

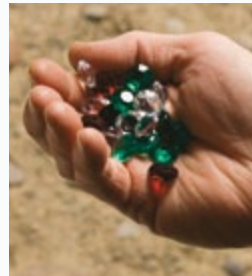
*Sometimes as we move through our journey here below, we underestimate the value of the precious pebbles that God places in our paths. These pebbles may seem small and insignificant, but in reality they are treasures of eternal worth.*



**By Elder Shayne M. Bowen**  
Of the Seventy



# WHY PERSONAL PROGRESS?



## The Parable of the Pebbles

One night in ancient times, three horsemen were riding across a desert. As they crossed the dry bed of a river, out of the darkness a voice called, "Halt!" They obeyed. The voice then told them to dismount, to pick up handfuls of pebbles, put the pebbles in their pockets, and remount. The horsemen followed the instruction.

The voice then said, "If you have done as I commanded, tomorrow at sunup you will be both glad and sorry." The horsemen rode on. When the sun rose, they reached into their pockets and found that a miracle had happened. The pebbles had been transformed into diamonds and other precious stones.

The horsemen remembered the warning that they would be both glad and sorry. They were glad they had taken some pebbles, sorry they had not taken more.

## The Plan and Your Progress

You are a daughter of a loving Heavenly Father. When you left your heavenly home to come to this wilderness (mortal life), Father did not leave you on your own. He prepared every needful thing for you to return back to your eternal home. He has placed living prophets on the earth to guide you. He has provided you with the ability through fasting, study, and prayer to know which pebbles are the most valuable. He has given you His Only Begotten Son to pay the price that you cannot pay, to atone for what you cannot atone for. He has provided the plan of happiness, which returns you home safe and sound and with the knowledge and covenants that allow you to become like Him. He has told you who you are.

Through living prophets, He has given you the Personal Progress program, which helps you develop values that prepare you and mold your character so that you can fulfill your divine potential.





The living prophets of God have clearly communicated to you what is of greatest eternal worth. They have clearly indicated that “families are central to God’s plan, which provides a way for family relationships to extend beyond the grave. Sacred temple ordinances and covenants, faithfully kept, help us return to the presence of God, united eternally with our families.

*Personal Progress helps you develop values that prepare you and mold your character so that you can fulfill your divine potential.*

“Exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom can be attained only by those who have faithfully lived the gospel of Jesus Christ and are sealed as eternal companions.

“The sealing of husband and wife for time and eternity by the authority of the priesthood—also known as temple marriage—is a sacred privilege and obligation that all should strive to receive. It is the foundation of an eternal family.

“The nature of male and female spirits is such that they complete each other. Men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation.”<sup>1</sup>

This is why we have *Young Women Personal Progress*. Everything in the Personal Progress program leads you to the holy temples. Personal Progress is an inspired program to help you stay focused on that which is eternal and which moth and rust doth not corrupt.<sup>2</sup>

### Precious Possessions

The world would have you believe that the values of faith, divine nature, individual worth, knowledge, choice and accountability, good works, integrity, and virtue are insignificant pebbles in a modern world. That is not true. “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.”<sup>3</sup>

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paths. These pebbles may seem small and insignificant, but in reality they are treasures of eternal worth.

Remember the voice that says, “Fill your pockets”? We sometimes hear another voice saying, “Don’t worry. They are only pebbles. They will slow you down. They will be heavy and cumbersome to carry. It’s just not worth the hassle. Besides, if they are that important, your friends will have some extras.”

Often, we are so focused on the journey that we don’t see the destination. We halfheartedly follow the direction that is given us and wander in strange paths that promise excitement and thrills but that always end up hollow and cheap. Indeed Isaiah said, “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*”<sup>4</sup>

If you are wise in your journey here on earth, one day the pebbles that you have gathered will be transformed. And on that glorious, light-filled day when you see Him again, the precious gems that you possess will give you rightful entry into His presence, and you will be home. **NE**

### NOTES

1. *Administering the Church* [2010], 3.
2. See Matthew 6:19–21.
3. Alma 37:6.
4. Isaiah 5:20; emphasis added.

