

accounts are not His richest blessings. He blesses us with wisdom to manage our limited material resources, wisdom that enables us to live better with 90 percent of our income than with 100 percent. Thus, faithful tithing payers understand provident living and tend to be more self-reliant.

I have come to understand that the Lord's richest blessings are spiritual, and they often have to do with family, friends, and the gospel. He often seems to give the blessing of a special sensitivity to the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially in marriage and family matters like raising children. Such spiritual sensitivity can help us enjoy the blessings of harmony and peace in the home. President James E. Faust suggested that the payment of tithing is "an excellent insurance against divorce" ("Enriching Your Marriage," *Liahona*, Apr. 2007, 5; *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 7).

The payment of tithing helps us develop a submissive and humble heart and a grateful heart that tends to "confess . . . his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). Tithing fosters in us a generous and forgiving heart and a charitable heart full of the pure love of Christ. We become eager to serve and bless others with an obedient heart, submissive to the Lord's will. Regular tithing payers find their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ strengthened, and they develop a firm, abiding testimony of His gospel and of His Church. None of these blessings are monetary or material in any way, but surely they are the Lord's richest blessings.

I testify that as we pay our tithing faithfully, the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out upon us His richest blessings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



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## What Manner of Men and Women Ought Ye to Be?

*May your efforts to develop Christlike attributes be successful so that His image may be engraven in your countenance and His attributes manifest in your behavior.*

To be, or not to be" is actually a very good question.<sup>1</sup> The Savior posed the question in a far more profound way, making it a vital doctrinal question for each of us: "What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as *I am*" (3 Nephi 27:27; emphasis added). The first-person present tense of the verb *be* is *I Am*. He invites us to take upon us His name and His nature.

To become as He *is*, we must also *do* the things He *did*: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must *do* in my church; for the works which ye have seen me *do* that shall ye also *do*" (3 Nephi 27:21; emphasis added).

To *be* and to *do* are inseparable. As interdependent doctrines they reinforce and promote each other. Faith inspires one to pray, for example, and prayer in turn strengthens one's faith.

The Savior often denounced those who *did* without *being*—calling them hypocrites: "This people honoureth

me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6). To *do* without to *be* is hypocrisy, or feigning to be what one is not—a pretender.

Conversely, to *be* without to *do* is void, as in "faith, if it hath not works, is *dead*, being alone" (James 2:17; emphasis added). *Be* without *do* really isn't *being*—it is self-deception, believing oneself to be good merely because one's intentions are good.

*Do* without *be*—hypocrisy—portrays a false image to others, while *be* without *do* portrays a false image to oneself.

The Savior chastised the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithing"—something they *did*—"of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23). Or in other words, they failed to *be* what they should *have been*.

While He recognized the

importance of *do*, the Savior identified *be* as a “weightier matter.” The greater importance of *being* is illustrated in the following examples:

- Entering the waters of baptism is something we *do*. The *be* that must precede it is faith in Jesus Christ and a mighty change of heart.
- Partaking of the sacrament is something we *do*. *Being* worthy to partake of the sacrament is a weightier and much more important matter.
- Ordination to the priesthood is an act, or *do*. The weightier matter, however, is power in the priesthood, which is based “upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:36), or *be*.

Many of us create *to do* lists to remind us of things we want to accomplish. But people rarely have *to be* lists. Why? *To do*'s are activities or events that can be checked off the list when *done*. *To be*, however, is never done. You can't earn checkmarks with *to be*'s. I can take my wife out for a lovely evening this Friday, which is a *to do*. But *being* a good husband is not an event; it needs *to be* part of my nature—my character, or who I am.

Or as a parent, when can I check a child off my list as *done*? We are never done *being* good parents. And to be good parents, one of the most important things we can teach our children is how *to be* more like the Savior.

Christlike *to be*'s cannot be seen, but they are the motivating force behind what we *do*, which can be seen. When parents help a child learn to walk, for example, we see parents *doing* things like steadying and praising their child. These *do*'s reveal the unseen love in their hearts and the unseen faith and hope in their child's potential. Day after day their efforts

continue—evidence of the unseen *be*'s of patience and diligence.

Because *be* begets *do* and is the motive behind *do*, teaching *be* will improve behavior more effectively than focusing on *do* will improve behavior.

When children misbehave, let's say when they quarrel with each other, we often misdirect our discipline on what they *did*, or the quarreling we observed. But the *do*—their behavior—is only a symptom of the unseen motive in their hearts. We might ask ourselves, “What attributes, if understood by the child, would correct this behavior in the future? Being patient and forgiving when annoyed? Loving and being a peacemaker? Taking personal responsibility for one's actions and not blaming?”

