

## Graduation Talk



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Graduates, faculty, family, and friends: Aloha.

It is my privilege and honor to speak to you today on behalf of the graduating class of fall 2017. I would like to express our love and appreciation to all of the family, friends, faculty, church and school leaders for helping us achieve this goal. As an I-work student, I also would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of the donors. We love you and are incredibly grateful for everything you have done to get us to this point. You have helped us academically, financially, and spiritually, given us support and guidance, and helped us become who we are today.

Looking out at the audience, I know that each of us has a unique story to share on the journey to BYUH. I am just one of many students who was guided by the Lord to this unique ground. When my auntie heard that I was accepted to BYUH, she was happy and believed that this was a place where I could find myself a faithful young man and then bring him home to China. It would be even better if he had blond hair and blue eyes. Instead of a young man, I earned my auntie and my other beloved family members VIP seats here today.

Elder Henry B. Eyring says “Conversion brings a drive to learn... this drive is more than a cultural tradition passed on through the generations. It is the natural fruit of living the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

When I was 15, I dropped out of school and started to work. I was told by cultural tradition that education was not an important part of my future life because I was a girl. What I needed was a man who could bring bread to the house. Elder Eyring continues: “Our missionaries coming home, grow a great desire for self-improvement, a desire to learn more and to gain greater skills.”

My mission changed my outlook on education. After my mission, I developed the desire for self-improvement. I came to understand that education can put us in a better position to serve others. As a nontraditional student, the path to BYUH was not easy at all. There were many people, my angels, who helped me financially and spiritually. They inspired me as great examples who were using education as a tool to strengthen their lives so that they could have a greater ability to help the children of God. My dear graduates, I invite you to take a moment, think about some of the examples in your life, think about how we can become one of them - - to touch souls and change lives as they did for us - as we step out of this campus today.

In my first semester, I attended a Chinese student's baptism. One of the speakers gave a talk that will never be forgotten. She said to the *mostly* Chinese audience that day: "God let you be born in China, a place that has no gospel, because He trusts you. He knew that someday you would find the truth and return to His presence."

Today, God not only guided me to find the truth in my own country, but He also brought me here to grow academically and spiritually so that I can return to build His kingdom. I need to thank my auntie who is sitting in the audience here today. I appreciate her courage to be a real pioneer and to be the first of very few people in my province to be baptized. Our country needs leaders of integrity, and we will be amongst them because, "The mission of BYUH is to prepare students with character and integrity who can provide leadership in their families, their communities, their chosen fields, and in building the kingdom of God."

To those who are struggling or who will struggle in their future life, I would like to offer my encouragement. Whenever we struggle with the barriers that make life difficult, please remember President Tanner and Sister Tanner shared in a past devotional, "We have so many privileges, so many unwrapped gifts". As members of the church, privileges exist everywhere we go. The privileges of seeking help from God, the privileges of searching answer from the scriptures etc. My beloved friends, I can testify that living up to these privileges will lead us to greater success.

Finally, I want to conclude my talk today by using one of my TESOL professor's words. I've really admired - - no matter what topic we studied in our TESOL classes - how my professors can somehow apply the principles we learn in class to the principles of the gospel! How amazing! My enlightening experience came from a discussion on how we could become qualified English language teachers as nonnative speakers. One of my professors concluded: "be a qualified active member of the church- that makes you valued and qualified in any position."

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.