

## WITH GRATITUDE AND LOVE

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I waited with anticipation for the first day of class. I was and still am excited to teach these students. My experiences with them have been marvelous. I believe that most of them are hardworking, ordinary people who are concerned with doing what is right. Some are struggling with some aspects of their lives, but I am grateful that they are here so that we can help them conquer their challenges. I also believe that, for the most part, they really do want to learn. Even though they may not want to put forth as much effort as is required to learn, and some are more concerned with their grade than with learning, I remain optimistic. I believe that they really do want to learn. And I love them.

In addition to associating with the students, there are many other reasons why I am grateful to teach here. I will focus on two reasons that really seem to stick out in my mind. One is the opportunity to have an opening prayer to begin class. The other is the opportunity to discuss the scriptures and talks by the General Authorities alongside the course content.

Before I started teaching here, I looked forward to being able to begin class with prayer. As I think about the importance of inviting the Spirit of the Lord to be with us as we learn, I am deeply impressed with the account of Karl G. Maeser's call to lead Brigham Young Academy:

"The explosion of a powder magazine on Arsenal Hill north of Salt Lake City on April 5, 1876, shook that part of the city and brought down all of the plaster from the ceiling of the Twentieth Ward Schoolhouse, where Karl G. Maeser, a talented German schoolmaster, was teaching. Brother Maeser hurried in search of Bishop John Sharp at the office of President Brigham Young, where he reported the damage and asserted he could not continue teaching until the school was repaired.

"That is exactly right, Brother Maeser," said President Young good-naturedly, according to an account by Maeser's son, Reinhard. "I have another mission for you."

Another mission! The teacher's heart sank. He already had filled three missions for the Church and was just beginning to see financial daylight. He had worked hard, serving at various times as tabernacle organist, bookkeeper, professor of pedagogy and German at the University of Deseret, and private tutor for President Young's family.

"Yes," continued the President, "we have been considering the establishment of a Church school, and are looking around for a man to take charge of it. You are the man, Brother Maeser. We want you to go

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to Provo to organize and conduct an academy to be established in the name of the Church—a Church school.”

Arrangements were completed for Professor Maeser to head Brigham Young Academy in Provo immediately at a salary of \$1200 a year, to be paid in such commodities as the school treasurer might receive in tuition. In a few days he returned to President Young’s office and said, “I am about to leave for Provo to start my work in the Academy. Have you any instructions to give me?”

President Young paused for a few moments as though in deep thought, then replied, “Brother Maeser, I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all. God bless you. Goodbye.” (Edwin Butterworth Jr., “Eight Presidents: A Century at BYU,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1975, 23)

The reason that I include more than the usual quote about Brother Maeser is that each of us came here to BYU-Idaho under different circumstances, but I believe that President Young’s counsel still holds true for each of us: Not even the alphabet or multiplication tables without the Spirit of God! What a powerful lesson that I hope to always remember, not only as I teach the youth of the Church but also as the important lessons that are taught in my own home. The feedback that I have received from my students is that they appreciate the prayers. I think that the students in my Statistics class really appreciate the prayers. As psychology majors, they can be overwhelmed by a statistics course. But they understand that prayer is very powerful and that after we pray, we go to work.

Similarly, I am also grateful to teach here because of the opportunity to discuss in class the scriptures and talks by General Authorities. The other day in my General Psychology class, we were talking about how to discipline people, specifically children. We discussed some of the current theories of the day; then we opened the scriptures and carefully considered the Lord’s message often cited in the Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-44. We discussed some of the ways that the Lord would have us treat each other. We talked about the importance of persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, meekness, and love. We also discussed the importance of showing someone even greater love after correcting them so that they know that we are their friend, not an enemy.

When I taught at other colleges, talking about Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, was difficult if not impossible. I am grateful for the privilege of incorporating prayer and the scriptures as part of the lessons that I teach these wonderful students.

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