How do parents teach these attributes to their children? We will never have a greater opportunity to teach and show Christlike attributes to our children than in the way we discipline them. *Discipline* comes from the same root word as *disciple* and implies patience and teaching on our part. It should not be done in anger. We can and should discipline the way that Doctrine and Covenants 121 teaches us: “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness and pure knowledge” (verses 41–42). These are all Christlike *be*'s that should be a part of who we, as parents and disciples of Christ, *are*.

Through discipline the child learns of consequences. In such moments it is helpful to turn negatives into positives. If the child confesses to a wrong, praise the courage it took to confess. Ask the child what he or she learned from the mistake or misdeed, which gives you, and more important, the Spirit an opportunity to touch and teach the child. When we teach children doctrine by the Spirit, that

doctrine has the power to change their very nature—*be*—over time.

Alma discovered this same principle, that “the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people *to do* that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword” (Alma 31:5; emphasis added). Why? Because the sword focused only on punishing behavior—or *do*—while preaching the word changed people's very nature—who they *were* or could *become*.

A sweet and obedient child will enroll a father or mother only in Parenting 101. If you are blessed with a child who tests your patience to the nth degree, you will be enrolled in Parenting 505. Rather than wonder what you might have done wrong in the premortal life to be so deserving, you might consider the more challenging child a blessing and opportunity to become more godlike yourself. With which child will your patience, long-suffering, and other Christlike virtues most likely be tested, developed, and refined? Could it be possible that you need this child as much as this child needs you?

We have all heard the advice to condemn the sin and not the sinner. Likewise, when our children misbehave, we must be careful not to say things that would cause them to believe that what they *did* wrong is who they *are*. “Never let failure progress from an action to an identity,” with its attendant labels like “stupid,” “slow,” “lazy,” or “clumsy.”<sup>2</sup> Our children are God's children. That is their true identity and potential. His very plan is to help His children overcome mistakes and misdeeds and to progress to become as He *is*. Disappointing behavior, therefore, should be considered as something temporary, not permanent—an act, not an identity.



We need to be careful, therefore, about using permanent phrases such as “You always . . .” or “You never . . .” when disciplining. Take care with phrases such as “You never consider my feelings” or “Why do you always make us wait?” Phrases like these make actions appear as an identity and can adversely influence the child’s self-perception and self-worth.

Identity confusion can also occur when we ask children what they want to *be* when they grow up, as if what a person *does* for a living is who he or she *is*. Neither professions nor possessions should define identity or self-worth. The Savior, for example, was a humble carpenter, but that hardly defined His life.

In helping children discover who they are and helping strengthen their self-worth, we can appropriately compliment their achievement or behavior—the *do*. But it would be even wiser to focus our primary praise on their character and beliefs—who they *are*.

In a game of sports, a wise way to compliment our children’s performance—*do*—would be through the point of view of *be*—like their

energy, perseverance, poise in the face of adversity, etc.—thus complimenting both *be* and *do*.

When we ask children to *do* chores, we can also look for ways to compliment them on *being*, such as, “It makes me so happy when you do your chores with a willing heart.”

When children receive a report card from school, we can praise them for their good grades, but it may be of greater lasting benefit to praise them for their *diligence*: “You turned in every assignment. You are one who knows how to tackle and finish difficult things. I am proud of you.”

During family scripture time, look for and discuss examples of attributes discovered in your reading that day. Because Christlike attributes are gifts from God and cannot be developed without His help,<sup>3</sup> in family and personal prayers, pray for those gifts.

At the dinner table, occasionally talk about attributes, especially those you discovered in the scriptures earlier that morning. “In what way were you a good friend today? In what way did you show compassion? How did faith help you face today’s challenges?

In what way were you dependable? honest? generous? humble?” There are scores of attributes in the scriptures that need to be taught and learned.

The most important way to teach *to be* is *to be* the kind of parents to our children that our Father in Heaven is to us. He is the one perfect parent, and He has shared with us His parenting manual—the scriptures.

My remarks today have been addressed primarily to parents, but the principles apply to everyone. May your efforts to develop Christlike attributes be successful so that His image may be engraven in your countenance and His attributes manifest in your behavior. Then, when your children or others feel of your love and see your behavior, it will remind them of the Savior and draw them to Him is my prayer and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, act 3, scene 1, line 56.
2. Carol Dweck, quoted in Joe Kita, “Bounce Back Chronicles,” *Reader’s Digest*, May 2009, 95.
3. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 115.