Many of you have already made a list of New Year's resolutions. May I suggest that all of you consider two resolutions from my list. These are not the usual ones like losing five pounds (or gaining five depending on your circumstance), reading the scriptures every day, and staying on top of your homework, etc. Although these things are important and may be on your lists, I would like to make two suggestions that are not quite so ordinary.

Marilyn S. Bateman, wife of Merrill J. Bateman, gave this devotional address at Brigham Young University on 9 January 1996.

Here is the first resolution: I encourage you to keep a record of the little miracles that happen in your lives. These things are often so seemingly insignificant that we may not see them for what they are. We must call upon the Spirit to help us recognize the touch of the Master’s hand in our lives. As you come to recognize and record these little miracles, they will become fixed in your mind and you will be surprised how very blessed you are and how aware God is of you.

The second resolution is that you look for an opportunity to render a kind act of service each day, and do it consciously. There are many things possible that you might do. Most won’t take a lot of time. To offer some suggestions, I would like to mention a few points from President Howard W. Hunter’s 1994 Christmas message. He suggests we might mend a quarrel; dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust; write a letter (please write to your parents); encourage a friend; forego a grudge; apologize; express your gratitude; see the beauty of the earth; speak your love and speak it again. (See “The Gifts of Christmas,” First Presidency Christmas Devotional, 4 December 1994.)

As we look outside ourselves in offering service and extending love to others, our own lives become fuller and richer. Life seems to fall into place better. We are choosing the good life, the happy life.

President Bateman and I are so pleased to be here at BYU. This is our school of choice—our family’s school of choice. It always has been—we are true-blue. BYU is a very special place; you make it that way. We feel of your vitality and your strength. We admire you for your preparation and your choice to come here to get your education and to strengthen your spiritual roots. We resolve to do all we can to help you realize your potential. As the Savior called his disciples “friends,” we are your friends.

Jesus Christ is our Savior. He extends his grace and all that he has to us. He bids us accept his offering. I am thankful to him. I am thankful for the special witness that can come to us through the Holy Ghost of the reality of God’s purposes. May you be blessed in your honest efforts to know his will for you. This I say in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.