

On Giving Gifts..... HTH 12-10-91

When giving a person something of value (particularly in the case of a child), it may be important to give instruction to that person pertaining to the value of the thing (gift) that is being bestowed. This is true for both physical and spiritual gifts. In the incident of the "Samaritan woman at the well", John 4:5-42, Jesus told the woman, among other things, "... If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water". Jesus then proceeded to tell her of his "living water" and its value; the gift of God.

In Matthew 7:9-10, Jesus said, "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son will ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Upon giving a gift, it is often important to give instructions concerning the gift's usefulness or importance.

When the Hall family built their home in John Beesly's "Hill Ridge Heights" subdivision in the Pleasant View area, we were still in the county, not yet annexed into Provo City. We had water and electricity but did not have sewer or storm drains. Consequently, residents of the subdivision had septic tanks. The year was 1956 and Harold Colvin was our Bishop. We met in the "Old Purple Church (so-called because of the purplish tinge in the color of the brick). The old chapel was located at Canyon Road and what is now the bottom of Stadium Avenue.

Lory Free became Bishop in 1961 and selected R. Chase Allred as his first councilor and H. Tracy Hall as his second councilor.

As second councilor, my primary responsibility was for the Mutual Improvement Association. Another of my responsibilities was for the Deacons quorum and the collection of Fast Offerings. My architect friend, Lee Knell was the deacon's quorum advisor. While the Deacons were out collecting, Lee and I would talk until they returned, whereupon we would count and credit the money with Walt Hedquist who was the ward clerk.

One day we were talking about childhood experiences and Lee told the following story. The grandfather of one of Lee's young friends mailed a

sealed and stamped envelope to his grandchild for Christmas. Upon opening the envelope, the boy found a funny looking piece of paper that was colored green on one side and black on the other. He had never seen anything like it before and said to Lee, "Look at this funny joke my grandpa sent me for Christmas", and threw the colored paper into the burning fireplace. Fortunately the boy's father, in an adjoining room, had overheard the conversation and was able to rescue the one hundred dollar bill before it was consumed.

I had a similar experience when I was eight years old and in the third grade at the Marriott School. A boy approached me during recess with a small coin about the size of a dime but of a different color than any money that I had ever seen before. He wanted to trade it to me for a nickel that he knew I had. I did not want to trade because the nickel was larger than the coin that he said was money. Finally, he prevailed upon me to make the trade.

When I arrived home after the school day had ended, my mother saw me playing with this coin and immediately wanted to know where I had obtained it. I hesitated to tell her and was somewhat evasive because I feared that she would get after me for making such a dumb trade. Mother became agitated and insistent so I told her about trading my nickel for the yellowish coin. I'm sure, at that time, that my Mom was worried that I might have stolen it.

It was then that I learned that this yellow, dime sized coin was a ten dollar gold-piece. My mother immediately walked with me (approximately one mile from our home) to the parents of the child, explained what had happened and traded the gold piece back for my nickel. It turned out that the grandfather had given the boy this coin as a present for his birthday but had failed to tell him the value of the gift!

It is easier to tell one the value of money than of less tangible gifts. But that is all the more reason to tell our children the value of gospel gifts: the atoning sacrifice of our Savior, word of wisdom, ordinations, prayer, priesthood, revelation, marriage, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, missions, heritage, motherhood & fatherhood, church leaders to guide us, and much, much more.